



English Curriculum Reform in the Philippines: Opportunities and Challenges of the English Teachers

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ABSTRACT

This study evaluates the opportunities and challenges of English Teachers during the preparations and implementation of Language of Arts and Multiliteracies Curriculum (LAMC) as New English Curriculum. The Quantitative Descriptive method was used in the study. Subsequently, simple random sampling technique was utilized in choosing the respondents, and data were obtained through surveys and a researchers-made questionnaire to assess and evaluate the status of the teachers upon the imposition of the curriculum. A total of 32 English Teachers who participated in the study, they were English teachers from different public schools in Minglanilla, Cebu. The data gathered was analyzed through frequency and percentage, results revealed that the curriculum is facilitated conventionally. Also, teachers claimed that it brought more opportunities than challenges. However, some associated factors aggravated by lack of teaching materials, unclear knowledge base of students, unequal opportunity of seminars and trainings amongst teachers are the core concerns pertinent to the curriculum implementation. Thus, for people to realize the change of educational system, it is necessary that ideas and needs should emerge wherein the former system is no longer adequate. *Keywords:* English curriculum, curriculum, opportunities, challenges, English Teachers, Philippines

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INTRODUCTION

English nowadays has made its way in becoming the most functional language in the entire world. This has been known as an international language and many people are using it in different major aspects like in the fields of businesses, medicines, infrastructures, and education. In the field of education a lot of English Teachers who have contributed in inculcating knowledge about English to the Filipinos. These English Teachers are Professional Teachers who took English as their major and continues to do their passion as public school teachers. Also, curriculum plays a significant role in education. It comprises the lessons and academic content that needs to be taught to learners in a specific program or course, an example of it is the English

curriculum. As the educational system revolves, the curriculum needs to be modified. English is more than just a language, it plays a vital role in different aspects in the world. Thus, the Philippine government strengthen its current English Curriculum. Language Arts and Multiliteracies Curriculum (LAMC) is the response of this academic needs and its purpose is to produce a competent English Language speakers in the different fields of interests.

There has been a great deal of research on curriculum review and curriculum enhancement to continually address the issues in developing the language competencies and academic achievement of the Filipinos. For various reasons upon the implementation of the new enhanced curriculum, there are still reports that teachers are struggling and confused in remodeling their lessons due to this enhancement that have been made in the curriculum (Pazzibugan, 2013; Valerio, 2015). Some of the notable issues, as mentioned by Madrunio, Martin & Plata (2016) on the article in English Language Education in the Philippines: Policies, Problems, and Prospects, including the medium of instruction to use, the alignment of the educational system's vision, content standards and instruction especially in basic education, the absence of a clear and coherent assessment framework, the effectiveness of the top-down processing, and the challenges in the implementation of the K-12 in the country. The absence of precision and accuracy of this new education program are the reasons for these challenges. An educator must fully understand the basic concept of the curriculum and its pedagogical before they can effectively implement it (Rahman and Hardman 2014; Barrot, 2018). It is also present in the study of (Shilling, 2013) that deals with the challenges of the educators during the process of the curriculum implementation and how do the educators overcome these challenges and problems.

The studies mentioned above focuses more on the challenges that the teachers in our country have encountered upon the enhancement of the curriculum. Most of our public teachers have encountered the same challenges for they follow the same curriculum but it is not all teachers in our country is privileged to adopt in this enhancement of our curriculum because of some instances in their community. As the use of English is



becoming crucial in our society today, there is really a need of the English curriculum to be enhanced, upon enhancement there is really a need of the English teachers to adopt on this enhancement. Our study does not only focus on the challenges that public school English teachers in Minglanilla, Cebu have encountered but also the opportunities that this enhancement in our curriculum have brought to them during the implementation and in the preparation of the curriculum.

This study highlights the opportunities and the challenges of the English Teachers during the preparation and the utilization of this new education program. The result of this investigation will give potential benefits for the new generation of students and teachers.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVE

The objective of the study is to know the different challenges and opportunities that the public school English teachers in Minglanilla, Cebu experienced during the preparation and utilization of this new curriculum.

METHODOLOGY

Design

This research used the quantitative descriptive method, which investigated teachers' opportunities and challenges in the implementation of the Language Arts and Multiliteracies Curriculum. As for Dulock (1993) that descriptive design is the systematic facts and characteristics of a certain population or area of interest, it also describes and determines what exist and which something occurs to nature.

Environment

The study was conducted in different public schools in the town of Minglanilla, Cebu. Minglanilla is a first class municipality that belongs in the first district in the province of Cebu. It is composed of 19 barangays, has a total land area of 65.60 square kilometres and has a total population of 132, 135 as of time being.

Respondents and Sampling Technique

The respondents of the study are English teachers in different public schools in Minglanilla, Cebu. There are 32 respondents in this study and they are identified through simple random sampling technique. The respondents were given right to participate in the study and were allowed to cancel their participation if they want to.

Tool

The tool that was used in the study is researchers-made questionnaire. The questionnaire was validated by content experts who have a specialization in English subject and also gone to reliability testing outside the research environment to ensure the affectivity of the tool.

Data Gathering Procedures

Upon the data gathering, the researchers sent consents to the authorities that are involved in the study and gained their approval to conduct data gathering. A consent was attached in the questionnaire. The researchers clearly explained to the respondents that their participation must be voluntary and they are allowed to withdraw their participation if they want to.

Data Analysis

The data gathered was then analyzed using the statistical treatment percentage and frequency. This was used on how many teachers responded in each bracket and its equivalent to the percentage.

Ethical Considerations

The researchers conducted a survey concerning the respondents as the subject of the study and their protection regulations. The conducted study was beneficial for the respondents, students, researchers, future researchers, research environment and stakeholders. The researchers provided consents, and whenever a respondent refused to answer the survey questionnaire, their decision was then respected to avoid misconceptions and harm. The respondents were informed that the survey is in voluntary condition and there were no deterrent for those who participated for there was no oppression during the process. The conducted study gave fair and equal treatment in order to avoid conflict and upon selecting the respondents, it was randomized to have the fairness innate in the study. All of data gathered were coded to restrict the personal information and remained with utmost confidentiality in the time of processing.

RESULTS

Opportunities for the new curriculum

Table 1 displays the implementation of the new English curriculum known as the Language Arts and Multiliteracies Curriculum (LAMC). Many of the teachers claimed that they experienced these opportunities along with the implementation of the new revised English Curriculum. Furthermore, this opportunity can help the teachers grow professionally for the betterment of everybody.

**Table 1***Opportunities for the new curriculum*

Components	Always		Sometimes		Often		Rarely	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
Increased Professionalism	22	73.33	8	26.66	2	6.66	0	0
Commitment Growth	21	70	9	30	2	6.66	0	0
Opportunity for Innovation and Creation	21	70	10	33.33	1	3.33	0	0
Opportunity for students' development and engagement	23	76.66	9	30	0	0	0	0
Professional Development Workshops	17	56.66	10	33.33	5	16.66	0	0

Note. n=32

The tabular values have shown that Opportunity for students' development and engagement got the highest rate of 76.66%. Second, Increased Professionalism recorded 73.33% of the teachers, this percentage really approves that the new curriculum increases their abilities as a teacher. Commitment Growth and Opportunity for Innovation and Creation both tied with 70% while Professional Development Workshops got 56.66%. In general, most of the teachers placed on record on the first and second bracket of the scale.

Challenges of the new curriculum

In this part wherein the teachers encountered challenges, two most emerging problem that respondents believed to be the most challenging part in the integration of Language Arts and Multiliteracies Curriculum (LAMC).

Table 2*Challenges of the new curriculum*

Components	Always		Sometimes		Often		Rarely	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
Additional workload	14	46.66	16	53.33	2	6.66	0	0
Confusion on how to teach the enhanced curriculum	11	36.66	19	63.33	2	6.66	0	0
An unclear knowledge base of the students	15	50	22	73.33	6	20	0	0
Student's behavior (not willing to participate)	13	43.33	25	83.33	3	10	1	3.33
Parent's behavior (not willing to support the program)	11	36.66	13	43.33	4	13.33	4	13.33
Lack of materials	15	50	12	40	3	10	2	20

Note. n=32

The second table revealed the top two challenges both acquired 50% are the Lack of teaching materials and the Unclear knowledge base of students. It is then followed with 46.66% from the additional workload of teachers. 43.33% considered Student's behavior (not willing to participate) as one of the emerging challenges. Moreover, 36.66% of the teachers deemed the challenges Confusion on how to teach the enhanced curriculum and Parent's behavior (not willing to support the program) respectively.

**Experience during the preparation phase**

The table 3 elaborates the idea of teachers upon preparing for the proper conduct of Language Arts and Multiliteracies Curriculum (LAMC). It is incorporated with various tasks and pre-works before proceeding to the major bullet.

Table 3*Experience during the preparation phase*

Components	Always		Sometimes		Often		Rarely	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
Seminars advocacy about this enhanced curriculum	16	53.33	8	26.66	5	16.66	3	10
Appropriate training on content	14	46.66	9	30	3	10	6	20
Receiving primer/hand-outs	16	53.33	10	33.33	4	13.33	2	6.66
Preparation of instructional materials	17	56.66	10	33.33	2	6.66	3	10

Note. n=32

The results have shown that the Preparation of instructional materials got the highest percentage of 56.66%. Both Seminars' advocacy about this enhanced curriculum and Receiving primer/hand-outs got the percentage of 53.33%. The lowest percentage of 46.66% comes from Appropriate training on content.

Experience during the implementation phase

In this part, all of the possible experiences of teachers are exposed to things that they do during the phase. It is where the major process takes in.

Table 4*Experience during the implementation phase*

Components	Always		Sometimes		Often		Rarely	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
Training in methodology	15	50	11	36.66	0	0	6	20
Training in assessing students outcome	16	53.33	11	36.66	1	3.33	5	16.66
Time for revisiting the teaching-learning process	13	43.33	12	40	1	3.33	5	16.66
Development of the knowledge and skills to teach the new English Curriculum	11	36.66	15	50	2	6.66	4	13.33

Note. n=32

The results mentioned above stated that Training in assessing students' outcomes gained 53.33%. Trainings in methodology got the percentage of 50%. 43.33% of the teachers concerted on Time for revising the teaching-learning process while the Development of the knowledge and skills to teach the new English Curriculum got the lowest percentage of 36.66%.

DISCUSSIONS

This reform in the English Curriculum has brought opportunities for them to grow professionally and personally. Most of the teachers who participated in the study have encountered different opportunities that could be useful for them as this curriculum in English is established. Anning (1994) stated in her study that teachers and children demonstrate opportunities based on their capabilities, class evaluation and utilization of such



tools in particular. This connects to the highest percentage of results from the table, holistic development and engagement made it vulnerable not just for the benefit of the teachers, but also for the students involved. On the other hand, Sandars (2012) mentioned that the wide range of responsibility of a teacher maximizes on both verbal teaching and engaging into variety of virtual devices. Thus, this points the generalization that teachers exhibit skills on his/her growth, innovative development, learning through workshops and a sense of professionalism on the field. In the implementation of a reform in a curriculum, it is not really easy for teachers to adopt in the enhancement drastically but they will experience different opportunities that will help them be developed and adopt gradually in the reform of the curriculum.

As the reform in the English Curriculum is implemented by the government, there are really different challenges that teachers have faced. Most of the teachers who responded in the study really encountered the same challenges, majority of them sees that the main challenges in this reform in English curriculum are the lack of teaching materials and the unclear knowledge base of the students. According to Right (2018), teaching materials are used to deliver instruction and produce students' understanding about the topics. Hence, it is one of the major needs in order to facilitate the teaching and learning process. When students enter a more advance subjects in their curriculum, most of them lack important prior knowledge and skills which signify unclear knowledge base. Meanwhile, Hernando-Malipot (2018) stated that additional workloads of the teachers are a contributor to their high-stress level. This triggers the present mind-set of teachers in which they get stress far way easily that brought them in disciplining the students in a contrary manner. As the reform of the curriculum happens, teachers could not really avoid some challenges that they may encounter as they adopt in this reform. These challenges might brought burden to the teachers but this will also serve as a lesson for them to learn, grow and adopt in this enhancement in the curriculum for these challenges will be overcame by the teachers as they experience and utilized the enhanced curriculum.

In the study of Hoy and Spero (2005), they mentioned the influences of teachers during teaching and prior to teaching. Their experiences plays a vital role where it made significant that the changes they are having multiplies to their existing experiences. Although the highest percentage exposed that most of the teachers are always

prepared in their instructional materials, the remaining percentages takes into account the factor that teachers experience during preparation phase primarily falls on not given enough opportunities to enhance their skills and learnings especially teachers in the private school and some of the teachers did not experience some seminars about the Language Arts and Multiliteracies Curriculum (LAMC). Lastly, teachers experience some seminars but not the appropriate training of its content. When planning a lesson, a teacher should be creative enough in coming up with a lesson that both give opportunities not only for the student but also for the teacher and it has to be flexible to cater to the existing ideas and skills. Therefore, teachers must master their subject area even though their seminars and training are not enough for them to produce productive students.

The said curriculum is concerned with prioritizing students' consequences and offshoots in all aspects. In the study of Taole (2015), he asserted that the curriculum implementation is affected with leadership, unavailability of resources and by non-development subjects. It is in need for teachers to understand the context, carrying the duties and to accept reforms as well. In connection to the study, teachers are well prepared for the implementation of the new curriculum which they will develop and master their skills and abilities for the teaching-learning strategy. Teachers are open for revision in coping the new planned learning for their professional growth and they can also add some spice in teaching with their enhanced strategies and techniques as they apply this new curriculum and together with the 21st century teaching. Although the lowest percentage shown that teachers are not given some trainings about the new English Curriculum, Hariss and Sass (2011) proclaimed that the productivity of the teachers have been a major factor of developing his/her professional skill. Thus, these affect the holistic growth of a teacher in both personal and professional attributes that is why their skills and knowledge in teaching English subject does not meet the standards of the new curriculum.

CONCLUSION

Based on the pertinent findings of the study, the researchers concluded that some English teachers met some challenges during the preparation and implementation phases in which they are given less emphasis at some point. Most of the teachers claimed that the enhancement of the English Curriculum brought more opportunities than challenges as it open platforms for the teachers' part. This study is in line with Durkheim's



Theory on Educational Change which puts the Language Arts and Multiliteracies Curriculum (LAMC) into vital because it is the key to enhancing the quality of our educational system.

RECOMMENDATION

The following recommendations are formulated based on the findings of the study:

1. As a major stakeholder in the Enhancement of Basic Education Curriculum, teachers thereof must be directly involved in the curriculum revision process for them to be able to explore new knowledge and skills which is somehow useful in implementing the new curriculum.

Also, they feel more comfortable knowing the fact that they are engaged in curriculum enhancement.

2. Teachers' involvement is undeniably vital so therefore should be given more opportunities in terms of relevant training and seminars to have a clearer perspective about the enhancement program.
3. As one of the factors of Educational Change, students must give more exposure and experiences to be motivated to participate and mingle with others to gain learning.
4. Enough amounts of instructional materials should be put into consideration to successfully implement the curriculum.

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