

Painting with a Broad Brush: Needs, Challenges and Opportunities on the Implementation of Special Program in the Arts of Surigao City National High School

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Abstract: This paper aimed to understand the needs, challenges and opportunities in the implementation of Special Program in the Arts of Surigao City National High School. This paper used focus group discussion which involved an up-close, in-depth, and detailed interview on the implementation of SPA involving the advisers from Grade 7 until 10 of the said program. Since this study employed qualitative interpretation, interview guide was prepared to explore its main focus. As to how data were generated, permission from the School Principal and advisers on its conduct. Content analysis was used in treating the data gathered from the stories shared by the informants. The results of the analysis of the generated data like (a) the needs of the school in the program, (b) the specific challenges encountered by the students and teachers, (c) the cited opportunities that the students can learn from the program. The challenges in the execution of the program should be addressed and full support from the DepEd is necessary. The theory of supporting the implementation of the program is needed by the school as it would allow smooth execution of the planned activities. This study offers a review of the Implementing Guidelines, more enhancement training to teachers, and ask support from the internal and external stakeholders.

Keywords: Special Program in the Arts, DepEd, Performing Arts.

I. INTRODUCTION

Quality education is viewed as any country's pillar of success. Restructuring the Philippines's basic educational system through the K to 12 Program is a tough but strategic move by the government to ensure that it produces competent graduates who can serve as the backbone for a highly skilled and employable work force. Introduced in 2011 by the Department of Education (DepEd), headed by Secretary Armin Luistro, FSJ, the K to 12 Program made kindergarten a prerequisite to basic education. It also lengthened the basic schooling which included a two-year senior high school with technical and vocational courses to students who are not planning to go to college, thus, giving them more chances of getting employed in a blue-collar work. The program replaced the 10-year basic education curriculum, which consisted six years in grade school and four years in high school that concentrated on the English Language and Filipino, Sciences, Arithmetic and Mathematics, and Social Sciences.

One special feature of the educational system is the offering of special program to address the varying needs and skills of the students. The Bureau of Curriculum Development (BCD) ensures that relevant, responsive, and effective basic education curriculum is focused and developed appropriate to all types of learners in school. With this, special programs are created and offered in schools where students can also enroll in journalism, arts, sports, and other fields which they are comfortable with.

As one recognized school implementing Special Program in the Arts, Surigao City National High School, along with Cabrera Altres National High School, takes pride on its achievements in music, dance, theater, visual arts, creative writing, and media arts. It envisions to produce excellent young artists with aesthetic potentials committed in the preservation of Filipino cultures and heritage. Its program specifically aims to (1) to provide artistically inclined students with regular secondary education, (2) to enhance the talents of the students through specialized subjects, (3) to provide basic knowledge, concept and skills necessary relevant to the program, (4) to develop special inclinations of students in media arts, creative writing, visual arts, music, drama, theater arts and dance arts, (5) to establish cultural identity, awareness of life, a sense of nationalism and preserves traditions, (6) to develop cultural ability to express their and feelings through their chosen art forms and be responsive to national excellence and globalization, and (7) to prepare students for life and work by developing in them the general skills and attitudes the habits of hearts and mind they need to prevail the post society regardless of their chosen career.

With its targets to be an arts oriented school, it has raised its excellence in producing positive learning outcomes such as creating a positive attitude to learning, developing a greater sense of personal and cultural identity, and fostering more creative and imaginative ways of thinking among high school students. However, certain problems are met during its implementation which resulted to poor execution of its programs, projects and activities like resources to fit curriculum and instruction, budget for training and activities, space consideration for practices, and assessment admission.

This study aimed to find out the needs, challenges, and opportunities of the school in the implementation of the Special Program in the Arts and how they addressed such challenges, and how it strengthened the guidelines to make the program meaningful. This study can be a help for the implementing schools in the Division of Surigao City and for DepEd to reinforce the Arts Education Program in public schools. The result of this study can be used as a reference of the department to help schools implementing the Arts Education and even revise the implementing guidelines when needed for improved implementation of the program.

II. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

This review offered fusions of studies concerning Arts Education. The literature gathered were relevant as it would widen the discussion on the importance of Performing Arts.

Lichter (2015) emphasized that for the school to be successful in implementing the program, the process of implementation should be understood because if the implementation were fully apprehended, it makes easier for the teachers to navigate the process and at the end of it; the new program will give impact to the achievement of the students. Fixen (2005) refers implementation as planned activities and set into practice. The delivery of the program should anchor on the proposed platform and should not have essential difference appearance between the planned programs to succeeding practices. To ensure the quality implementation of the program, Durlak (2013) proved that it is important to effectively address the steps in the implementation. Assessing the settings before implementing a program is necessary; the settings affect the realistic outlooks on what can be achieved. If the program will be accepted sincerely by the implementers then excellence execution can be achieved. To start implementing the guidelines, there must be a technical help to aid staff and to guarantee quality implementation. Preserving a good implementation is achievable through monitoring and feedback system during the operation.

Wilson (2013) stressed that having a quality implementation associates with a quality outcome. In other cases, when execution is poor then it will result in a failure in attaining the proposed results. It simply means to note that the contributors will gain extra benefits as an effect of an improved implementation and obtain no important benefit if the program is not properly implemented. Henderson (2002) also says that having a quality implementation of the program will connect to the availability of components, such as instruction, materials, other resources, assessment and the guide itself. The accessibility of these fundamentals will give students with a quality program.

Problems like budget constraints, space considerations, and an emphasis on high-stakes testing have made it increasingly difficult, for even those principals who understand the value of arts education provide the instruction required under New York State education law (O'rya, 2012).

Biag (2015) mentions that one of the factors to make a success in implementing a program is the goal of the school itself. The schools should be self-motivated in implementing a program in order for the program to survive. Parents are also one of the elements to consider since they will and should support their students in booming out the program. Rollins (2013)

points out that implementing a program attaches to piloting the program and should offer a chance to make changes before the full launch to give a guarantee to the best probable product.

Challenges in its implementation and openness to new ideas are requisite. The success of implementing an Arts program is critical since the exact number of the artist should be considered. Guidelines should be followed with regards to the number of student-artist enrolled in different art genres. This is because the interactions with the students will make also a difference for the victory of the execution. Herpin (2012) emphasizes that one of the assurances of quality implementation is through assessing the improvement of the students. The used to formative and summative assessment will measure the growth of learners.

However, Russell- Bowie (2004) expresses that there is a decrease of following the guidelines and procedure from the actual practice of Arts education in schools from another country like in Australia, Namibia, South Africa, USA, and Ireland due to some problems. For instance, the teachers lack knowledge, dedication, and readiness in teaching Arts resulted in producing less quality Artist. Schools that implemented Arts Education do not give priority for the improvement of to the program. The teachers' lack of personal experience of arts and inadequate resources of materials and equipment resulted in the poor implementation of the program.

UNESCO (2000) declares that Arts Education can be promoted through public consciousness as it endorses the importance of the Arts. One of the ways for the public to know the existence of Arts Education is by means of conducting Arts activity or showcasing the talents of the students. In as far as resources and materials are concern; the use of locally available sources is encouraged to aid scarcity of the needs. Another way to achieve quality implementation is through supporting the teachers with provisions of seminars and workshops because these will give confidence on the quality of Arts Education's implementation. Schagen (2011) identifies the following factors influencing implementation, as follows: principal, teachers, and learners. Stetson (2015) addresses that the principal performs an important part in the provision of excellence education, ensuring the program to be fully implemented and supports the students' development. The principal also serves as the organizer, leader, and sponsor of quality instructional operations.

Performing Arts

Special Program in the Arts (SPA) which includes Performing Arts is an avenue for the Filipino promising artists to develop and express their talents in the art. Artists if given a quality implementation of the program will be fully developed in their craft and use in continuing a curriculum. The fact of the significance of it is strong and it is for the holistic development of the learner-artist. Even so, Performing Arts in the Philippines is considered strengthening its execution particularly on the curriculum which includes four nodal points of signification namely: 1) diversity understood as a difference in students' ethnocultural backgrounds; 2) diversity of educational opportunities and modes of expression; 3) diversity and/or/as deeper understanding, and 4) diversity of learning arenas and contexts: entrepreneurial expectations (Ellefsen and Karlsen, 2019).

Arts education is one of the important subjects if not the most. Through it, students can be themselves and they can express anything they want depending on the kind of arts that they are into. More so, the SPA is a platform of DepEd that will help students develop the artist in them. With this program also, a flexible approach is employed to the curriculum which encourages independence, intellectual challenge, and risk-taking. Performing Arts teachers should engage in art brokerage which includes an embodiment of arts engagement, ensuring students regularly visit cultural events/institutions, using local cultural resources, organizing visits from artists/cultural organizations, enabling students to exhibit and perform for wider audiences, connecting students with arts workplaces and enhancing community arts participation (Thomson et.al., 2019).

Legal Basis of the Implementation. Long before DepEd in the Philippines implemented Arts Education through Special Program, which is intended to the potential and promising young artist for the development of their God- given talent and for the preservation of the Filipino culture and heritage as well. The objective of this Arts Education Program is to develop artist students in different genres, such as; music, visual arts, theater arts, creative writing, media arts, and dance, however, this study is limited to performing arts only like dance. Students are also given freedom to express their thoughts, feelings, and ideas to their chosen career, as the aid to the theory of Education for All (EFA). Through this program, the students are expected to develop a sense of patriotism and extend gratitude of Filipino culture and arts. The

program will help students to be prepared for work in a postmodern society regardless of their chosen career (DepEd Order No. 335 s. 2004).

Needs of the Program. To ensure the quality implementation of the program, Durlak (2016) emphasized that it is important to effectively address the steps in the implementation. The first step is always the difficult process like knowing who the teachers will form part of the program, the strategies to be used and how learners be assessed. Assessing the settings before implementing a program is necessary; the settings affect the realistic outlooks on what can be achieved. If the program will be accepted sincerely by the implementers then excellence execution can be achieved. In the study of Chrismon (2016), it revealed that evaluation among current teachers focus on their effectiveness on student learning, and usually do not provide valued feedback for teachers in highly specific fields such as theatre arts. Data suggested that there is a need for progress in the evaluation process of theatre arts among teachers. Alternative, methods on evaluating teachers is encouraged that will provide a holistic picture of what an effective theatre teacher looks like and performs in their classrooms and rehearsals for productions.

Challenges in the Program. Tromp (2016) stressed that having a quality implementation associates with a quality outcome and learning. In other cases, when execution of the program is poor, then it will result in a failure in attaining the proposed results. It simply means to note that the contributors like teachers will gain extra benefits as an effect of an improved implementation and obtain no important benefit if the program is not properly implemented. Content or even the competencies should be delivered well.

Mann (2016) viewed that having a quality implementation of the program and performing among the students will connect to the availability of components, such as content, instruction, materials, other resources, assessment and the guide itself. The success of implementing a Performing Arts program is critical since the exact number of the artists should be considered and the qualified teachers being involved. Guidelines should be followed with regards to the number of student-artist enrolled in different art genres like dance, music, and theatre. This is because the interactions with the students will make also a difference for the victory of the execution.

Martina et. al. (2015) viewed that different challenges were encountered by Performing Arts teachers like the lack of learning resources and inadequacy of facilities, strategies to use, training on a new technology for delivering instruction and the maintenance of equipment and facilities. Further, one problem identified by the National Commission for Culture and the Arts (NCAA) is to address teachers' competence like sending them to scholarship or grants which can benefit to improve their way of teaching. The NCCA through the Philippine Cultural Education Task Force (PCETF) conducted the Levels I and II of the Graduate Diploma in Teaching the Arts (GDTA), a post-baccalaureate in-service teacher enhancement program. The scholarship offered by DepEd aims to increase the knowledge of the applicant, not only in the field of Arts but also to the Filipino heritage and cultures. Scholars will be taught with theories, strategies, and practical training to internalize and to attain the objectives meaningfully. The program will be focusing more on the localization, to have a deeper understanding and appreciation of the local Arts (DepEd Memo No. 14, s. 2016).

Usman (2016) underscored also that the in the school system, part of the fundamental pre-requisites to be put in place in the direction of the actualization of the educational goal and objectives necessitates the acceptable provision of resources, maximum utilization and suitable management of education resources to avoid wastages and improve the quality of the teaching-learning process in the academic environment. It was examined further the perception of school administration and education resources, the relevance of education resources in the school system, classification of education resources, challenges associated with the availability and utilization of resources in the school. Solutions were presented on how to overcome the identified challenges to guarantee effective and effective management of available resources in the school system.

Opportunities of the Program. Quality performing arts education promotes physical, mental, and emotional development, as well as cognitive achievement, which is a vital factor to accomplish quality education. Notably, participation in the creative and performing arts can lead to a range of academic and personal well-being benefits. As emphasized by Martin, Papworth, Ginns, Malmberg, Collie and Calvo (2015), certain benefits can be achieved by learners if they engaged in performing arts like improving academic achievement, motivation, engagement, time spent on homework, positive educational aspirations, and tertiary aspirations. Personal well-being benefits include enhancements in pro- social behavior, community volunteering, political campaigning, positive mood, peer relations, trusting relationships, a sense of belonging, and empathy.

Tromp (2016) punctuated that being involved to performing arts is vital to students and allows students to learn about themselves, their culture, and their community. By taking with it, students begin to visualize the world differently through the use of different instructional strategies. The creativity and imagination of students are pushed through the development of art and dance. It is necessary for art educators to cultivate and guide students with quality art and dance lessons to increase their (students) understanding and relationship with the world.

Greene (2014) states that students who are inclined with Arts are expected to achieve high in academics such as in Math, Science, recognized to win in essay writing, and poem compares to those students who are not attached in Arts. Art Education helps the students to be more innovative; students can take their experiences of the world and change them into arts, making new associations and connections through their creative personalities. Art students' insight, recollections, and dreams all inspired by their creative ability. Arts permits learners to investigate, expand on, and record their own innovative and creative thoughts.

Framework of the Study

The study used the implementing guidelines to streamline the system of educating students in a structured academic environment according to their particular artistic inclination. The framework of this study followed DepEd Memorandum No. 335 s. 2004 titled the Special Program in the Arts Implementing Guidelines. Figure 1 showed the schematic diagram of the study showing its input, process, and outcome. The first box asked the needs, challenges, and opportunities in the implementation of the Special Program for the Arts. The second box asked the process of the study like interview with the SPA advisers while the third box proposed an action plan based on its findings.

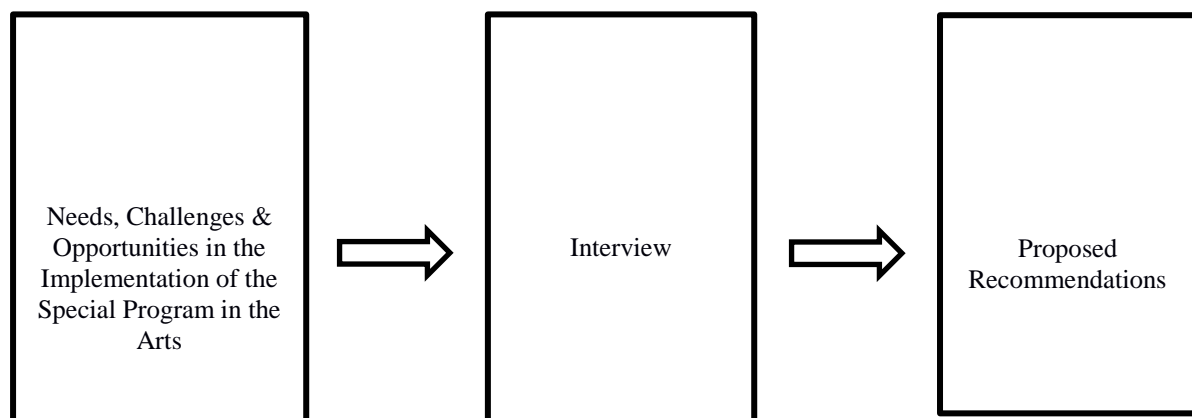


Figure 1: Schematic Diagram of the Study

Objectives of the Study

The aim of this study was to understand the needs, challenges and opportunities on the implementation of Special Program in the Arts in Surigao City National High School. It sought also answers to the following questions:

Specific Questions:

1. What are the needs of school in implementing the program?
2. What are the specific challenges encountered by the students?
3. What are the opportunities that the students can learn from the program?
4. How can the implementation of the guidelines be strengthened to make the program more meaningful and sustainable?
5. Based from the findings, what recommendations can be proposed?

III. METHODOLOGY

This paper aimed to understand the needs, challenges and opportunities in the implementation of Special Program in the Arts of Surigao City National High School. This paper used focus group discussion which involved an up-close, in-depth, and detailed interview on the implementation of SPA involving the advisers from Grade 7 until 10 of the said program.

Since this study employed qualitative interpretation, interview guide was prepared to explore its main focus. As to how data were generated, permission from the School Principal and advisers on its conduct. Content analysis was used in treating the data gathered from the stories shared by the informants. According to Pfarrer et al (2007), content analysis is a research technique used to make replicable and valid inferences by interpreting and coding textual material. By systematically evaluating texts (e.g., documents, oral communication, and graphics), qualitative data can be converted into quantitative data. Although the method has been used frequently in the social sciences, only recently has it become more prevalent among organizational scholars.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results of the analysis of the generated data followed the sequence in the questions raised in this study. The description presentation included: (a) the needs of the school in the program, (b) the specific challenges encountered by the students and teachers, (c) the cited opportunities that the students can learn from the program.

The participants were asked on the needs of the SPA teachers for a successful implementation of the program. Teachers said that they would need materials relevant to music, dance, theater, visual arts, creative writing, and media arts which includes rooms for vocal with piano and electric keyboard, room for instrumental arts, workshop area, drama room for, computer room, dance studio, special library with lots of books and other materials for the specialization, slide projectors, television sets, moving cameras with accessories, and media arts room. The school should strictly implement also its admission and assessment guidelines as part of its selection policies relevant to specialization. Being an autonomous school, it should provide the needed resources that the teachers and students need like during competition and training.

Being enrolled also in the Special Program in the Arts is never easy. Teachers as interviewed shared about the sacrifices and hardship that they had encountered along the implementation since 2016 like the conflict of selection of the students with the other programs, decreasing class size from Grade 7 until 10 due to transfer and elimination, teachers to handle like research, and no performances/recital among the students. Knowledge about the subject specialization with no instructional materials, was also one thing that emerged since there were still other skills that they would need to improve. Being a recognized school in SPA, administrators should provide more enhancement trainings to teachers and exposure to students as this would improve their craft. Administrators should also be multi-talented in a variety of ways since this SPA requires distinct responsibilities on curriculum. With poor skills among them, this would also affect the kind of performance of teachers in teaching arts. Further, with the pandemic Covid-19, SPA teachers were also affected in the delivery of quality learning and skills enhancement since Self-Learning Modules and Learning Activity Sheets were only used as no face-to-face classes are not allowed. However, in spite the challenges, teachers had successfully overcome and moved forward. One teacher said in the middle of the interview *“So far the students of SCNHS-SPA were not just talented and sporty but also wise enough for the reason that they would easily get solutions on that problems”*. One teacher also added *“I was able to overcome all of those problems because I benchmarked with the other teachers that I know especially when it comes to Self-Learning Modules or Learning Activity Sheets”*, and others replied *“We just work hard, we balanced the activities. When we had our free time we do finish our works or we ask for an extension of deadline or even reports so that we can do gradually all the works we must be done”*. And one SPA teacher gave a lesson in life stating that *“If you put in your mind what you are doing and love what you have and share what you learn then there’s no problem at all.”*

Every hardship that the students experience for now is just but temporary and there are so many opportunities which await them in the future. As of now the opportunities that they had get are those costumes received from the school used for competitions and performances. Students, on their varied skills, may be able to develop its potential and innate talent for they have given enough time in everyday learning with its program chosen and the fact that they would get good grades. Students represented the school for the division contests, or they go for other school contests, it can be regional, national or even international and show people what talents they had. Further, students in arts were trained to explore and to write their own ideas and experiences. They study and work on all genres but the program is an avenue to be engaged in the different performing arts activities like music, dance, theater, visual arts, media arts, and creative writing. Talents are developed because they have a specialist who will help and teach them in improving their skills for two hours daily as indicated in the implementing guidelines. Students are also given the opportunity to show their talent by means of the recital. Thus, students will be able to develop their self-confidence especially on presenting their talent to the audience. Another student says, *“I am always excited during presentation because I can show my talent, perform in front of many audience and recital helps me to be confident”*.

To strengthen the implementing guidelines of Special Program in the Arts, there should be strict monitoring of all activities as planned by the school, full support to the implementation through meeting the needs of the teachers, provide more enhancement trainings to students and teachers, and rigorous planning to resolve issues on curriculum and instruction. With the lack of knowledge, confidence, and experience in the arts among teachers, there might be poor implementation of the program, thus, continuous training be given with support to resources and instructional materials relevant to the specialization.

V. CONCLUSIONS

Surigao City National High School has implemented Special Program in the Arts since 2016. As years go by, the school noticed how it went well with its operation and management. The challenges in the execution of the program should be addressed and full support from the DepEd is necessary. The theory of supporting the implementation of the program is needed by the school as it would allow smooth execution of the planned activities. This study offers a review of the Implementing Guidelines, more enhancement training to teachers, and ask support from the internal and external stakeholders.

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