

Lived Experiences of Selected K-12 Teachers During the Shift of Curriculum

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Abstract— In 2013, Former President Benigno Aquino III approved the K-12 Curriculum. With the implementation of the new curriculum designs, the teachers who are the frontliners of the education system are the most affected. In this study, I focus on the lived-experiences of 3 teachers who have been teaching since the old curriculum.

It is found out that the change in curriculum design is not as easy as it seems. From the semi-structured interviews, three general themes about the experiences of the participants arose: (a) the participants are optimistic about the contents of the new curriculum finding out that it is generally good in context; (b) they seemed to be not in favor of the Outcomes based approach since it is now an excuse of the students for passing and is very student centric and lastly; (c) they are confident that they are already done with coping with the changes brought by the curriculum reforms.

Keywords— Curriculum Reforms, Expert Teachers, K-12, Public Schools, Curriculum

I. INTRODUCTION

Teachers are so-called the implementers of the curriculum. The department of education will decide on the Curriculum design and the teachers, no matter how, will implement and teach on how they are asked to do. But upon teaching for a long time, and being used to with a curriculum design, the passing of time will require a change in curriculum to advance with the ever-changing needs of the world.

In May 15, 2013, then president Benigno Aquino III approved Republic Act 10533 or An Act Enhancing the Philippine Basic Education System by Strengthening its Curriculum and increasing the number of years for basic education, appropriating funds therefor and for other office, most commonly known as the Enhanced Basic Education Act of 2013.

With the goal of achieving the same educational standard as of our neighboring countries, this act adds two more years from the former 10-year basic education system and a universal kinder.

Different opinions regarding the new curriculum design came out even before the implementation has started

In this light, I would like to answer, but not limited to the following questions: (1) What are the problems encountered during the shift in curriculum? (2) How did the teacher cope with such changes? (3) What are their insights regarding different features of the new curriculum? (4) How did the school/DepEd help with the shift in curriculum?

The Veteran Teachers

In a paper written by Tsui in 2009, she referred Successful Veteran teachers as expert teachers. According to her studies, three dimensions differentiate expert to non-expert teachers, these are (a) their ability to assimilate teacher knowledge and teacher act; (b) teacher's response to the context of teaching; and (c) their ability to participate in reflective and conscious talks.

Waynik in 2013 describes that expert teachers must teach in a way that best suits their students so that they can accommodate the needs of their students.

Experiences of Teachers from Foreign Countries about Curriculum Reforms

Changes in the curriculum is not only happening in the Philippines. Government tends to pursue researches on how the quality of their country in terms of different aspects would improve. Most of them believes that it must start in the training grounds, the school. It turns out that different countries take reforms in their educational differently as well.

According to Osborne and Drillon (2008) as stated in Dillon (2009)'s study on Scientific Literacy, Science Teaching is a culture that is passed on to generations, because of this, teachers from the Netherlands are teaching in the way of the old curriculum even the curriculum has already changed. The teachers are having a hard time switching from one curriculum to another.

In a study in China, Li (2009) states that the objective demands of new curriculum implementation gives the most pressure to teachers in the implementation of new curriculum in Guanzhou, China.

McCormick, J., Ayres, P. L., & Beechey, B. (2006), identified that the perceived stress of teachers came from the implementation of new curriculum.

McCormick, J., & Ayres, P. L. (2009), stresses that there is a negative association between teachers' self-efficacy for the new type of teaching and self-efficacy for using technology with the new curriculum.

Guo, L. (2012) identified that one of the challenges of new curriculum reform concerns the extended working hours a teacher must do to cope with the reform. Another concern is the struggle in shaping new teaching identities and the new evaluation system.

Sun (2009) explained that the more receptivity an English teacher has, the more effective the teacher is. In the same paper, she found out that the main factor for new curriculum receptivity is the practicality of the curriculum and support from outside the academe.

Li (2011) also suggest that lack of support like teacher-training which she concluded as one factor to be improved, prohibits receptivity of teachers to the new curriculum.

Augustine (2009) found out that teachers experiences during their high school days has an effect to their teaching practice. Also, he suggests that curriculum designers should consider this.

In a similar study by Ower (2017), he stated that the respondents felt trapped in the old curriculum finding it hard to implement the new one because of the features of the old curriculum.

Teachers from different countries take reform in their educational system positively but acknowledges the challenges it comes with. Common factors are identified and must be addressed to allow the smooth transition of curriculums. The most common factor is that the teachers are stressed by the extended works the new curriculum has brought to them. Problems like the materials, trainings as well as the lack of trainings brought by the new curriculum stresses the teacher

more. The more the teachers are stressed, the less efficient they become.

II. METHODOLOGY

Method

I will be using the Phenomenology approach for this study. Phenomenology is a design of inquiry where the researcher will dig deeper into the experiences of participants who has already experienced the same phenomenon (Giorgi, 2009; Moustakas, 1994). In Phenomenology, the researcher must not consider his/her beliefs as the experiences of the respondents is the focus.

Since my research will focus on the lived experiences of the respondents, the approach is the most appropriate. The focus of this study is to set light on the sentiments of tenured teachers on curricular reforms. Teachers are the front liners in the education system. They deal with the students firsthand and their experiences about the shift of the curriculum in the Philippines

Data Gathering Procedure

I will be using semi-structured interview as a data gathering procedure to capture the sentiments of the respondents. Three tenured teachers in three different schools will be respondents for the study since the design only requires 3-10 respondents (Creswell, 2014) I gathered participants teaching different subjects to make sure that the result will be based from their area of teaching only.

The interview questionnaire is composed of 8 questions that focuses on the lived-experiences and ideas of the respondents about the reform in curriculum in the Philippines. Since the type of interview is semi-structured, I was giving follow-up questions upon the need to further gather relevant data from then interviewee.

To start the data gathering procedure, I sent a letter of communications to Dr. Cecile Carandang, officer in charge, Division of City schools Caloocan city.

Participants

To ensure that the responses of the participants will not come from a single subject unit, I have chosen 3 participants from different schools and subject area. This will guarantee that the common experience of the participants is not within a single subject area only. This

will give a broader dimension to the study since it concerns the other subject area teachers as well.

Conceptual Framework

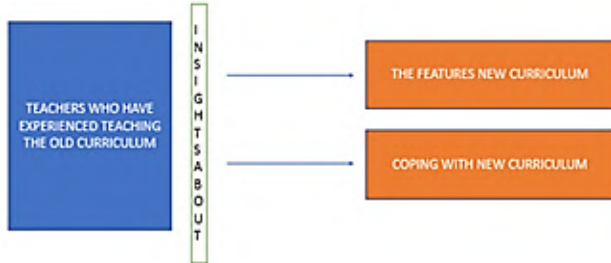


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework of the Study

As presented in the figure above, the tenured teachers will be interviewed to know their lived experiences regarding the curriculum reforms. From the interview, comes 3 themes that will also suffice the purpose of the study regarding the sentiments of teachers on curriculum changes.

III. ANALYSIS OF DATA

After the interview of the participants, responses are transcribed verbatim. The following are the answers for the statement of the problems.

1. What are the problems encountered during the shift in curriculum?

Participant A, which is a TLE teacher needs to shift from one field of TLE to another. For a long period of time, she has been teaching Drafting in 3rd Year high school and because of the new DepEd rule in Career Pathways TLE (search for an RRL), there must be a continuation of subject. She then transferred to Beauty Care which she found hard for the first 3 years of her teaching beauty care.

Participant B, which is a Filipino teacher has not specified any problems during the shift of the curriculum.

Participant C, which is a science teacher specified that students found the topics in the new curriculum harder for the students and that the students of the first batch suffered a lot.

2. How did the teacher cope with such changes?

Participant A did not specifically tell how but it seems that she really tried to study the new subject given to her. She stressed in the end that at this point, she knows the subject by heart.

Participant B does not specify how but is very confident that she had coped with the new curriculum already.

Participant C specified that she has to take all the opportunities given by her school to attend seminars in order to help her with the curriculum change.

3. What are their insights regarding different features of the new curriculum?

Participant A, B and C all agreed that the new grading system focuses on the skills of the students.

Participant A states that she noticed that the some of the students are no longer memorizing or using comprehension during class discussion. Most of the time, the students are more concerned with the performance task. With Outcomes Based Education, she has stated that the outputs are being used as a license for them to pass.

Participant B, she says that the new curriculum focuses more on the skills of the students and less on the content.

Participant C states that the students having high scores in exam have advantage than those who are fewer achieving students in the new curriculum. The OBE has a good objective but is not attainable in large classes.

4. How did the school/DepEd help with the shift in curriculum?

Both Participants A and B, shared that there are seminars conducted during the shift in curriculum. These seminars are also helping the teachers to cope with the changes in curriculum. Participant A detailed that the seminars are provided to teachers that will be teaching the new curriculum the next school year.

Participant C, which is a private school teacher only heard of seminars but is not able to attend.

General Themes

Upon reviewing the participants' responses, in the open-ended interviews, there are 3 common themes that the participants are agreeing with:

1. The new curriculum is good

Even though they are having a hard time implementing the new curriculum, they are positive that this new curriculum is good. They have still high hopes that the government is implementing a good curriculum, and it will help the students.

The goal of the new curriculum, more than to make the Philippines' education system anew is to have more opportunities for the students. That these completers can be employed right away after senior high school. That the students are already equipped with knowledge and skills that are needed to survive in the society.

2. Not in favor of the outcomes-based curriculum

It is stressed that the Outcomes-Based Curriculum focuses more on the things the students are doing inside the classroom. The more the students do activities, the higher their chances of passing as well.

It is also now an excuse for the students for passing. The students are now thinking that if they do good in the performance tasks, they will pass no matter what. They are not considering other factors like the written works and quarterly assessments as a basis anymore, they are now more focus with performance tasks.

In the Philippine setting where 60 as a class size is normal, checking and recording and other clerical works can be a burden to the teachers. It is hard to attain in large classes.

3. They have already shifted

All the participants that were asked are positive that they have already passed through the old curriculum and has already shifted to the new one. This is a good revelation since most of the literatures agree that foreign teachers are finding it hard to shift from one curriculum to another,

IV. CONCLUSIONS

Teachers in the times of curriculum reforms are having hard time to shift from the old curriculum to the new. That statement is as far as the review of related literatures is concerned. But during the conduct of the study I have concluded that:

1. The hard ships encountered by teachers during curricular reforms are concerned most of the time in the content. Since the shift of curriculum requires a change in content as well, the teachers also have to adjust from the contents they are already teaching for a long period of time to the new one.
2. There is no specific reason how the teachers cope with the curriculum reform but all of the participants are very confident that they have already coped with the curriculum change.

3. All the participants agree on the fact that the new curriculum has focused on the skills and output of the students. Their understanding of the outcomes-based education is also the same, they see OBE focusing on the outputs the students produce.
4. Efforts from the government are only felt by public school teachers. Private school teachers are having trainings with the help of publishing houses. These publishing houses are providing free seminars to schools who are buying their books.

V. RECOMMENDATIONS

These are some recommendations for the study:

1. the private school teachers may not be part of the government but they must be reached as well. Seminars and trainings must be provided as well to teachers from private sectors to make them at par with the teachers from the public.
2. Further researches for rural areas must be conducted as well. The locality is different and it is also important to test whether they have already cope with the implementation of the new curriculum.
3. To have a quantitative research on whether the teachers have already coped with the new curriculum designs. I suggest that there should be a correlation between thinking and practice
4. A revisit of the curriculum and its implementation in different schools in the Philippines.

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