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# A REVIEW OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING COURSES

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***ABSTRACT—*** *This quantitative study dealt with the implementation of the Experiential Learning Courses. It aimed to measure the intended learning outcomes and the level of engagement, the challenges and benefits derived in the implementation of Field Study Courses. A 5-point Likert scale was used to measure the intended outcomes and the level of engagement of the respondents. The results show that the level of the intended learning outcomes measured was interpreted as very much achieved, and the level of participation of all the respondents was interpreted as very much participated. The results show that when experiential learning is implemented according to its processes, the intended learning outcome will be achieved. Further, the results imply that even if there are challenges in the implementation of the field study courses, the overall implementation is still successful.*

***Keywords—*** *learning outcomes, implementation, field study courses*

## I. INTRODUCTION

The present teacher education curriculum is designed in such a way that "the curricular components are integrated. The curriculum emphasizes the interweaving of foundational, theoretical, methodological, and experiential knowledge in the various learning experiences in the curriculum." (CHED Memo. 30 s, 2004). The experiential learning component of the curriculum consists of six (6) Field Study (FS) courses and Practice Teaching. [1]

The equivalent of the Field Study courses in previous teacher education curricula is the observation course which was taken a semester before Practice Teaching. As a result, the student teacher observed the teaching-learning process in an authentic setting, not side by side, with the learning of concepts and theories, but long after the concepts and theories were learned. With the introduction of the six (6) FS courses, observation of the application of concepts and theories in an actual setting takes place along the learning of educational concepts and theories. For this reason, it is expected that FS courses are offered along with or attached to the intended theoretical courses. For purposes of integration and coordination, the FS course must be handled by the instructor who teaches the theory portion. In other words, there is only one instructor for both the theoretical aspect and the FS part. [2]

Salandanan [3] defined experiential learning as a way of acquiring knowledge or skills through direct experience. It is referred to as learning through experience and learning through discovery and exploration. Smith [4] according to him, experiential learning is either learning by yourself or experiential learning through programs structured by others. Learning from experience by yourself might be called 'nature's way of learning.' It includes learning that comes about through reflection on everyday experiences. Experiential learning by yourself includes learning that is organized by learners themselves. Emphasis is placed on the 'nature of participants'

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subjective experiences of phenomenon under the assumption that this will lead to genuine, meaningful, and long-lasting learning. Field study courses are designed to immerse students in significant learning environments to enable them to reflect on and synthesize the application of theories and principles of teaching and learning (Vega, 2008).[(5)]

Field study courses adhere to the Vygotskian principle of social construction of knowledge, that is meaningful learning and construction of knowledge will occur if learners work hands-on in relevant settings with proper guidance. Complementary to Vygotsky's theory is Albert Bandura's social learning theory. Bandura asserted that learning takes place not only through observation. Recently, the situated learning theory reiterates Vygotsky's and Bandura's views. The situated learning theory asserts that knowledge needs to be presented and in an authentic context or setting that involves social interaction and collaboration. [6] Kolb described an experiential learning cycle model that consists (1) concrete experience, (2) reflection (on the experience, (3) formation of abstract concepts, and (4) testing in a new situation. Effective learning is seen when a person progresses through a cycle of four stages: of (1) having a concrete experience followed by (2) observation and reflection on that experience, which leads to (3) the formation of abstract concepts (analysis) and generalizations (conclusions), which are then (4) used to test hypotheses in future situations, resulting in new experiences. For Kolb, learning is an integrated process, which a new experience is reflected upon where one may discover any inconsistencies between experience and understanding.[(7)] As described by Haynes [8], experiential learning is the process that involves a number of steps that offer students a hands-on, collaborative, and reflective learning experience, which helps them to fully learn new skills and knowledge. He further states that even though the learning content, the instructor, stakeholders, and the teaching-learning environment to self-reflect and apply what they have learned in another situation. Katula and Threnhauser (1999)[9] identified experiential learning as one of the most notable trends in higher education during the past thirty years. During this time, a definition for experiential learning was developed and refined.

The Experiential Learning Courses Handbook [10] authored by the Teacher Education Council of the Department of Education in 2006 provided the ELC framework, the guidelines for FS students, the course syllabi, and a bit of recommended activity sheets for students. The CHED mandates that teacher education students should be equipped with the learning experiences that will meet the standards of the learning environment in Basic Education Schools (BES). Hence, CMO 30., s., 2004 [11] sets forth the one-unit Experiential Learning Courses (ELC) known as Field Study (FS). The Experiential Learning Courses (ELC) are indispensable components of the New Teacher Education Curriculum per CMO No. 30 s., 2004. This pursuant to National Competency Based Teacher Standards (NCBTS), the core of the Teacher Education Development Program (TEDP) of the government. The ELC's is intended to provide students with actual learning experiences in which they can observe, verify, reflect on, and practice the different components of the teaching-learning process in a variety of authentic school settings. Such experiences, which are built around mentoring, will begin with field observation and will gradually intensify into participation and until students undertake practice teaching. [12]

From the time the new curriculum for Teacher Education was implemented, there several attempts at its successful implementation, when learning guides were inadequate and other instructional materials. The proliferation of workbooks in Field Study subjects vis a vis with that of other learning materials in the new curriculum has paved the way for its implementation. Lucas [13] in her book Field Study 1-6 cited the different learning outcomes each student should achieve. In every FS course, the same intended learning outcomes are

measured. This study is an attempt to determine whether the intended learning outcomes after the conduct of the Field Study are evident for each Field Study student, the level of engagement of Field Study Student, Field Study Instructor, Field Study Cooperating School, and Field Study Resource Persons, and the problems met in conducting field study courses.

Specifically, it intends to determine the level of the intended learning outcomes along exposure, participation, identification, internalization, and dissemination. It tries to gauge the level of engagement in the attainment of the intended learning outcomes by field study students, field study teachers, field study cooperating schools, and field study resource persons. Moreover, it seeks to identify the challenges and benefits derived by the field study students from their field study courses.

## II. RESEARCH METHOD

The study made used of a descriptive research. Descriptive research is a fact-finding with adequate interpretation. The descriptive study according to Sevilla [14] is a kind of study that describes the nature of a situation as it exists at the time of the study and explores the causes of a particular phenomenon. It is connected to determining the present conditions or characteristics of a research subject. It does not necessarily involve testing the hypotheses. It is often referred to as a research method that finds out "what is".

A self-made survey questionnaire was used to measure the intended learning outcomes and the level of engagement of field study students, field study instructors, field study cooperating schools and field study resource persons as to the conduct of field study courses. A questionnaire has been defined by Good [15] as a list of planned written questions related to a particular topic, with space provided for indicating their response to each question, intended for submission to a number of persons for reply; commonly used in normative survey studies and in the measurement of attitude and opinions.

After presentation in the in-house review of the college for research proposal, the researcher was advised to conduct a validity and reliability test of the self-made survey questionnaire instrument to be used. The researcher made used of a standard questionnaire to test the validity and reliability of the questionnaire. The questionnaires were distributed to the faculty members of the College of Education, who were not covered as part of the respondents. After obtaining the required validity and reliability coefficient of the questionnaire ($\alpha = 0.91$), the same was distributed to the respondents of the study: the field study students, field study instructors, field study cooperating schools, and field study resource persons. Four-hundred thirty-five respondents were selected through stratified random sampling.

A 5-point Likert scale was used to measure the level of the intended learning outcomes of the field study students and the level of engagement of the field study students, field study instructors, field study cooperating schools, and field study resource persons in the conduct of field study courses. The weighted mean was used to determine the intended learning outcomes, and the level of participation of the respondents. A "face to face" interview with the field study students was also employed to get empirical data on the challenges and benefits derived from the implementation of the field study courses.

## III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

***Level of Intended Learning Outcomes***

**Table 1:** The Level of Intended Learning Outcomes

| **Intended Learning Outcomes** | **Weighted Mean** | **Adjectival Interpretation** |
|---|---|---|
| Exposure | 4.55 | Very Much Achieved |
| Participation | 4.58 | Very Much Achieved |
| Identification | 4.56 | Very Much Achieved |
| Internalization | 4.51 | Very Much Achieved |
| Dissemination | 4.50 | Very Much Achieved |
| **Average Weighted Mean** | **4.54** | **Very Much Achieved** |

Table 1 is the level of intended learning outcomes of the Field Study Courses. It could be gleaned from the table that it was arranged hierarchically according to the degree of the intended learning outcomes. From the intended learning outcomes of the field study courses, dissemination has obtained the lowest weighted mean and participation has obtained the highest weighted mean. Dissemination is the highest level of the intended learning outcome as expected for each field study student. Apart from the six (6) field study courses, a six (6) unit Practice Teaching program is required for every Pre-Service student before they can finish the degree. Based on the results, the level of the intended learning outcomes of the field study students obtained an average weighted mean of 4.54, which is interpreted as very much achieved.

It could be noted further that all the intended learning outcomes of the students were very much achieved.

Steinaken and Bell 1979[(16)] proposed an experiential learning model that includes five steps: (1) Exposure, where you are exposed to the topic, (2) Participation, where you become physically a part of school experience, (3) Identification, where you connect with the experience and analyze it, (4) Internalization, where you begin to be affected or influenced by the experiences, (5) Dissemination, where you express and share your learnings and insights. These five also function as a taxonomy to classify the nature of specific learner responses as one goes through experiential learning experiences.

The Learning Outcome as defined in CMO 30, s, 2004, is the specification of what a student should learn as the result of a period of specified and supported study. explanatory context ... Student learning outcomes are properly defined in terms of the knowledge, skills, and abilities that a student has attained at the end (or as a result) of his or her engagement in a particular set of higher education experiences. Not all of the outcomes of college are confined to learning. It is well articulated in CMO 46, s. 2012[(17)] that outcomes based education is the main thrust of higher education institutions in the Philippines today. The outcomes provide details against which the graduates of the curriculum can be measured and facilitate the quality-assurance process . The approach of instruction is student-centered, assessment is competitive, and the classroom is where teachers facilitate and students take priority over the acquired knowledge and developed skills.

Austin [18] developed assessment activities for each student learning outcomes. Outcomes were assessed by rubrics and other by surveys. Several indirect assessment activities were also employed. Student learning outcomes

were measured to allow the university to understand the value of experiential learning where the students and faculty members are actively engaged and have the capacity to change the culture of learning in college.

The primary purpose of assessment is to validate the knowledge and skill level of a student for the benefit of the intended profession and society. (Quinn & Shurville, 2009) [19] This suggests that alignment of assessment methods with teaching strategies in experiential courses may be inhibited by a lack of understanding of experiential methods. There is little discussion in the literature on the use of traditional type testing methods in experiential learning courses and their impact on student learning outcomes. In addition, there is little discussion on the appropriate type of assessment methods in experiential learning courses and on matching the assessment method with the form of experiential learning.

***Level of Participation of Field Study Students, Field Study Cooperating Teacher, Field Study Cooperating School, and Field Study Resource Person in the implementation of Field Study Courses***

**Table 2:** Level of Participation of Field Study Students, Field Study Cooperating Teacher, Field Study Cooperating School, and Field Study Resource Person in the implementation of Field Study Courses

| **Respondents** | **Weighted Mean** | **Adjectival Interpretation** |
|---|---|---|
| Field Study Student | 4.56 | Very Much Participated |
| Field Study Teacher | 4.46 | Very Much Participated |
| Field Study Cooperating School | 4.43 | Very Much Participated |
| Field Study Resource Person | 4.35 | Very Much Participated |
| **Average Weighted Mean** | **4.45** | Very Much Participated |

The results show that, in terms of the level of participation among the different respondents, it obtained an average weighted mean of 4.45, which is interpreted as very much participated. It could be noted further that from among the respondents, field study resource persons obtained the lowest weighted mean and field study students obtained the highest weighted mean.

Students find outdoor learning activities to be realistic, interesting, and interactive, although it is not surprising that students who prefer to be indoors often prefer to avoid outdoor climatic conditions (Hudak,2003).[20] But to maximize connections with past knowledge and classroom concepts, students still need somebody to discuss those connections.

According to Carl Rogers (in Drummond, 2003)[21] experiential learning can occur when several conditions are met: there is student participation, students control and direct the learning process; activities are based upon direct interaction with nature, and self evaluation is used to assess student learning. Research supports that the notion that students benefit from spending time working and learning outside the classroom where they can apply theory and their awareness of other classroom issues. Students who engage in this type of experiential education have more positive perceptions of instruction, course content, and course structure, who better in teams and are better to apply knowledge to practical contexts. (Petersen et al., 2005)[22] Experiential education requires interaction

between teachers and students; they must both become active learners. The adaptation of roles takes time, and administrator support becomes critical if the process is to take place.

***Challenges Associated in*** the ***Implementation of Field Study Courses***

Challenges associated with the implementation of field study courses included attitude of the students garnering buy in from faculty, cooperating schools, and resource persons to undertake the process and administrative challenges.

***Attitude of the students.***

The majority of the students stated that their foremost consideration is the cost of the study trips. Other challenges on their part were their physical condition due to the long travel that they were not accustomed, the lack of preparation in some of the needed materials, lack of awareness of how to conduct, and the lack of time to accomplish the task stated in the module in one setting. Students who directly participated in a field study generated a more positive attitude about the subject. Michie (1998)[23] identified seven barriers to successful field trips: (1) transportation; (2) teacher training and experience; (3) time issues such as school schedule and teacher's ability to prepare; (4) lack of school administrator to support for field trips; (5) curriculum flexibility; (6) poor student behavior and attitudes; and (7) lack of venue options.

***Engagement.***

Field study instructors, field study cooperating schools, and field study resource persons were emphasized by field study students to have difficulty getting them on board and keeping them on board with the curriculum. In this struggle for buy-in is evident that there are tensions among the field study instructors, field study cooperating schools, and field study resource persons. Field study students took note of the following observations that, field study instructors have inadequate knowledge in the implementation of field study courses. Cooperating schools, on the other hand, and resource persons displayed an unwelcoming attitude. With the number of students visiting the cooperating schools, administrators and resource persons perceived that it is an additional task instead of establishing or building relationships. Empirical observations, however showed that there are resource persons that do not let students to enter their classroom for classroom observations during the visit. Aceron,[24] et.al, 2019 find that the respondents strongly agreed that they experienced problems as reflected in ambiguity and some content, practices, and exercises of the book were out of context. They also found that there was limited time for consultation from the supervisors as well as lack of experience and incompetence of the FS and cooperating teachers. It imperative that the teacher prepares the students for the field trip in order to maintain a level of control that will allow for learning to occur when the class arrives at the venue. (Eyler, 2009)[25] Upon arrival at the venue, students are often disoriented resulting in excited, explorative, and unrestrained behavior. (Falk, et.al)[26]

***Benefits derived from Field Study Courses.***

Student benefits included validity where their learning experiences were situated in complex environments that mirrored their lives and future environments as career knowledge, where they gain practical insights into career

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possibilities. Although in this research, the researcher did not measure the validity, it was gathered through "face to face" interviews with field study students.

***Validity.***

Authenticity and usefulness of the experiences that the students enjoyed during the field study. With information explosion, often, knowledge selected for school content may become obsolete. They were able to engage meaningfully in the material by making links among connections integrated in experiential education. Experiential learning can be a highly effective educational method, especially for adults, as it engages the learner at a more personal level by addressing the needs and wants of the individual. The process requires qualities such as self-initiative and self-evaluation. Baldwin, Buchman, and Rudisill (2007)[27] studied the impact of a service learning program has on teacher education candidates' respect for diversity. Their findings suggest that service learning is a positive influence on teacher candidates' willingness to teach in diverse school settings. Teacher candidates' "even began to question social inequities that they encountered."

***Career Knowledge.***

The structured support also develops the self-efficacy of students such that they have greater control and confidence over their ability to have an experiential learning encounter early in their educational career. Field studies are basically designed so that pre-service teachers can have a holistic understanding of the career they will have in the future. Students gain professional skills as a result of their experiences, which are also reflected in their activities and also help them determine if they are in the right profession.

## IV. CONCLUSION

A successful and quality field study requires collaboration among field study students, field study instructors, field study cooperating schools and field study resource persons. Some factors should be considered from the pre-planning of activities, planning stage, preparations of activities, safety measures, and most importantly, it must be connected to the curriculum. Students should be actively engaged, and all students should be able to take part regardless of their financial, physical, or intellectual status.

## V. RECOMMENDATIONS

1. A faculty member may be trained in the implementation of field study courses.
2. Intensive planning in the preparation of the field study trip ensures that each trip has a measurable-academic component that directly addresses the standards and benchmarks of the subject areas.
3. Each faculty member must ensure that an explicit role, responsibility, and involvement in both the academic and social aspects of the field study is undertaken. These roles and responsibilities must be clearly defined in advance.
4. There must be a design and implementation of a risk management plan that includes a protocol for emergency situations.
5. Cooperating schools where the field study is conducted may conduct awareness to its faculty members so that a more welcoming atmosphere may be provided to the field study students.

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6. School administrators may continue to strive to offer experiential education opportunities to all students. In this effort, risk management, cost, and destinations of the field study trips will be carefully analyzed.
7. Continue the implementation of Field Study courses.

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