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**FACILITATING INSTRUCTION IN THE ALTERNATIVE LEARNING SYSTEM (ALS)**

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**ABSTRACT**

This study investigates the modalities employed by the ALS programs implementers in teaching the learners classified as Persons Deprived of Liberty (PDLs), Indigenous People, and Non-Literate Adults. Ten programs implementers assigned to teach these groups of learners were purposively chosen as key informants. Data were obtained from the interviews and discussions with the groups. Data were thematically analyzed based on Braun and Clarke (2006) six-step stages for qualitative data. Results revealed that the face-to-face is the main instructional modality employed by the ALS programs implementers across three groups. It is aided by the use of radio and modern and traditional technologies. Home visitation is also conducted. Overall, it can be categorically claimed that the manner by which instruction is delivered in the ALS is responsive in addressing learners' various needs given their circumstances.

**Key Words:** Flexible Learning Strategies, Instructional Modalities, Learners' Diversity.

**1. INTRODUCTION**

The Alternative Learning System (ALS) is the Philippine blueprint to afford basic education services to the Filipinos who are out of school grounds. This is likewise the country's fulfillment to its commitment to realize various international pledges such as those mandated in the Education for All (EFA), Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), and, the most recent Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to make education services within reach by the Filipino people.

In RA 9155, ALS is defined as a parallel learning system to that of the country's formal education system for basic education. ALS program offerings intend to cater to the educational needs of the Out of School Youths (OSYs), Persons Deprived of Liberty (PDLs), Indigenous Peoples (IPs), Non-Literate Adults, Persons with Disabilities, and the Muslim Migrants. It thus offers Basic Literacy, Accreditation and Equivalency (A&E) (elementary and junior high school certifications), Indigenous Peoples Education (IPEd), among others (DepEd, 2017).

Several empirical studies involving the ALS exist. These academic undertakings were focused on various topics such as those relative to programs and curriculum implementation. Pinca (2015), for example, reported that non-contextualized instructional tools, lack of instructional resources, as well as the untimely release of travel allowance are among the concerns that need immediate attention for resolution. Fernandez (2013), on the other hand, said that the proximity of the Community Learning Centers (CLCs) to the target learners needs to be looked into as well. Additionally, Abasolo (2017) averred poor choices in teaching strategies augmented by the scarcity of instructional materials such as clientele-needs-based modules

resulted in the dismal performance of the clientele in this locality to the Accreditation & Equivalency (A&E) examination.

Concerning curriculum implementation, in the context of the instruction and learning process, Labarrete (2019) assessed the reading and writing skills of a group of ALS learners in a single district learning center in a town in Leyte. For the former, the researcher reported that learners enrolled in the program generally find skills pertinent to reading specifically on inferencing, evaluating, creating, outlining, and semantic mapping challenging as challenging. The assessment for the latter, on the other hand, concentrated on how it is taught, the learners' ability to express ideas in written format, and the programs implementers and learners concerns about its implementation. Findings revealed that while its current pedagogic practices remain commendable, there is still a need to adopt novel measures such as the principles contained in the scaffolding theory and that of the Outcomes Based Teaching and Learning in order to effect change in the learners' performance of this macro language skill in the classroom and beyond. The researcher recommended that instructional practices for both be revisited.

While studies in the ALS abound, none is attuned to how instruction is delivered given its unique learning environment. With this contestation, this study then investigates the modalities employed by the ALS programs implementers in teaching learners mainstreamed in the programs for the Persons Deprived of Liberty (PDLs), the Indigenous Peoples, and Non-Literate Adults.

## 2. METHODS

### Sampling

This study utilized multiple case study design. The cases include the PDLs, Indigenous Peoples Education (IPEd), and Non-Literate Adults. Ten programs implementers assigned to teach across three cases were purposively chosen as respondents. Of these informants, six were assigned to teach the PDLs, two for the IPs, and two for the Non-Literate Adults. The PDLs make use of the Multipurpose Halls of the Leyte Regional Prison (LRP), Leyte Provincial Jail (LPJ), and the Bureau of Jail Management and Penology (LRP) while instruction for the IPs is facilitated in IPs Learning Centers in the municipality of Bato and Isabel. Meanwhile, the programs implementers for Non-Literate Adults usually visit the residences of their learners and make their residences centers for teaching. In this study, the Non-Literate Adults in the town of Barugo. All programs implementers taken as respondents for this study are teacher education graduates and had been an ALS teacher for over five years. A letter detailing the study's nature, scope, and purpose approved by the Schools Division Superintendent of the Leyte Division was relayed to the pre-identified informants. Their consent to participate were sought and were also assured of utmost data confidentiality.

### Data Collection procedure and analyzes

Data in this study were collected and analyzed following the six-step stages for qualitative data analyses suggested by Braun and Clarke (2006). First, immersing oneself in the data. Video recorded interviews and Focus Group Discussions (FGD) were repeatedly played to get an in-

depth and holistic perspective as to the modalities of learning employed by the program implementers across three cases. These were done for initial code generation and determine codes and patterns. Dominant codes were noted for further analyses. Second, generating initial codes. Several initial codes were generated taken from the meanings and patterns based on the video recorded interviews and FGDs conducted involving the programs implementers. Third, themesearching. All themes that have emerged thrice from the codes generated in the second stage were taken as a theme. Fourth, Reviewing themes. The themes listed in the third stage were further filtered, reviewed, and eventually refined to ensure that clear and coherent data within themes and distinct boundaries between them are met. Then, Defining and naming themes. The focal idea of each of the themes included was identified, named, and discussed. Finally, findings from the analyses made were reported.

### **Ethical considerations**

Consent of the key informants for this study was sought and that the nature and purpose of the study were deliberately explained. They were also assured of data confidentiality.

### **3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS**

The programs implementers across three cases were asked this question: (1) *What modalities do you employ to facilitate instruction? Provide a brief description.* This question was asked to elicit information leading to the modalities they use specific for the group of ALS learners they are teaching. Herewith are some of the interview statements given by the respondents:

#### **The Case of the PDLs:**

....” *Makuri gud Sir. Waray kami iba na choice kundi kumahi la center, I kay deri man ini hira pwede makagawas ha prisonhan...hahahahahahahaha. haroy Ginoo... akon tawa. Sorry la Sir. So ito na imu pakiana Sir, makasiring ako na pirmi face-to-face encounter. Danay gad nagamit kami hin laptop ngan iba pa naa kaparehas na gadgets pero kaurugan gud mga manila paper...cartolina...akon gin gagamit kay makuri makasulod mga gadgets nganhi ha facility nganhi ha Palo Provincial Jail”* [ It is difficult Sir. We don't have other choices but to report to the center because our learners are not allowed to out of the prison facility...laughter...paused...Oh Lord forgive me. My apologies Sir. So, going back to the question Sir, I can say that the modality is always face-to-face encounters with our learners. Sometimes we use laptops and other similar gadgets but most of the time we use manila paper...Carolina...because it's difficult to enter gadgets here] (PDL, Program implementer, Respondent 1).

....” *Kaulangan gud namon sumulod ha learning center ngan umatubang ha amon mga learners Sir. Tapos nagamit ako hin modules na gin hatag amonn han Division Office. Gin susupportahan nala ini nakon hin traditional technologies sugad hin manila paper...cartolina...dioramas... ngan iba pa”* [ We need to report to the center and face our learners, Sir. I use the modules that were given to us by the Division Office. I support this by

using traditional technologies such as the manila paper.... Cartolinas...dioramas and the likes as teaching aids]. (PDL, Program implementer, Respondent 3).

....” *I thought that your question Sir will be difficult. Anyway, I actually face my learners in teaching them because they are not allowed to go out. In teaching them I am using the many modules given to us by our District Coordinator. We are also lucky here in LRP because we are given school supplies by the management. Actually, the people here are all friendly to us implementers. Sometimes also I use laptop but not often*” (PDL, Program implementer, Respondent 4).

.....” *Well, good afternoon Sir. First of all, let me tell you that it is for the first time that I will take part in a study of this kind. Obviously, the modality that we use here in DSWD controlled facility in Tanauan is the face-to-face. This facility Sir is very friendly to us. Although we are allowed to use you know high ends educational technologies, I sometimes just accustom myself in using the modules and the display boards. Most of the times I also prepare visuals aids using the manila paper and cartolinas*” (PDL, Program implementer, Respondent 5).

.....” *Damo nga salamat Sir Rufo han imu pagbisita. Nalilipay gud ako kun mayda nakanhi pag usyuso pinaagi hin pag research ngahi ha amon center kay nakakaparayaw akon amon mga achievements dinhi. Kumo ALS program implementer ha BJMP-Carigara, akon masisiring na an modality na amon ginagamit amo an pag atubhang gud han amon mga learners. waray iba.. Ini an pamaagi nakun para makagtutdo hini namon mga learners’ para hini nga grupo. Kun nakikig atubang ako akon mga learners nagamit akon chalkboard of course kay adto man kami ha multi-purpose hall. Naghihimo ako mga visual aids gamit an manila paper...display board...bulletin board...ngan sympre an modules na gin panhatag ha amon tikang ha Division Office*” [ Thank you very much, Sir Rufo, for visiting me. I am extremely happy if somebody comes to our center to conduct a research study because I can present all my achievements here. As an ALS implementer in Carigara-BJMP, I can say that the modality that I use is to have an actual encounter with my learners. I use this strategy so that I can deliver instruction to my learners for this group. Whenever I face my learners, I use chalkboard of course because I recite my lesson here in the multi-purpose hall. I also create visual aids using the manila paper...and also I use display board, bulletin board, and of course the modules handed to us by the Division Office] (PDL, Program implementer, Respondent 6).

...Well, it is a face-to-face modality Sir. We also use here in DSWD Home for Girls the modules and we prepare our lessons using the many traditional technologies” (PDL, Program implementer, Respondent 5).

The informants’ voices represented by their usage of phrases across interview statements such as “to report to the center because our learners are not allowed to out of the prison facility”, (PDL, Program implementer, Respondent 1); “to report to the center and face our learners Sir”, (PDL, Program implementer, Respondent 2); “I face my learners in teaching them because they are not allowed to go out” (PDL, Program implementer, Respondent 4) ; and “to have an actual encounter with my learners” (PDL, Program implementer, Respondent 5)

imply that the PDL program implementers engage themselves in a face-to-face modality in facilitating instruction. The modality is supported by the use of traditional technologies. This modality is illustrated by Laurente and Azores, in a personal interview conducted on (November 24, 2019) as

*....” a teacher reporting to a regular classroom and uses varied traditional technologies like manila paper, cartolinas etc. to discuss a lesson in whatever subject. We use this modality in implementing the PDLs as no gadget policy of the prisons cells is strictly imposed”.*

Kempis and Cabrera, on the other hand, also in a personal interview in (December 16, 2019) likewise said...

*....” well, it’s an instructional delivery similar to what the teachers in the formal schools are doing...but...the only difference is ours are prison facilities”*

### **The Case of the IPs:**

*...” Hello Sir Rufo. Thank you for considering me as one of your respondents. I am very happy that you came. The modality is face-to-face. Here in Bato we have a number of technologies to choose from when delivering instruction. The IPs and I are very lucky because we have very supportive LGU and the Edmund-Rice Ministries, an NGO base in the nearby City of Maasin who have donated all the needed facilities just to educate the Sama-Badjaos here. As you can see, we have a gigantic TV set, overhead projector, laptops, white screens. I am also proud to inform you sir that my learners are very active and participative because they know that they have to cope with the “civilians” as they call them or the common people in the barangay who are not members of their tribes. So, whenever I recite classes here...I make sure to come every day and face them. You know there are already a number of them, the Sama-Badjaos, who are already employed after graduating from A&E. We have one who is already working at the City Hall of Maasin. Many of the women are already employed in the market because they can already read and write. Many do not beg on the streets anymore. So somehow Sir, na i transform na jud naku na sila [somehow sir I was able to transform them]. I am very proud of their achievements. I think that you have been surprised” (IPEd, Program Implementer, Respondent 1).*

*... “Thank you Sir. I hope that you were able to see the reality of teaching the IPs here in our town. Actually Sir, I have a problem with their attendance because my learners will come sometimes they are absent. Yung pong nilakad natin na napakalayo yun po ang nilalakad ko three times a week para makarating po dito sa aming mga learners. Ang tulay didto sir ay binabaha during high tide kaya made in bamboo lang. Kami dito sa Isabel medyo malayo po talaga doon sa Bato na mga IPs. Pero parehas lang sila ng tribu at mag kakamag anak sila Sir. Wala kami TV pero may sarili akong laptop. So, I personally come to teach using my laptop. Madali naman silang turuan Sir kasi punctual sila and purposeful” [Thank you Sir. I hope that you were able to see the reality of teaching the IPs here in our town. Sir, I have a problem with their attendance because my learners will come sometimes they are absent. The kilometers long that we had walked is what I also walk three times a week to reach my learners. The bridge is made of a bamboo rift because during high tide it is flooded. Here in Isabel Sir, I can say that we*

are not that progressive as compared to Bato IP learners. But they are the same tribe...they are cousins. We do not have a TV set here but I have a personal laptop. So, I come to teach using my laptop. They easily learn Sir because they are punctual and purposeful] (IPEd, Program Implementer, Respondent 2).

The voices of the IPs-program implementers echoed through these phrases *to come every day and face them* (IPEd, Program Implementer, Respondent 1) and *personally come to teach* (IPEd-SITE<sub>2</sub>VR<sub>2</sub>,) along with these word groups *gigantic TV set, overhead projector, laptops, white screens* (IPEd-SITE<sub>1</sub>VR<sub>1</sub>) and *teach using my laptop* (IPEd, Program Implementer, Respondent 2) suggest that instruction is likewise facilitated by the programs implementers for this learners' group in a face-to-face manner supported by modern technologies.

An IPs-implementer narrated.....

...” *You know Sir, whenever I report to the class, I would let my learners watch the educational shows already downloaded in the computer given to us by the Edmund-Rice Ministries. Tuwang-tuwan naman ang aking mga learners [ My learners are so happy]. I will allow them to sing using the Karaoke because they wanted to do what the “civilians” or the people in the barangay are doing. I believe that it is already a way of learning...so...so... hinahayaan ko na lang sila [ I believe that it is already a way of learning so I just let them do it]. Coming to class and seeing them is a big deal them to them. So, I always make sure that I attend and personally engage with them daily* (Salilin, M.R., personal interview, December 7, 2019).

### **The Case of Non-Literate Adults:**

..... *“You know Sir. The nature of the learners that we have really will compel the teacher to face them. I do not see anything more important as an ALS teacher than to conduct my lesson that way. Visiting them in their homes really matters”* (Non-Literate Adult Program Implementer, Respondent 1).

..... *“I use the traditional technologies and the module Sir Rufo. You know my learners since they are adults and busy home...if you do not personally visit them in their homes then nothing will happen”* (Non-Literate Adult Program Implementer, Respondent 2).

..... *“I personally go to their home and teach in front of them Sir. I use module and visual aids written in manila paper...cartolinas...or sometimes the cartons of cigarettes and the used calendar”* (Non-Literate Adult Program Implementer, Respondent 1).

... *“I personally go to their homes because you know Sir they are living island-barangays...so you have to see them always.”* (Non-Literate Adult Program Implementer, Respondent 2).

...”*I made them feel they are very important to me so I visit their home and personally teach them. You know, my presence matters to my adult learners Sir.* (Non-Literate Adult Program Implementer, Respondent 1).

The constant resurfacing of the voices of the program implementers like *“visiting them in their homes really matters”* (Non-Literate Adult Program Implementer, Respondent 1);

*personally visit them in their homes then nothing will happen”* (Non-Literate Adult Program Implementer, Respondent 2); *“personally go to their home and teach in front of them”* (Non-Literate Adult Program Implementer, Respondent 1); *“personally go to their homes because you know Sir they are living island-barangays...so you have to see them always.”* (Non-Literate Adult Program Implementer, Respondent 2) and *I visit their homes and personally teach them”* (Non-Literate Adult Program Implementer, Respondent 1) alongside *“traditional technologies and the module”*(Non-Literate Adult Program Implementer, Respondent 1); and *“I use module and visual aids written in manila paper...cartolinas...or sometimes the cartons of cigarettes and the used calendar”* (Non-Literate Adult Program Implementer, Respondent 1) all point to a conception that the Non-Literate program implementers use the face-to-face modality in lesson recital that is aided by traditional technologies.

The program implementers said...

*.....”this instructional modality means visiting the respective residences of our adult learners. In this, we implementers need to wait for our earners after they are done doing their farm chores and other forms of economic activities”* (Macalalag, M., and Geraldo, J., personal interview, December 12, 2019).

#### 4. CONCLUSIONS

Results of the findings suggest that the face-to-face is the main modality employed by the programs implementers across three groups of learners. This instructional delivery modality is aided by using modern and traditional technologies as well as a radio. Home visitation is likewise conducted. This modality is described by the programs implementers across cases as a typical classroom-type of delivering instruction in which the ALS programs implementers reports to the community learning centers and recite the lessons in front of the intended learners. The lessons recitals are aided by modern educational technologies including computers, laptops, white screen, karaoke, TV sets, projectors, standalone modules, and the Internet. It thus makes it comparable to a typical lesson delivery employed by the learning facilitators in the formal schools across content courses and grade levels who use similar technologies for instruction.

The use of various instructional support in facilitating instruction in the ALS is an imminent manifestation of the fact that the ALS programs implementers have genuinely and creatively sought ways to deliver a customized and meaningful learning experience to their learners. It is likewise suggestive of the true meaning of alternative education. Historically, Alternative Education or Alternative High School has its roots in secondary schools in the USA opened to the vulnerable youths who failed in traditional schools. This type of education is linked to "disengaged and uninterested" learners, thus, the impression that the programs are of poor quality. Anything that is non-traditional schooling is considered as alternative education. Its common attributes include having flexible schedules, smaller teacher-student ratios, and modified curricula (Aron, 2006). According to Kim and Taylor (2008), Alternative education programs mushroomed in the mid-90" as a mechanism to address the learning needs of children and youths who discontinued their studies in regular schools. These learners come from various social classes to include the out-of-school youth, children with special needs, and even adults. Raywid (1994) proposed a three-type typology of alternative education based on their programs'

goals. Class one is called "popular innovation" or "true educational alternatives" as because they metamorphosed the organizational, administrative, and pedagogical approach of the entire school to bring about an interesting environment and an array of alternatives for youth at risk or potential school leavers. Class two is the "last chance" program that concentrates on behavior modification for chronically disruptive likened to "soft jails." The third class is dedicated to students who need temporary remediation or rehabilitation to address academic, social, emotional issues.

Additionally, this modality and various tools are likewise in consonance to the UNESCO's Flexible Learning Strategies (FLS). In the agency's digital library, FLS is defined as an umbrella term synonymous with multifarious alternative educational programs aimed at the most marginalized Out of School Children (OOSC). FLS represents a deviation from a fractional approach to the provision of education for the educationally excluded towards more systematic and flexible interventions designed to match the needs and circumstances of OOSC. Its main thrust is to ensure that, regardless of mode, duration, and location or whether delivered in a formal or non-formal system, excluded children can acquire basic literacy and numeracy skills. Additionally, FLS will provide OOSC with the competencies and life skills required to live safe and dignified lives. FLS is to put inclusive education into practice. It is characterized as being: 1) reaching the Unreached; 2) equity & Inclusivity; 3) equivalency; 4) intensive quality learning; and 5) global citizenship and lifelong learning (UNESCO, 2015).

The DepEd-ALS is a realization of the government's commitment to both domestic and international statutory pledges contained in RA 9155 or the Government of Basic Education Act of 2001 and the UNESCO-led program Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) specifically goal four respectively. Both compel the state to provide an alternative viable mode of delivering education as a mechanism to ensure that basic education is delivered and reached by all especially to all those deprived of economic resources, forced to discontinue their studies due to various life circumstances and the deprived, depressed, and underserved sectors such as the PDLs, IPs, and Non-Literate Adults.

## 5. RECOMMENDATIONS

This study concentrated on three groups of learners enrolled in various ALS programs. Given this, the results obtained from this empirical undertaking may not be suggestive of a holistic picture as regards how instruction is facilitated in the field. As such, a parallel study involving other groups of learners such as the Persons with Disabilities (PWDs), Education and Skills Trainings, and even other IPs who dwell in the region who are being served by other ALS programs implementers may be conducted. In this way, a wider picture relative to modalities employed by them may be reported. Additionally, this may be extended to other divisions in the region. In this way, other modalities unreported from this academic undertaking may be reported to the stakeholders especially to those with the intention to become ALS learning facilitators or even those already in the service.



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