Instructional Intervention Program: Bidlisiw Vision

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ABSTRACT

This paper attempts to determine the effects of an instructional intervention conducted by the student teachers of Cebu Normal University on the academic achievement, Philippine Educational Placement Test (PEPT) and Accreditation and Equivalency Test (A&E) of the commercially, sexually exploited children (CSEC) and other children-at-risk (OCAR) of Bidlisiw Foundation, Inc. living in depressed areas of Cebu. The results revealed that the instructional intervention improved their academic achievement in English, science, mathematics, Filipino and social studies. It equipped them with the necessary competencies and skills in taking the PEPT and A & E test. Thus, they will be prepared for the formal system in school.

Keywords: Instructional intervention, academic achievement, PEPT, A & E

INTRODUCTION

Studies indicate that the Asian – Pacific region harbors the largest number of child workers in the 5 -14 age category with a total of 127.3 million (ILO, 2004). The Philippines is likewise faced with the problem of a large and rapidly growing out-of-school youth. In 1999, the number of Philippine out-of-school children and youth was estimated to have reached 8.9 million mainly as a result of family poverty, lack of interest and motivation to study and the high cost of schooling. The Visayas has the largest number of out-of-school youth in the 7 -14 age group. Region VII, in particular has 8.9% out-of-school youth and 15.4% families with
working children (OSCY, 1999). These data indicate that the youth sector is most at risk (ADB, 2002). Designing an Alternative Learning System that focuses on the needs of the out-of-school youth is a response to encourage them to return to the formal school system and become productive members of the society.

Bidlisiw Foundation Incorporated, a social development non-government organization based in Cebu City, has been established with a vision to improve the quality of family and community life among Filipino children and their families and a mission to help the most disadvantaged children and families among the urban poor communities.

Cebu Normal University, a reputable institution dedicated to the formation of teachers in the elementary, high school and tertiary levels, and recently Proclaimed Center of Development in Region VII, entered into a partnership with the Bidlisiw Foundation Inc. The objective of the project was to provide an instructional intervention program to the out-of-school youth specifically the commercially, sexually exploited children (CSEC) and other children-at-risk (OCAR) who are interested to go back to the formal school setting. It aimed to strengthen the attainment of their basic competencies in order to prepare them for the Philippine Education Placement Test (PEPT) and the Accreditation and Equivalency (A & E) Test. It served as an alternative learning system which is highly flexible, with learning sessions based on specific educational needs of the out-of-school youth. Likewise, it aimed to strengthen their self-esteem and self-trust and enable them to think critically and creatively. The integration of both academic and character formation of the out-of-school youth was the overall goal of the program.

The Philippine Education Placement Test (PEPT) is the principal instrument used in the Accreditation and Equivalency Program with the main objective to retrieve out-of-school youth and place them in the formal school system, if they so desire, and to place over-aged in-school youth in the grade level corresponding to their ages. On the other hand, the Accreditation and Equivalency Test (A and E) offers the successful test takers certification of learning achievements at two learning levels - elementary and secondary- that are comparable to the formal school system. Both the PEPT and A & E test the competencies gained through formal, informal and non-formal education which are equivalent to those developed in five subject areas - English, Filipino, science, mathematics and social studies. (DepEd. 2001)
The main objective of this study was to determine the effects of an instructional intervention conducted by the student teachers of the Cebu Normal University, 2005-2006, on the academic achievement, Philippine Educational Placement Test (PEPT) and Accreditation and Equivalency Test (A&E) of the commercially, sexually exploited children (CSEC) and other children-at-risk (OCAR) of Bidlisiw Foundation, Inc. Selected and trained student teachers of the Cebu Normal University were sent to the different centers of Bidlisiw Foundation, Inc.: Cebu City, Mandaue City and Talisay City. They conducted the validated 40-item test on the academic performance of the out-of-school youth in English, Filipino, math, science and social studies. Instructional intervention of the basic competencies and skills were conducted based on the results of the pre-test which are needed for PEPT and A & E. Sessions related to character formation were also held during the instructional intervention program. Academic achievement, PEPT and A & E test results were used in the study. The qualitative — quantitative methods of research were used in the study.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Personal and Demographic Profile

This study involved fifty-six (56) out-of-school youth of the Bidlisiw Foundation Inc., thirty-four (34) of them male and twenty-two (22) female, who were between 15 and 19 years old. Of the total respondents, twenty-seven (37) were commercially sexually exploited children (CSEC) and nineteen (19) were other children-at-risk (OCAR). The CSEC worked and hung out at nightclubs, restaurants, videoke and disco bars. They engaged themselves in commercial, unprotected sex with a boyfriend, old men, gay, and lesbian partners. Most of them had poor personal hygiene and no regular health consultations. Like their parents, they had vices like smoking, gambling, drinking of liquor and drug use. The OCAR had parents who were previously freelance sex workers (FSW). Their peers were gay, lesbians and pimps with exposed them to prostitution.

The respondents became out-of-school youth because they had no money to finance their school expenses. Their parents who were dropouts were unsupportive of their education; thus, they lacked the interest and motivation to study. They were ashamed to continue their formal schooling due to their age and peer pressure. They had menial and part-time jobs as laborers (porter, tricycle driver, barker, “magbubuwad”) to augment their family income but most often their source of income was seasonal. They were pushed to work due to difficult fam-
situations. Generally, they were not currently in school because they could not afford to lose these incomes.

Most of them were victims of child and physical abuse in their families. They had low self-confidence and self-esteem, lacked communication and problem-solving skills. They came from large and poor families with poor family values and their parents had low parental skills. They had family dysfunction as they experienced abandonment by either of the parents, experienced violence like beatings from the father and verbal abuse from the mother. Because of family conflict, others chose to live with a relative or a friend. Normally, they lived in the depressed and deprived areas of Cebu City, Mandaue City and Talisay City.

Just like any ordinary youth, the CSEC and OCAR had simple aspirations in life: to know how to read and write, count money, finish schooling, pass the PEPT test, have a decent job, be a policeman, teacher, OFW, engineer, basketball player, businessman, nurse, architect or a doctor someday. They viewed education as a tool to attain their dreams to become professionals in the future. Consequently, they considered education as a passport to white-collar jobs, which are seen as better paying compared with manual jobs. They had a strong desire to be needed and to feel useful, and many aspired to have a better and happy life.

In general, these out of school youth were coerced into prostitution because of peer pressure or certain damaging events that made it difficult for them to live a normal lives due to trauma or stigma, which is also cited in ILO (2002). On the other hand, poverty was the main reason that the children worked. They had to supplement an inadequate family income, there was no one to support them, their parents could not provide for their own education and they experienced mistreatment at home (ILO 2004).

Academic Achievement

A forty-item test in each subject area, namely: English, math, science, Filipino and social studies were administered before and after the instructional intervention. Table 1 shows the profile of their academic achievement. As presented in the table, none of the commercially sexually exploited children and other children at risk had an above average level of performance in the five subjects tested in the pretest. They had a below average performance in English, math and science. However, in social studies and Filipino they had an average level of performance. This result shows that the out of school youth are not prepared for formal education, for they lack the necessary skills and competence in the basic
subjects mentioned. They had stopped their basic education and were busy earning a living; thus, learning and school might not be highly valued. According to Amarasinghe (2002) as cited in Child Labor (ILO, 2004), the low level of education and skills of parents also had negative effects on children and their future. If the parents had received little education, it means their children were exposed to limited family education at home and to low aspirations to obtain it. This was also observed in the profile of the respondents. According to Machionis (2000) as cited by Kauchach (2003) socio-economic status consistently affects academic performance which conforms with the achievement profile of the respondents

Table 1. Profile of the Academic Achievement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Pre-test</th>
<th>Post-test</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(f)</td>
<td>(%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>Above Average</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Average</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>12.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Below Average</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>87.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Math</td>
<td>Above Average</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Average</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Below Average</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>98.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science</td>
<td>Above Average</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Average</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>17.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Below Average</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>82.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Filipino</td>
<td>Above Average</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Average</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>57.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Below Average</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>42.86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social</td>
<td>Above Average</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Studies</td>
<td>Average</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>57.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Below Average</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>42.86</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Ranges for Percentage of Achievement

76 – 100  Above Average
50 – 75   Average
0 – 49    Below Average
After the instructional intervention, the commercially sexually exploited children and other children at risk showed improvement in their academic performance as shown in the post-test results. 55% to 73% had an average performance, while 5% to 43% were above average. Only 3% to 41% performed below average level in the five subjects. The increase in their academic performance as indicated in the mean scores and the percentage level of performance indicates a positive response and formable effects of the instructional intervention. Based on the ILO – Child Labor report (2004) functional literacy and numeracy skills are pre-requisites to any form of education. At the same time, practical skills training that requires the correct manipulation of materials and objects in the environment or “learning by doing” is often applied in most progressive schools. Thus, students’ active involvement in practical learning experiences such as arts, constructing models, workshops in different subject areas tested help the commercially sexually exploited children and other children at risk improve their academic performance and attitude towards learning.

On the other hand, the commercially sexually exploited children and other children at risk had performed well in Social Studies and Filipino compared to English, math and science in both pre-test and post-test. They found the subjects easier for them for they could hear current events from radios and watch television or hear people talking about certain issues or events in the Filipino language. Unlike social studies and Filipino as the second language of the respondents, the three subjects; English, math and science are skill subjects. The irregular attendance during review, tutorial and other differentiated activities given to them affected the development and mastery of their skills. For Math and Science subjects the mean scores were 24.43 and 24.38, respectively. This means that the respondents still need the basic numeracy skills and scientific concepts, processes and skills. This finding also conforms with the study done by Heady (2000) and Sanchez, et al (2003) as cited in Education and Child Labor (ILO, 2004) that mathematics learning achievement is lower than it should have been possibly because of exhaustion from their work or possibly because they lacked focus and motivation.

In totality, 82.14% to 98.21% of the out-of-school youth’s academic performance was below average in English, science and math. In Filipino and Social Studies their performance was 41.07% to 42.86%, with a mean that ranges from 11.50 to 20.79. In the posttest, 55.35% to 73.21% of commercially sexually exploited children and other children at risk performed in the average level with a mean that ranges
from 24.38 to 29.27. The respondents had performed in the above average level that ranged from 5.36% to 42.86% with Math having the lowest percentage while Filipino had the highest percentage.

The instructional intervention had helped the commercially sexually exploited children and other children at risk in their academic performance in English, science, math, Filipino and social studies. The learning sessions that they had undergone built up their self-esteem and self-trust and helped them think critically and creatively. The integration of both academic and character formation upgraded their knowledge and skills acquired during the learning sessions which helped them prepare for the Philippine Educational Placement Test (PEPT) and Accreditation and Equivalency test (A&E). The program ensures the formation of individuals on the cutting edge with positive attitudes as their basic literacy skills are developed.

Table 2 presents the mean gain of the academic achievement of the commercially sexually exploited children and other children at risk.

Table 2. Mean Gain of the Academic Achievement (n = 56).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Mean Gain</th>
<th>Standard Deviation of Mean Gain</th>
<th>t - value</th>
<th>Sig. (p value)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>10.482</td>
<td>2.904</td>
<td>27.007*</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Math</td>
<td>12.920</td>
<td>3.818</td>
<td>25.341*</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science</td>
<td>10.339</td>
<td>3.965</td>
<td>19.515*</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Filipino</td>
<td>8.48</td>
<td>2.841</td>
<td>22.341*</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Studies</td>
<td>8.393</td>
<td>3.155</td>
<td>19.909*</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Significant at 0.05 level (2tailed)

With regard to the pre-test and post-test, the commercially sexually exploited children and other children at risk had a mean gain that ranged from 8.4 to 12.9. The p-value of 0.000 implies that the results of the pre-test and post test were highly significant at the 0.01 level of confidence. This means that the instructional intervention was effective and that the students’ skills in the subjects tested had improved. The respondents found the instructional intervention mean-
Brophy (1998), if students are motivated to learn, they have the tendency to find academic activities meaningful and worthwhile and try to get the intended learning benefits from them.

**PEPT and A and E Tests Results**

Table 3 presents the profile of the commercially sexually exploited children and other children at risk of the Bidlisiw Foundation Inc., Cebu who passed the Philippine Educational Placement Test (PEPT) and Accreditation and Equivalency test (A&E).

Table 3. Profile of PEPT and A and E Tests Results (n = 56).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Test Passed</th>
<th>(f)</th>
<th>(% )</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Philippine Educational Placement Test (PEPT)</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>30.36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accreditation and Equivalency Test (A and E)</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>37.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As can be gleaned from the table, 17 or 30.36% passed the Philippine Educational Placement Test (PEPT) while 21 or 37.5% passed the Accreditation and Equivalency Test (A and E). This result shows that with the exposure of the commercially sexually exploited children and other children at risk to the instructional intervention which is an alternative learning system, these would prepare them to be in the formal school. The low percentage of passing in the two tests was the result of the irregular attendance of the respondents to the learning sessions due to the nature of their work and home environment. Many passed in other subject areas, but failed in some which caused a failing mark in the test results. This conforms to the findings of Beder (1999), Alamprese et al. (2003) and Greenberg (2007) as cited by Comings (2007) that attendance patterns are inconsistent which affect their performance.

**Correlations between academic achievement, PEPT and A and E**

As contained in table 4, the hypotheses of no significant correlation between the academic achievement of the commercially sexually exploited children and other children at risk, PEPT and A and E was rejected. The p-value of 0.000 in aca-
demic achievement and PEPT was highly correlated at the 0.01 level of confidence. This shows that the improvement of their academic achievement had helped in their performance in the PEPT. Those who passed the PEPT were those who performed well in their academic subjects.

Table 4. Correlations between academic achievement, PEPT and A and E

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pairwise Variables</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Computed r</th>
<th>p-value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Achievement and PEPT (Philippine Educational Placement Test)</td>
<td>132.70</td>
<td>0.560*</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Achievement and A and E (Accreditation and Equivalency Test)</td>
<td>132.70</td>
<td>0.411*</td>
<td>0.002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PEPT (Philippine Educational Placement Test) and A and E (Accreditation and Equivalency Test)</td>
<td>75.48</td>
<td>0.394*</td>
<td>0.003</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)*

The p-value of 0.002 in academic achievement and A and E of the respondents was highly significant at the 0.01 level of confidence. This means that there was a high correlation between the academic achievement and A and E. This indicates that those who passed the A and E test were also those who performed better in their academic subjects. These respondents had mastery of the basic knowledge and skills in English, math, science, Filipino and social studies.

The results of the PEPT and A and E had a p-value of 0.003 which was also significant at the 0.01 level of confidence. This means that there was a high correlation between the PEPT and A and E test results. This indicates that those who passed the PEPT were also those who passed the A and E. This also shows that those who really had aspirations to have a better life, viewed education as a tool to attain their dreams to become professionals in the future. They were motivated to achieve their learning goals. Thus, initially high motivation was a resource that feds engagement in the learning sessions of those who passed the PEPT and
A and E tests during the instructional intervention. With this, the commercially sexually exploited children and other children at risk would be ready for their re-entry to formal education for they had already gained a positive self-image and self-confidence. This conforms with the study made by Beder (1999) on adult literacy education.

**Instructional Intervention Protocol**

In order to provide opportunities to learn and develop, guidance in making constructive choices, and help with specific problems or situations, an instructional intervention protocol was prepared. Thus, this alternative learning program was a holistic approach that encompassed physical, social, academic, psychological, and career-related needs. To help the commercially sexually exploited children and other children at risk, as defined by the National Policies on Literacy / Non-formal Education in the Latest Policy Document on Education (2002), it was hoped that they should be functionally literate have a range of skills and competencies in the cognitive, affective and behavioral domains would enable him/her to live and work as a human person, develop his/her potentials, make critical and informed decisions, and function effectively in society within the context of his/her environment and that of the wider community (local, regional, national and global) in order to improve the quality of his/her life and that of society. On the other hand, this instructional intervention protocol would adequately prepare and provide on-going assistance to the student teachers for their different work assignment in the various centers of Bidlisiw Foundation Inc.. Moreover, this would help them avoid problems related to work load, unclear expectations, isolation, role-conflict, and reality shock as the student teachers conducted the instructional intervention program.

**Phase 1: Student Teachers’ Orientation**

- Seminar on the What, Why and How of Multi-Grade instruction
- Lecture on Alternative Learning Sessions, PEPT and A and E Tests
- Lecture on the Vision, Mission of Bidlisiw Foundation Inc.
- Seminars on Child Rights, Issues about Child Labor and Corporal Punishment.
- Exposure to the Different Bidlisiw Centers

**Phase 2: Loading of Instructional Information**

- Reinforcement Input with Reference to Multi-Grade Instruction;
- Preparation of Topic Outline and Multi-Level Instructional Materials
Sessions on Lesson Planning for Specific Purposes and Evaluative Materials Preparation
Structuring of the Different Centers

**Phase 3: Learning Engagement**

Conducting a Pretest to Establish the Clientele’s Present Needs
Establishing Classroom Routines and Commitment to Learn.
Daily Preparations of the Needs - Based Lesson Designs
Actualization of the Daily Prepared Needs - Based Lesson Designs
Character Formation Sessions with Focus on the Following Areas:

a. peer support,

b. group building, activities, and
c. group therapy sessions for children sessions

d. health and recreational activities,
e. transition education activities
f. family counseling sessions

Creative Workshops
Implementation of the 4-Module Parent Education Sessions
Conduct family action planning through home visits scheme
Organize educational tour to the different universities and learning institutions in Cebu City and other neighboring cities

**Phase 4: Learning Verification**

Learners’ Orientation on the do’s and don’ts of taking the PEPT and A & E tests
Regular weekly meetings and conferences with the Bidlisiw staff every Friday;
Conduct authentic learning assessment
Conduct post – test in five major subject areas; Math, English, Science, Filipino and Social Studies
PEPT and A and E tests
Documentation of the collated clientele’s learning data
Submission of the documented reports to the concerned agencies
CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The instructional intervention conducted by the CNU student teachers is an effective alternative learning scheme that helped the commercially sexually exploited children and other children at risk in their academic performance, PEPT and A&E. Thus, the children would gain a better perception and direction in life. Personal and demographic profiles of the commercially sexually exploited children and other children at risk of Bidlisiw Foundation Inc., Cebu affected their performance in academic achievement, and performance in the PEPT and A&E.

It is recommended that the CNU CTE-ILS extension program that focused on instructional intervention be intensified. Community action should be strengthened by re-orientation of community values, and the conduct of community-wide advocacy to sustain efforts to fight commercial sexual exploitation of children and other children at risk.

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