



RESEARCH ARTICLE

STRENGTHENING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING COURSES:
A PROPOSED MANAGEMENT PLAN

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ABSTRACT

This study aimed to assess the level of preparedness in and acceptance of the Experiential Learning Courses (ELC) implementation in compliance with the National Competency-Based Teacher Standards (NCBTS). It focused on the assessment of four groups of respondents: namely, the school heads, the cooperating teachers, the graduates and the faculty of the College of Teacher Education of Batangas State University. Weighted mean, ANOVA and Scheffe Test were used in the study. Results show that the faculty members were fully prepared on the ELC implementation and acceptance of the ELC implementation was high. A proposed management plan was then conceptualized.

INTRODUCTION

Quality education is the concern of all educational stakeholders. It is the constant reason why innovations, changes and modifications are initiated and undergone in the field of education. Add to these, technological advancements which bring about changes in society. The scenario was made complicated by the statement of Meinnardus (2008) which pictured a painful reality in Philippine education which was talked about with much pride and optimism. He said that deterioration has set the country apart from the glory of yesteryears and seemingly the state of education is shown to stand on a direct proportion to the country's economy. Ironically, economic crisis is often blamed on the educational system. According to the human capital theory, the economic development of a nation is the function of the quality of its education. In other words, the more and better educated is its people, the greater are the chances for the latter to attain economic development. The pre-service education has been continuously coping with these changes. As such, the New Teacher Education curriculum was developed which aimed to redefine and give direction to the new Teacher Education Program. This curriculum provides Experiential Learning Courses (ELC) which equips teacher education students with theories and concepts complemented by observation on the actual scenarios in some chosen performing schools.

It is done in a manner that the theories and principles discussed in a professional subject are reconciled with their observations in the corresponding Field Study (FS) course through the meta-cognitive process. The last stage of ELC is Practice Teaching. At this point, the student teachers are deployed in a performing school where all the opportunities to bring out their best and experience the actual life of a teacher are given. The Teacher Education Institutions (TEI), on the other hand, should see to it that the professional subjects and the component subjects of the ELC offered in their program are anchored on the National Competency Based Teacher Standards (NCBTS). The NCBTS serve as the mold and the heart of the various stages of Teacher Education and Development Program and the pre-service and the in-service teachers are both expected to use the same mold for personal and professional development. The NCBTS framework requires both teacher and students competencies. Competency suggests that participants are able to use a set of information correct and appropriately. Competency-based instruction intends to measure what students have learned in response to what teachers have taught. It promotes students' participation in their learning experiences. The study intended to determine the level of competency of the cooperating school heads, the cooperating teachers and the Bachelor in Elementary Education (BEEd) and Bachelor in Secondary Education (BSEd) graduates of the University during academic year 2009-2011. These were the first two batches of graduates, product of the New Teacher Education Curriculum.

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It also aimed to determine the level of preparedness in and acceptance of the ELC implementation with compliance to the seven domains of the NCBTS among the CTE faculty members teaching the professional education subjects. Moreover, the study would also identify the strengths and the weaknesses of the said implementation in the University with compliance to the NCBTS as disclosed by the respondents. Data from the investigation, implications to the instruction of the concerned professors/ instructors of the Batangas State University (BatStateU) system were analyzed to serve as inputs on a proposed management plan to intensify the ELC implementation at BatStateU.

METHODS

Research Design: The researcher made use of the descriptive analysis to establish the need for the conceptualization of a management plan to strengthen the implementation of the Experiential Learning Courses particularly in the College of Teacher Education among the campuses of BatStateU which offer Teacher Education courses. This design was deemed appropriate as descriptive studies aim to provide an accurate description of a situation or of an association between variables from which one can make some statements about a certain group or population. To attain acceptable levels of accuracy and reliability in their findings, descriptive studies often require quantitative measures for variables under investigation, as well as sufficient number of cases or units for data collection and analysis. Moreover, a qualitative method was employed by using interviews, focus group discussions, documentary analyses and observation.

Research Instrument: Three sets of self-constructed questionnaires were used to describe the quantifiable responses of the respondents in terms of the competencies required by the NCBTS. The first set focused on the preparedness of the faculty to teach professional education subjects in College of Teacher Education as implemented in the ELC in compliance with the NCBTS. The second set of questionnaire measured the degree of acceptance of the NCBTS among the faculty teaching the professional education subjects. The third set of questionnaire aimed to determine the strengths and weaknesses of the ELC implementation of the College of Teacher Education in BatStateU system in compliance with the NCBTS. It contained the different competencies of the seven domains of the NCBTS expected of the respondents to acquire and employ as they engage in the field of teaching. The domains as adopted from the ELC Handbook (2007) consisted of the following: Social Regard for Learning, The Learning Environment, Diversity of Learners and Curriculum. Other domains were Planning, Assessing and Reporting, Community Linkages and Personal Growth and Professional Development was constructed for the school heads and the cooperating teachers of the cooperating schools stipulated in the Memorandum of Agreement (MOA). The same set of questionnaire was administered among the employed BEEEd and BSEEd graduates of BatStateU in the teaching field.

Subjects of the Study: This study involved four groups of respondents, namely the CTE faculty members who taught professional education subjects in the ELC courses; the school heads and the cooperating teachers from the cooperating schools of BatStateU, and the employed BEEEd and BSEEd graduates of BatStateU during academic years 2009-2010 and 2010-2011.

The first group of respondents included 34 professors and instructors. This is the total population of faculty members teaching professional subjects at BatStateU. Fifty school heads served as the second group of respondents. The third group consisted of 624 cooperating teachers who were tasked by their respective school heads to mentor and guide the pre-service teachers from BatStateU. The fourth group of respondents consisted of 91BEEEd and BSEEd graduates of BatStateU during academic years 2009 -2011.

Data Gathering Procedure: Before the conduct of the study, letters asking permission to conduct the study were brought to the offices of the Schools Division Superintendents of Batangas province and three other cities. Then, copies of the Memorandum of Agreement used by the instructors of the concerned campuses during academic years 2009-2010 and 2010-2011 from the respective CTE associate deans were retrieved. Lists of the cooperating teachers, cooperating schools with their address and the names of their school heads or school principals were also secured. The lists of the BEEEd and BSEEd graduates of BatStateU were sourced from the commencement program which detailed graduate information on their e-mail addresses and cell phone numbers. The researcher contacted all listed graduates through their e-mail ads and cell phones. Faculty members and Associate Deans of the College of Teacher Education from various BatStateU campuses were also visited to ask for their graduates' information. A total of 108 cooperating schools were reached. Interviews and focus group discussions with observations were then conducted. Questionnaires were also distributed and retrieved. The entire data gathering process took two semesters.

Data Analysis Procedure: The appropriate statistical tools were used to arrive at right interpretations. Weighted mean and ranking were used to determine the level of preparedness of the faculty instructors and professors in the implementation of the ELC in BatStateU and their level of acceptance of the same in compliance with the NCBTS. It was also employed to find out the level of competencies of the school heads, the cooperating teachers and the employed BatStateU graduate respondents as the main participants in the ELC implementation at BatStateU pursuant to the seven domains of the NCBTS namely: the social regard for learning; the learning environment; the diversity of learners; the curriculum; planning, assessing and reporting; community linkages; and personal growth and professional development. Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was used to determine the significant differences among the responses of the three groups of respondents regarding the implementation of Experiential Learning Courses in terms of the seven domains of the NCBTS. Lastly, Scheffe Test was used to reveal which of the paired groups of respondents showed significant differences in their assessments.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Level of Preparedness on the ELC Implementation: Results show that faculty members were fully prepared in ELC implementation as they had personal commitment, willingness and capability to continuously grow professionally to fulfill the mission of a teacher. Faculty members were fully prepared in ELC implementation as they had acquired direct experiences in the field/classroom like classroom observations, teaching assistance and practice teaching and could facilitate learning to different types of students in different types of learning

environments, using a wide range of teaching knowledge and skills. This finding is also the consequence of the requirement provided to all the instructors and professors teaching in the University to pursue and finish the post graduate education aside from the professional commitment of a teacher to engage in continuing professional development provided by the Code of Ethics for Professional Teachers.

Level of Acceptance of the ELC Implementation: The effectiveness of implementation of any educational program depends on the acceptance of its faculty/personnel. Results show that the ELC implementation was highly accepted by the CTE faculty. This is parallel to the Commission on Higher Education and Department of Education mandates on ELC which stipulates that pre-service teachers should be provided with practical learning experiences where they can actually observe, verify, reflect on and experience the different components of the teaching-learning processes in actual school settings. This starts from the field study observations and culminates in Student Teaching.

Variation of the Responses of the Three Groups of Respondents on the ELC Implementation: The assessments of the three groups regarding the implementation of the ELC in compliance with the NCBTS were compared using one-way analysis of variance. The computed F-values of the seven domains of the NCBTS revealed significant differences in assessments of the school heads, cooperating teachers and employed graduates on the implementation of the ELC considering the seven domains of the NCBTS as reflected in computed F-values ranging from 6.22-32.50 which were all higher than the critical value of 3.005. The result implies that the assessments of the school heads, the cooperating teachers and of the graduates varied with respect to the implementation of the ELC in compliance with the NCBTS domains. The differences in assessment can be attributed to the different levels of values they uphold and the concepts they believe in as brought about by the different roles they play in their respective schools-- the school heads with their administrative and supervisory functions, the cooperating teachers who render teaching services among public school students with consideration to their time tested experiences and the BatStateU graduates who are mostly teaching in private schools as newly hired teachers. For instance, to model the values of pursuing learning, the school head has greater accountabilities being a leader in a learning community than a teacher whose focus is classroom with a number of students to be accountable for. Likewise, the same reason may explain the differences of the responses among the rest of the NCBTS domains. To determine the real source of significant differences among the group responses, the researcher used the Scheffe's test. Results are shown in Table 1.

The school heads performed administrative and supervisory functions while cooperating teachers performed teaching tasks. These teachers have rich depository of experiences since they have been in the teaching service for many years. In the process, they should model all the values required by the different situations they will encounter in dealing with students. The BatStateU graduates are also teachers but are new ones indicating social regard for learning is not much understood and experienced. The paired responses of the school heads and cooperating teachers and the school heads and BatStateU graduates in Learning Environment received computed values of 5.15 and 6.0, respectively, rejecting the

hypothesis and showed significant differences. This result is brought about by the separate functions of a school head from a school teacher. It means the school heads' assessment differed with those of the cooperating teachers and graduates. No significant difference was noted between graduates and cooperating teachers as they both are responsible and knowledgeable on importance of the learning environment. However, the responsibilities of the cooperating teachers and the graduates, as new teachers are not only confined to prepare instructional materials and management of the learning activities with the students. They should also show support compliance with the policies, procedure and program of activities of the school. They should also show willingness to mentor student observers and student teachers and use their classes as venues for learning whenever their service is needed by any Teacher Education Institution. The success of the school in terms of its plans and activities is directly proportional to quality learning.

As shown in Table 1, the responses relative to the Diversity of Learners made by the school heads and the cooperating teachers and those of the school heads and BatStateU graduates obtained computed values of 4.54 and 4.33 respectively indicating significant differences in their responses. This denotes that school heads' assessment differed with those of cooperating teachers and graduates. The difference in assessment could be attributed to their corresponding functions. School heads have more expanded functions, cooperating teachers have multi-tasking activities to meet needs of students, student-teachers and higher authorities while graduates are more focused on instructional delivery as guided by cooperating teachers and school heads. However, both teachers and graduates model values, prepare lessons, instructional objectives and materials and assessment tools giving provisions to the individual differences of their students. As shown in Table 1, the computed values received by the paired responses in the Curriculum of the school heads and cooperating teachers and those of the school heads and the BatStateU graduates in this domain were 4.09 and 4.33 respectively indicating significant differences in their responses. However, the paired responses of the cooperating teachers and the graduates got a computed value of 1.26. It denoted a difference which was not significant. This result implies that school heads' assessment differed from those of the cooperating teachers and graduates, but the cooperating teachers' assessments were similar to the assessment of the graduates. This result is attributed by the researcher to the fact that teachers, old and new, prioritize teaching before other school activities.

Students' quality of learning is largely influenced by the value preference, knowledge and instructional capability of a teacher and therefore, teachers should ensure that the learning activities, strategies and objectives are directed to the Vision and Mission of their schools. With the same reason, the researcher believes that cooperating teachers, as performing teachers, influence much the performance of student observers, most especially the student teachers and the long years of experience of the researcher as college supervisor in Student Teaching confirm it. The researcher is supported by Vocal (2004) who cited that the quality of education is largely dependent on the quality of teachers. Teachers, therefore, are expected to be the source of vision, expertise, and inspiration to respond more effectively to the forces of change; and initiate improvement in education. Teachers' attitudes influence

students' achievement. Though the school heads do not teach the subjects required by the curriculum, they lead their teachers in the acquisition of the needed instructional equipment or gadgets and devices which teachers cannot afford to buy. Incentives should also be provided by the school heads, material or immaterial to boost the morale and enhance the teaching competence of teachers. Table 1 shows that in the Planning, Assessing and Reporting domain, paired responses of the three groups of respondents obtained computed values which led to the rejection of the null hypothesis.

Again, the result is brought about by the nature of the work of the school heads which does not include teaching while cooperating teachers and the employed BatStateU graduates on the other hand, have the said task of teaching students integrating this domain. However, educational leaders cite that teaching to be meaningful, the teacher should prepare learning activities relevant to home and community life, needs and experiences. Education experts believe that if this principle is considered by a teacher, the links between the school and the community will be strengthened.

Table 1. Pairing of Groups with Domains of Significant Differences Using Scheffe's Test

Pairing of Groups	Scheffe Computed Value	Decision H_0	Interpretation
I. Social Regard for Learning			
School Heads and Cooperating Teachers	3.64	Reject	Significant
School Heads and BSU Graduates	6.33	Reject	Significant
Cooperating Teachers and BSU Graduates	9.167	Reject	Significant
II. The Learning Environment			
School Heads and Cooperating Teachers	5.15	Reject	Significant
School Heads and BSU Graduates	6.0	Reject	Significant
Cooperating Teachers and BSU Graduates	1.88	Accept	Not Significant
III. The Diversity of Learners			
School Heads and Cooperating Teachers	4.54	Reject	Significant
School Heads and BSU Graduates	4.33	Reject	Significant
Cooperating Teachers and BSU Graduates	1.987	Accept	Not Significant
IV. Curriculum			
School Heads and Cooperating Teachers	4.09	Reject	Significant
School Heads and BSU Graduates	4.33	Reject	Significant
Cooperating Teachers and BSU Graduates	1.26	Accept	Not Significant
V. Planning, Assessing and Reporting			
School Heads and Cooperating Teachers	3.64	Reject	Significant
School Heads and BSU Graduates	3.33	Reject	Significant
Cooperating Teachers and BSU Graduates	10.833	Reject	Significant
VI. Community Linkages			
School Heads and Cooperating Teachers	11.364	Reject	Significant
School Heads and BSU Graduates	10.05	Reject	Significant
Cooperating Teachers and BSU Graduates	1.893	Accept	Not Significant
VII. Personal Growth and Professional Development			
School Heads and Cooperating Teachers			
School Heads and BSU Graduates	5.91	Reject	Significant
Cooperating Teachers and BSU Graduates	4.67	Reject	Significant
	1.76	Accept	Not Significant

These implied significant differences school heads' assessment from those of the cooperating teachers and BatStateU graduates. Moreover, the assessment of the cooperating teachers differs from that of the BatStateU graduates. Although, three groups of respondents are concerned with this domain as they prepare their own plans, set their standards and assess their performances, they differed in competency along this domain.

The competencies shown by the cooperating teachers as implied by this outcome differed significantly from those of the graduates, although they are both teaching, brought about by the long years of experience which made the cooperating teachers competent in planning, assessing and reporting. The graduates need more experiences to exercise and apply the competencies in conceptualizing their teaching plans, assessing the capabilities of students in learning and in reporting them for better teaching performance. In Community Linkages, the assessment of school heads differed from that of the cooperating teachers. On the other hand, the cooperating teachers' assessment did not differ from that of the BSU graduates as presented in Table 1.

This needs then the cooperating teacher's awareness of the programs and activities promoted by the community. Invitation of resource persons from the community, and use of measures to update the community with the school plan, projects, activities, achievements and affairs will go a long way in promoting community linkages. Similarly, if students in their Experiential Learning Courses will be constantly oriented in this manner, their concern for community needs will be developed, enabling them to be proficient and productive citizens of the community. The school heads, although not teaching, should show support to this endeavor by extending their assistance to their cooperating teachers in coordinating with the concerned community officials. In the process of coordinating with offices, protocol should be observed through letters of request for the purpose. In Personal Growth and Professional Development, the paired responses of the school heads with the cooperating teachers and the BatStateU graduates garnered the computed values of 5.91 and 4.67 respectively which resulted to significant differences while those of the cooperating teachers and the graduates got a computed value of 1.76 providing no significant difference in

Table 2. Proposed Management Plan to Strengthen the Implementation of the Experiential Learning Courses

NCBTS Domain	Objectives	Strategies	Persons Involved	Target Period	Expected Outcome
Community Linkages	To conduct researches beneficial to the community/ learning community	Conduct of research of BEd/BSEd students beneficial to the community/ learning community where they are conducting their Field Studies Presentation of results in research fora	CTE students, Research instructor, Cooperating teacher Research students, Program Chairman, CTE Associate Dean, Dean of Colleges, Executive Director	Entire school year Entire school year	Aligned research addressing community needs Establishment of strong partnerships and symbiotic relationship between BatStateU, cooperating schools and the community
Community Linkages	To establish linkage between cooperating schools and CTE societies/ organizations to To maintain a bulletin board in a strategic location in the campus accessible to the community residents	Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) may be prepared and signed by the Dean of Colleges and the School head of a Basic Education School for the information dissemination of the cooperating school's programs and activities. Updating of bulletin boards regarding University programs, activities and achievements	CTE organizations, organization advisers, Resource teachers, Cooperating principals, CTE Associate Dean, Dean of Colleges FS students, OSA head, community residents	Entire school year Entire school year	Strong linkage between BatStateU and cooperating schools Well-informed community Well disseminated information on programs, activities and achievements to the community
Community Linkages	To train students in community resource mobilization (human and material) as teaching strategy To give the community opportunity to explain its programs	Assisting in the preparation of presentations to aid in the information dissemination on the cooperating school and facilitating the presentations in the form of programs Inviting resource persons from the community to explain programs or activities of the community	FS students, Information Technology instructor, cooperating principals, cooperating teachers, community resource person, residents of the locale FS students, community resource person	Entire school year Entire school year	Well- trained FS students in mobilizing community resources as teaching strategy Well-informed and updated community
Planning, Assessing and Reporting	To determine teaching-learning difficulties, their possible causes and formulate remedial action to resolve them	Conducting of action researches by the FS students regarding the teaching-learning difficulties in their respective cooperating schools Coordination of the student researchers to the concerned cooperating teacher on the concerns of the research problem Endorsement of the research results to the cooperating teachers for possible solutions	FS students, Research instructor, cooperating teacher, cooperating principal, Associate Dean, Dean of Colleges FS students, Research instructor, cooperating teacher FS students, Research instructor, cooperating teacher, cooperating principal	Entire school year Entire school year Entire school year	Production of research output Identification of teaching-learning difficulties on respective cooperating schools Responsive cooperating teachers on the persisting problems Resolved difficulties/ problems on respective cooperating schools

Continue.....

Planning, Assessing and Reporting	To use outcomes of different assessment results in planning and implementing learning activities for students/pupils	Inviting cooperating teachers considering the standard protocol required to attend seminars focused on assessment types which may be aligned with the Education Week celebration of the CTE	CTE students, cooperating teacher, cooperating principal, Associate Dean, Dean of Colleges CTE Dean	Entire school year	Updated cooperating teachers and pre-service teachers
		Inviting cooperating and resource teachers during exhibit activities sponsored by CTE where samples of portfolios, journals and rubrics may be displayed in addition to other instructional materials	CTE students, cooperating teacher, cooperating principal, resource teacher, Associate Dean, Dean of Colleges CTE Dean	Entire school year	Updated cooperating teachers and pre-service teachers

their responses. This assessment result by the school heads differed from the assessments done by the cooperating teachers and BatStateU graduates due to their different tasks. Most of the seminars and trainings attended by school heads are administrative and supervisory in nature while those attended by teachers are focused on the teaching profession.

Proposed Management Plan to Strengthen the Implementation of the Experiential Learning Courses (ELC): Magnified in the findings of the study were the competencies which implied the strong and weak points in the ELC implementation which the University may address. ELC implementation was found strong in the domains of Social Regard for Learning, Personal Growth and Professional Development and the Learning Environment; however, much more has to be done to strengthen the domains which were weakly implemented, among them Community Linkages and Planning, Assessing and Reporting. It is on the basis that the management plan was proposed to strengthen ELC implementation.

General Objectives

- To strengthen the ELC implementation through some activities that will establish constant linkage between the community and the school
- To enhance teachers’ skill in research by conducting a study to address the needs of the school and of the community
- To suggest activities for the ELC implementation at BatStateU

Recommendation

In the light of the foregoing findings, the following recommendations are given. The College Supervisor may coordinate with the Office of the Schools Division Superintendent in the selection of cooperating schools considering their performance in the division in order to strengthen collaborative linkage with those in the field.

Moreover, the College Supervisor should keep and furnish the CTE Office accurate and pertinent records of students in FS and Student Teaching such as Memorandum of Agreement for the purpose, list of cooperating schools, including the school address, names of school heads and names of cooperating teachers. Seminars may also be conducted in the University to invite DepEd officials as speakers on current trends in basic education teaching to reconcile the theories taught in the professional education courses with the current trends in the basic education system. Lastly, curriculum designers of the Basic Education Curriculum may introduce the conduct of basic research in the elementary and junior high school levels to utilize and enhance the research skills of new Education graduates in their teaching activities and to develop the research culture in the system which will address community problems.

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