

An Assessment of Alternative Learning System-Accreditation and Equivalency (ALS-A&E) Curriculum for Secondary Clientele

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ABSTRACT

This study assessed the Alternative Learning System-Accreditation and Equivalency (ALS-A&E) Writing curriculum for secondary clientele with the end goal of developing an enhanced session guide. It was focused on how it is taught, the clientele's ability to write an academic composition and the implementers' and clientele's concerns in its implementation. Two program implementers and 48 clientele were purposively chosen as respondents. Data were obtained from the compositions written by the respondents which were expressed in Waray and English languages, questionnaire, and Focus Group Discussion (FGD). Subsequently, data gathered were analyzed accordingly following the six-step techniques for a case study outlined by Yin (2014). Results revealed that the curriculum is conventionally facilitated. Also, the clientele can easily write a composition in Waray but find it challenging using the English language. Learning associated factors aggravated by insufficient logistics support and cognitive demands are among those echoed by the respondents' as their core concerns pertinent to the curriculum implementation. Accounting things holistically, there is a need to re-engineer the existing instructional delivery practices for this curriculum.

Keywords: *curriculum implementation, enhanced session guide, writing performance*

INTRODUCTION

The Alternative Learning System (ALS) is the Philippine government's response to its various international and domestic statutory pledges to provide a non-formal, informal, indigenous learning system, and community-based out-of-school programs to the Filipino people. It thus makes education within reach to all those who for various circumstances were unable to enter school, discontinue their studies, or just wants to further their knowledge and develop their trade skills. ALS is defined in Executive Order No. 356 as a community-based learning system similar to the country's formal primary education system. It offers multifarious programs intend to reach Filipino youths who are out of school grounds, non-literate adults, school leavers, abused children, the Indigenous Peoples (IPs), non-literate families, Muslim migrants, Depressed, Deprived, and Underserved group (DDU), and Persons with Disabilities (PWDs) among others. The Department of Education (DepEd) spearheads and oversees the

implementation the programs mentioned above (Department of Education, 2017).

Studies conducted about ALS abound. Amongst those investigated were macro issues including the competencies of the implementers, challenges in delivering instruction in the ALS environment, programs impact such as that of the A&E and BLP to specific clientele such as the Indigenous Peoples (IPs), and logistics related concerns among others. These academic endeavors were able to unravel successes, interests, and issues in its implementation. Apao, Dayagbil, and Abao (2014), for example, reported that well-implemented ALS-A&E programs in Cebu province paved the way for the attainment of life skills and a high literacy rate of the clientele which, in turn, led to the employment of program completers and high turnout of successful examinees in the A&E test. Moralista and Delariarte (2014), on the other hand, uphold that ALS Education is indeed very influential in cultivating cognitive abilities of the employed natives across

learning areas among the IPs in Iloilo. Similarly, Dayon, Garcines, and Sael (2016) credited the ALS literacy program as being instrumental for the Badjaos employability status after having completed the skills trainings development. However, a study commissioned by the World Bank as regards to ALS enrollment revealed that, while enrolment registered the highest for the years 2005-2014, it likewise recorded a significant decline of A&E passers nationwide. The body then recommended to the concerned government agencies to immediately undertake research to identify factors contributory to this issue (World Bank Report No: AUS14891, 2016). Even before the publication of these findings, the results of various studies conducted about the implementation of various ALS programs already enumerated a myriad of concerns that necessitates immediate attention.

Azardon and Nato's (2015) meta-synthesis study on different issues about ALS, for example, tied up the A&E takers' underperformance in the A&E examination to a problematic ALS system partly due to its usage of non-authentic and localized assessment tools. Pinca (2015), on the other hand, listed community-based instructional tools, delayed release of travel allowance, and lack of instructional tools while Fernandez (2013) took notice of proximity of the Community Learning Centers (CLCs) to the target clientele as among those that need urgent action.

The aforementioned concerns were seemingly left unaddressed because in October 2018, DepEd Secretary, Leonor M. Briones, was forced to put on hold DepEd Order No. 55, s. 2016, which sets the passing rate at 75% for the A&E examination and lowered it to 60% in response to the recorded low national passing rate in the A&E examination. Several factors were looked into to determine what might have caused this menace. Analyses revealed that among those that might have thwarted the testees understanding of the assessments contents is its language shift from Filipino to English, which may have contributed to the examinee's underperformance in the test (ABS-CBN News, 2018).

ALS implementers in Barugo, Leyte, however, were not surprised of this announcement at all. While the secretary's observation was rather a general statement, they, however, specifically pointed out the writing segment of the test that

compels examinees to write an academic composition using English language as the major culprit. For several years, they claimed, numerical ratings contained in the Certificate of Rating (COR), and the pile of the testees' exit testimonies in the town could attest to this observation. This observation is corroborated by Rashtchi and Karami (2015) who averred that writing is indeed a challenging language skill to master because it involves complex cognitive tasks.

The body of literature cited above suggests that while studies about ALS abound, none, however, is pivot to the actual teaching-learning process. Unarguably, it is then imperative to pursue a study attuned to gaining empirical insights about the cognition process adhered to by the ALS program implementers. An example is how writing skill is facilitated. Henceforth, this study then assessed the Writing curriculum for secondary clientele of the A&E program in view of developing an enhanced session guide. Defined operationally, curriculum, in this context, refers to the Writing skill that ALS-A&E clientele need to learn and master. The assessment concentrated on: (1) the skill facilitation in terms of objectives, contents, methods, and skill assessments; (2) the clientele's performance concerning the expression of ideas; and (3) the concerns of the implementers and clientele about its implementation. Findings herein may be cited as a framework to generate a holistic pedagogic picture as to how this curriculum is actualized in the field which is a dimension uncommon in various studies conducted about ALS.

FRAMEWORK OF THE STUDY

Outcome-based Teaching and Learning (OBTL) is a version of outcomes-based education (OBE) that makes use of constructive alignment (CA) as mechanism for enhancing teaching and learning process. CA is a teaching model anchored on the twofold principles of constructivism in learning, and alignment in the design of teaching and assessment. Its 'constructive' component is rooted from the constructivist theory while the 'alignment' suggests the deliberate and meaningful interplay of the key elements of the teaching and learning including the intended learning outcomes (ILOs), teaching/learning activities (TLAs), and assessment tasks (ATs). CA works this way: (1) ILOs for a

specific unit is described using a verb to determine how to handle the topic and in what context; (2) purposive TLAs activities anchored on the verb used in the ILOs are created to make it operational; and (3) ATs are designed using the exact verb in the ILOs (Biggs & Tang, 2007).

The set of skills and competencies spelled out in the ALS Curriculum Guide is the basis of the ALS implementers in teaching writing skill and was

referred to in the assessment process. Subsequently, the results obtained therein, were, in turn, referred to in the development of an enhanced session guide vis-à-vis the principles of OBTL and its CA framework. This OBTL-enriched session guide is hoped to improve the writing skill of the target ALS clientele. The illustration below shows this framework.

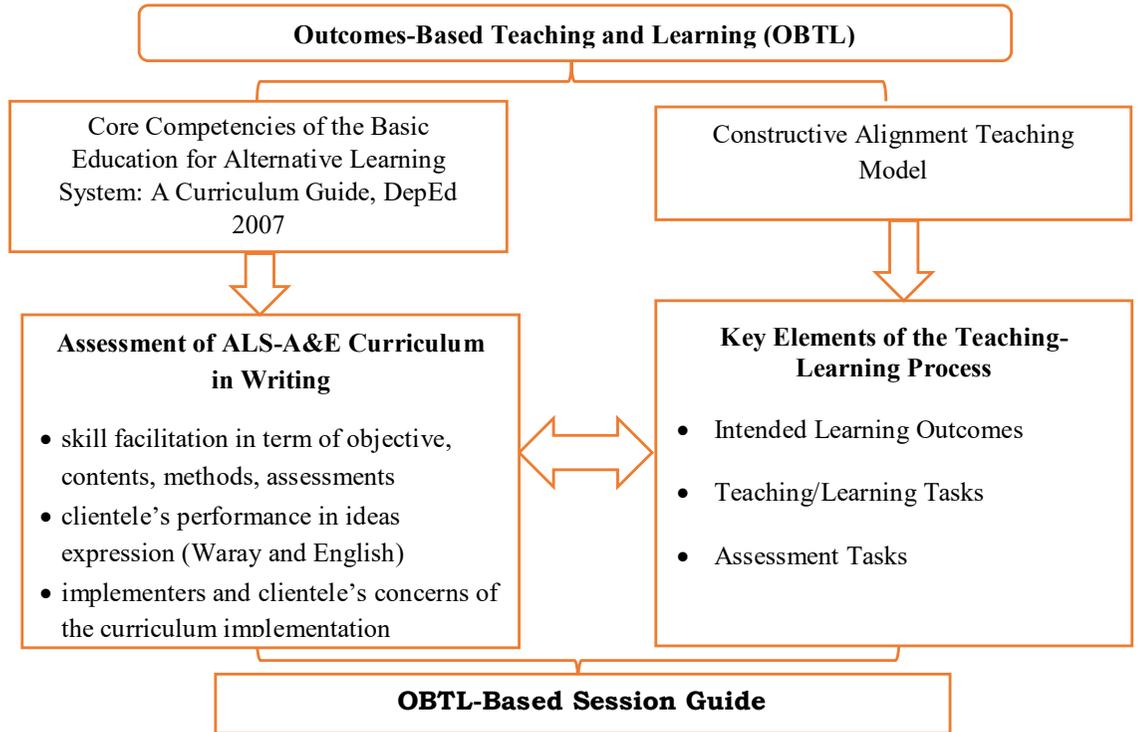


Figure 1. Conceptual framework of the study

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study used the case study design. According to Creswell and Clark (2007), this design of inquiry allows the researcher to develop an in-depth analysis of a case such as a program, event, activity, process, or one or more individuals. Zainal (2007) suggested its usage when the study is conducted in a small community using a portion of its population as respondents. Yin’s (2014) six-step techniques for organizing and conducting a case study were specifically followed.

Participants, Sampling and Ethical Consideration

This study was conducted in Barugo II District ALS Learning Center in Barugo, Leyte. The center is manned by a district ALS coordinator and a mobile

teacher with 125 clientele for A&E secondary certification during AY 2017-18. For various reasons, only 48 actually participated in the study. Thus, the two program implementers and 48 clientele were purposively chosen as respondents. Their consents were sought and were deliberately informed of the study’s nature, scope, purpose, and had been assured of utmost data confidentiality. The two implementer-respondents are both teacher education graduates and had been in the ALS system for over 8 years. Prior to joining the system, they had been elementary public school teachers. The two also enjoys the academic rank of Teacher 3 and had earned master’s degree units. Meanwhile, Table 1 presents the summary of the cliente-respondents

Table 1: ALS-A&E Clientele for Secondary Certification Clientele’ Profile

	Male		Female	
	f	%	f	%
Age				
15 – 17	13	59.09	18	81.82
18 – 21	9	40.91	8	30.77
Total	22	100.00	26	100.00
Years out of School				
1 – 5	18	81.82	21	80.77
6 – 8	3	13.64	4	15.38
9 – 10	1	04.45	1	03.84
Total	22	100.00	26	100.00
Grade Level before leaving school				
Grade 7	20	90.91	19	73.08
Grade 8	1	04.54	6	23.08
Grade 9	1	04.54	1	03.85
Total	22	100.00	26	100.00
School Last Attended				
Public	22	100.00	26	100.00
Private	0	00.00	0	00.00
Total	22	100.00	26	100.00
Ordinal Status in Family				
First Born	20	90.91	21	80.77
Middle Child	2	09.09	5	19.23
Last Born	0	00.00	0	00.00
Total	22	100.00	26	100.00
Reason for Leaving School				
Economic Woes	22	100.00	26	100.00
Parental Concern	0	00.00	0	00.00
Marriage	0	00.00	0	00.00
Total	22	100.00	26	100.00

Table 1 presents the profile of the respondents. As shown, of the 48 total respondents, 22 or 45.83% are male while 26 or 54.17% are female. Majority of them left school for not more than five years either in grades 7

or 8 due to economic constraints. Data provided in their Personal Information Sheet (PIS) also showed that they are engaged in various domestic trades. Figure 1 presents the distribution of the trades they are into.

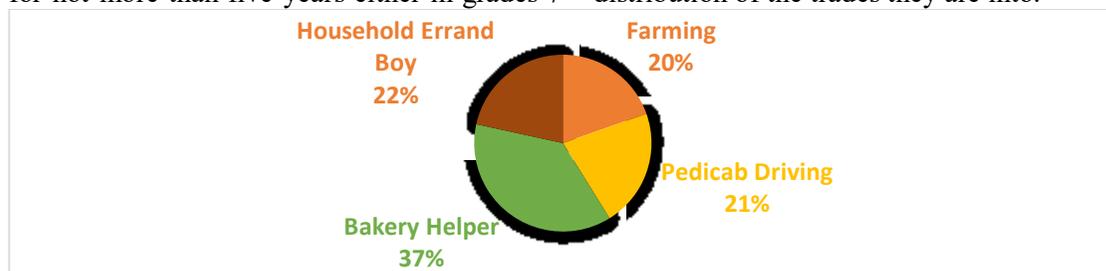


Figure 2. Trade activities of the male clientele-respondents

As shown, the male respondents are engaged in four basic trades: as bakery helpers (37%), household errand boy (22%), pedicab drivers (21%), and farming (20%). Meanwhile, Figure 3 below shows the distribution of the trades the female clientele-respondents are into.

As shown, the female clientele-respondents are engaged in hair dressing (5%), assistant dress maker (20%), and nannies and household helpers (75%) domestic trade activities.

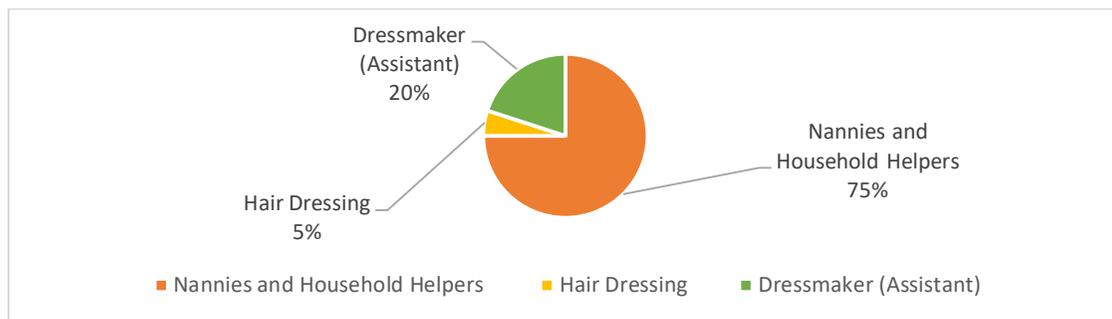


Figure 3. Trade activities of the female clientele-respondents

Instruments

Sample Compositions Written by the Clientele

The clientele’s performance in written expression was gauged through their written compositions generated following the free writing technique. These compositions were anchored on the following themes: (1) *An Makarimadima na Bagyo Yolanda*; (2) *An Akon Paborito na Maestra*; (3) *Surviving the Wrath of Super Typhoon Yolanda*; and (4) *My Most Unforgettable Christmas Break*. Themes 1 and 2 were utilized for compositions expressed in Waray language while themes 3 and 4 for the English language. These were analyzed using Jacobs and colleagues’ ESL Composition Profile, which features five writing domains: content (20%), organization (20%), vocabulary (20%), language use (25%), and mechanics (5%).

Questionnaire

A researcher-made questionnaire consisted of 10 open-ended questions concentrated on how the curriculum is facilitated in terms of objectives, contents, methods, and assessments was used to determine how the curriculum is facilitated. Rossman and Rallis (2012) claimed that this research tool is able to elicit ideas and behaviors, preferences, traits, attitudes and facts. The paper-and-pencil modality was used.

Focus Group Discussion

The clientele’s and implementers’ concerns about the curriculum implementation were unlocked

through FGDs. Two sets of FGD guides were constructed with an embedded vernacular equivalent for the clientele group to address language issue anticipated as a barrier for expressing their thoughts and ideas. Its contents were concentrated on the barriers of the curriculum implementation and on the five writing domains most challenging to teach and learn. The discussions were conducted separately in agreed time and venue. Lyttle and Weizenecker (2005), said that FGDs are utilized for generating information on collective views and the meanings that lie behind those views. It is likewise useful in generating a rich understanding of participants’ experiences and beliefs.

To ensure content validity of both the questionnaire and focus group discussion guides, a post-interview data screening and code-recode procedure were conducted. Thus, it is categorical to claim that these instruments were deemed valid given the fact that a one-on-one and group discussions were conducted which had paved the way for an intensive listening, comprehensive note-taking and audio recording in the gathering of the data. Likewise, the researcher also made it a point that the responses to the follow-up questions were not influenced by the previous questions.

Data Collection and Analyses

Data in this study were collected and analyzed based on the six-step techniques suggested by Yin (2014).

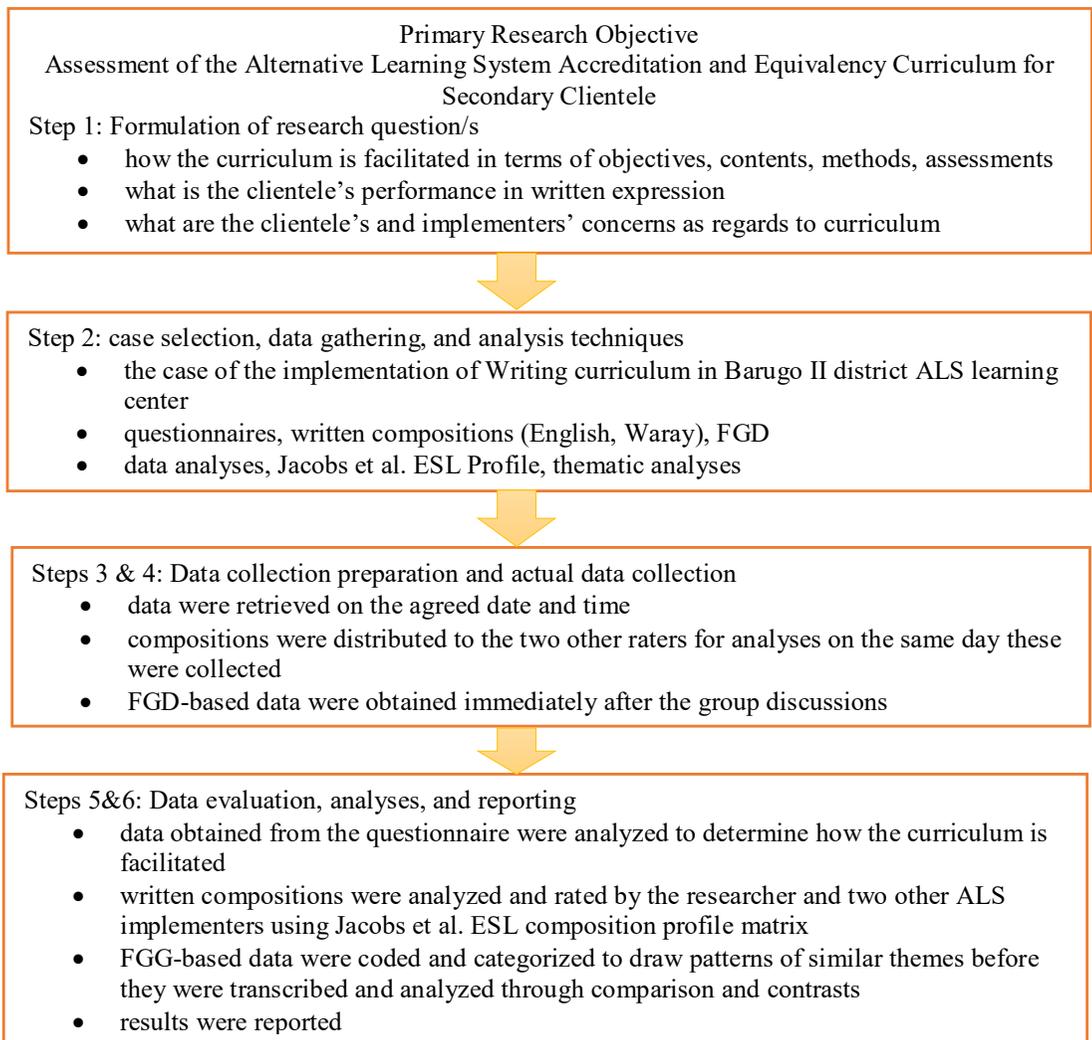


Figure 4. Data collection procedure and analyses as suggested by Yin (2014)

RESULTS

Facilitation of ALS-A&E Curriculum for Writing Skills

Objectives

Writing curriculum is primarily taught to equip the clientele with the fundamental knowledge of this macro language skill, and, in turn, be able to write a composition of academic standard using the English language. To do so, its lesson objectives are carefully outlined base on the FLT result and interview conducted during the recruitment phase. Oftentimes, the implementers claimed, learning objectives are initially focused on the development and mastery of the English language features. Below is one of the respondents’ responses:

Respondent #3: “Ha ALS usually derig gud namun ginsusunod hin tangkuray it curriculum para han Writing skill kay nakukurian mga clientele pagsunod. Ha kamaiha na nga panahon nga akon pag tinutduon kumo usa nga ALS implementer pirmi ko gud kaupod han akon mga naging kausa anay ha trabaho baga sinisiring na gin momodify hin gutiay it curriculum para han pag develop hit abilidad na makasurat it mga clientele hin maupay na composition. Kaurugan na basi gud ako hit result hit amonn diagnostic test na ginhahatag. Didto ko nababaruan na kaulangan ko gud na magtikang hit pag tutdo ha katingan o kun baga

pinukis pukis na style. Kaaurugan na tikang ako spelling, vocabulary enrichment, mga iba ibana klase hin sentences ngan damo la mga ngan pamaage para makasurat an mga clientele hinn usa nga composition kay maaram gud ako na pasuraton hira hit actual A&E examination” [The curriculum given to us in ALS is usually modified in consideration of the clientele’s readiness and pace of learning. This has been my experience together with some of my colleagues for a long time of being an implementer. We base our objectives on the results of the different diagnostic tests that we administer. In my case, I usually begin teaching mastery of various features of the English language such as spelling, vocabulary enhancement, among others].

Contents

Heavy and focused on activities and practice exercises about spelling, vocabulary development, speech parts, agreement of subjects and verbs, sentence types, capitalization and punctuation, styles of paragraph development, and thesis statement and support ideas identification. Here is a sample response from one of the respondents:

Respondent #1. *“Hasus Ginoo ko! bisan gin tutdo na ito ha ira nan hingalimot ito dayon salit kun actual paragraph or composition writing na, nabalik gud ako pag tutdo la ghap about rules in spelling, vocabulary enhancement, different parts of speech sугan hit past tense of verbs ngan participle, ngan danay ngani mga gerunds ngan infinitives ngan damo la”* [Oh, my GOD! even if these have been taught to them, you need to reteach them the fundamentals such as the speech parts, vocabulary development, spelling, sentence types, use of end marks, verb participles, gerund, infinitives, among others repeatedly].

Methods

The curriculum is facilitated following the prewriting-writing-post-writing schema. The lesson contents are recited using face to face and small group discussion techniques throughout the process in consideration of the clientele’s learning pace. Prewriting phase is actually the idea generation. In this stage, visuals such as pictures and graphic organizers such as concept map and plot map are commonly employed to squeeze the clientele’s

knowledge on a theme selected for the activity. Novak and Cañas (2008), contested that these techniques are indeed ideas enabler. The writing phase, on the other hand, is the actual writing stage. Here, the FLASH IT method is utilized. Briefly, this method compels the clientele to write the main and support ideas separately. Afterward, irrelevant ideas are eliminated while those of similar themes are grouped from general to specific and are numbered as they appeared in the composition. Thereafter, paragraph parts are written one after the other. Finally, the post-writing phase is the rewriting stage. Accordingly, detailed feedbacks are afforded to the clientele in a form of positive encouragement. In addition, mastered language features and suggestions to further their knowledge are also highlighted in this segment. Below is a statement from one of the respondents:

Respondent # 6: *“Siring pa man ga tagalog sir, “para paraan lang talaga” kay dapat la gud na madiskarte ka na ALS implementer kay nabaro man gud liwat mga kabataan kun nan mimiling ka hin iba iba na paagi. Kaurugan gud na gamit akon pictures, nag ka concept mapping ghap kami, map plotting ngan danay nagamit ghap ako hin question guide para la gud maka generate it mga clientele hin composition”* [You really have to be innovative in teaching writing in the ALS system. Usually we use pictures, graphic organizers, concept map, map plotting, and guide question].

Assessments

Informal and formal theme writing generation with the aid of an implementer-made rubric. A sample response is provided below:

Respondent # 9. *“Well, all of us ALS implementers use the informal and formal theme writing spree to assess our clientele. Damo pa gad iba na pamaagi pero kaurugan asya inin amon gin bubuhat pag assess kun бага nahibaro naba mga clientele pag surat hin composition. Ini liwat na informal theme na sinisiring бага deri pa gud ini hiyan sinisiring na raw product pala kay balikon mo na liwat pag tutdo an waray pa nira ka master. Kahuman an sinisiring na formal theme amo liwat an бага final output na ngan amo na an amonn gin gragraduhan using a rubric that we usually prepare”* [Well, all of us in ALS usually

use informal and formal theme writing techniques. Actually, we use other assessment techniques to determine if our clientele have already learned to write a composition. The use of informal theme is usually done to know if they already have mastery of the skill for us to decide whether to repeat the instruction or not. The informal theme writing, on the other hand, is actually their final output and is the basis for rating them using our prepared rubric].

The implementers' decision to tailor its lesson objectives and contents to the entry competencies of their clientele is pedagogically sound. However, the method and assessment practices they adhered to calls for a fresh look. Clearly, there is a need for them to adopt empirical-based practices reported effective in facilitating the skill for a diverse group of audience such as the visual thinking (Villasor, 2018); view-think-write Oted (2014); and technology-based methods including the use of Facebook and weblog as suggested by Deligero-

Monte (2016) and Ugsad (2017) respectively. Differentiated Approach (DI) by Tomlinson, (2001) may also prove beneficial. ALS implementers can attain differentiation through content, process, product, and affect in terms of the clientele's readiness, interest, and profile. Doing this requires contextualization of the session guide content through the adoption of localized instructional materials such as a text familiar to the clientele and a modified lesson objective. In so doing, content differentiation is achieved in terms of the profile, interest and readiness of the clientele. Process can be differentiated, on the other hand, by engaging the clientele in tasks pivot to paragraph development such as sentence completion, ideas sequencing, and guided and free writing activities that can be conducted individually, with peers, or by small group. Meanwhile, differentiation in product is attained through oral presentation, peer critiquing, and individual completion of activities.

Table 3: Performance of the Clientele in Waray Written Expression (N=48)

Components Percentage	Content 30%	Organization 20%	Vocabulary 20%	Language Use 25%	Mechanics 5%
Raters					
R ₁	21.20	18.22	18.35	20.21	4.01
R ₂	23.32	19.24	17.45	20.24	4.12
R ₃	22.29	17.12	14.22	19.21	4.34
Total	66.81	54.58	50.02	59.66	12.47
Grand Mean	22.27	19.19	16.67	19.89	4.16
Descriptive Level	G-A	E-VG	G-A	E-VG	G-A

Table 4: Performance of the Clientele in English Written Expression (N=48)

Components Percentage	Content 30%	Organization 20%	Vocabulary 20%	Language Use 25%	Mechanics 5%
Raters					
R ₁	22.32	16.27	12.23	16.31	3.20
R ₂	20.21	17.21	12.24	17.23	3.23
R ₃	21.43	15.23	11.22	16.19	3.14
Total	63.96	48.71	36.69	49.73	9.57
Grand Mean	21.32	16.24	11.90	16.58	3.19
Descriptive Level	F-P	G-A	F-P	F-P	F-P

Legend					
Content		Organization, Vocabulary, and Language Use			
30-27	EXCELLENT TO VERY GOOD	20-18	EXCELLENT TO VERY GOOD		
26-22	GOOD TO AVERAGE	17-14	GOOD TO AVERAGE		
21-17	FAIR TO POOR	13-10	FAIR TO POOR		
16-13	VERY POOR	9 - 7	VERY POOR		
	Mechanics	5	EXCELLENT TO VERY GOOD	4	GOOD TO AVERAGE
		3	FAIR TO POOR	2	VERY POOR

Tables 3 and 4 show the performance of the clientele in written expression as expressed in Waray and English languages respectively. For the former, its content, vocabulary, and mechanics were on the average to good level or a grand mean of 22.27, 16.67, and 4.16 respectively while its organizational and language use skills were very good to excellent or an average mean score of 19.19 and 19.89 respectively. In Jacobs and colleagues' (1981) ESL Profile, generally, these compositions were of academic value. The latter, on the other hand, its content, vocabulary, language use, and mechanics were poor to fair or an average mean of 21.32, 11.90, 16.58, and 3.19 respectively. Said compositions, however, were fairly organized or a 16.24 grand mean. Again, in Jacobs et al. (follow) In Jacobs and colleagues' ESL Profile, these compositions can be pictured as being: (1) poorly developed; (2) usage and word choice were erroneous; (3) sentences were poorly constructed; (4) misspelled words are rampant, and (5) end marks were frequently misused.

Given these results, it is evident that while ALS clientele are able to write composition of academic value in Waray; they, however, failed to write the same using English language. Lee's (2012) extensive review of the researchers' findings relative to the degree of transfer of first language (L1) competence to second language (L2) writing performance can explain this phenomenon. The researcher reported that existing research findings suggest either a close relationship between L1 and L2 writing or a little relationship between them. The case of the writing performance of the ALS clientele is veered towards the latter. Additionally, citing rich data mined from various studies focused on L2 writing, this same researcher, averred that there are factors intrinsic to L2 writing tasks that influence on L2 writing. These factors include certain task-related elements such as the writers' familiarity of the topic, tasks genre, and the prompt's subject matter that actuates task difficulty on L2 writing. Given this, it is then categorical to claim that one of these factors may thwarted the clientele's ability to write an academic composition using the English language.

Implementers and clientele's concerns in the implementation of the Writing Curriculum

Implementers' concerns

Learning related issues are among the core concerns of the A&E implementers in Barugo, Leyte in the implementation of this curriculum. This is further aggravated by economic standing, interest and motivation, age, marital affairs, and various family circumstances. Apart from those, logistic concerns, encompassing inadequacy of learning kits, state-of-the-art technologies, lack of instructional rooms, and untimely release of hazard pay and instructional tools are also among those they echoed that need attention. As to teaching the writing dimensions specified in Jacobs et al. ESL Profile, content, organization, and vocabulary were regarded as the most challenging domains to teach. This same profile defined content knowledge depth about the subject. Organization, on the other hand, is logical and cohesive skills while vocabulary refers to sophisticated use of effective word choice, appropriate register and relevant idiom demonstrated by the writer. Below is a respondent's response:

***Respondent # 4:** "I consider content as the most challenging because you need to constantly review the fundamental elements of a composition given the fact that our clientele tend to be forgetful. Katima damu gud man ha ira an mga may edad na ngan naiha na nakabalik pas eskwela. Sometimes ngani бага nagugul an na ako pag binalik balik hin pag review ngan deri na lugud kami nakaka focus hin iba pa na lessons"* [Content because you need to review the basic elements in writing a composition considering that our clientele tend to be forgetful. Also, most of them are advanced in age and had stopped studying for sometimes. There are even times that I am tired in reviewing them to the extent that other lessons are no longer given attention].

Clientele's concerns on ALS-A&E Curriculum Implementation

ALS-A&E clientele is most concerned about the heavy skill's cognitive demand necessary to become a proficient academic composition writer. These include (1) knowledge about paragraph structure; (2) consideration on paragraph aesthetics; and (3) knowledge in writing mechanics. The first demand

means that composition writing is developmental in nature as it involves topic identification, data generation and organization, prompt thinking, and prior knowledge. Secondly, it means that knowledge in details sequencing vis-à-vis specific paragraph development style is imperative for this purpose. Finally, the third demand calls for the writer to have a sizeable vocabulary, and mastery mechanics including but not limited to spacing, capitalization, and correct usage of punctuation marks. Mechanics, vocabulary, and content are the most challenging writing components to learn but fairly regard language use and organization as challenging. Data in Table 4 uphold these contestations. Below are some of their responses:

Theme1: Knowledge of Paragraph Structure

Respondent # 14: “*Ha pagsurat hin usa nga composition kinahanglan maaram ka kun anu an mga parte hini ngan kinahanglan gihapon makapag-isip ka dayon kun anu nga istorya emu hiimuun kay kaurugan ha ALS gin tatagan la kami hin halipot ng oras para makahimo hini tapos kinahanglan na maruruyagan hit mga magbarasa*” [When writing a composition, you need to know its parts very well and you should be able to think immediately of the story you will write because usually in ALS we are just given limited time to compose a paragraph that will suit the taste of the readers.]

Theme2: Paragraph Aesthetics

Respondent # 3: “*Makuri makasurat hin composition kay kinahanglan pa ngayan mabaruan an pagkakasunod-sunod han mga ideya nga mga tama na spelling han mga words na emu gagamiton. Kinahanglan gihapon mga paagi hin pagsurat. Bagay na nakakalimtan kuna ngan makuri intindihon.*” [It is difficult to write a composition because you need to learn sequencing of ideas including the spelling of the words you will use. You need as well to be knowledgeable on the different styles of paragraph composition which is something that I had already forgotten and is difficult to understand].

Theme3: Knowledge in Writing Mechanics

Respondent # 10: “*An mga butang nga nagpapakuri pagsurat hin usa nga composition*

an sako nga spacing an mga letra kon diin ka makapital letter or diin ka mabutang han sako nga mga punctuation marks. Usa pa an sako nga indent han papel, mga words na maangay han imo gin hihimo. Kahinanglan ghaon maupay emu agi para deri ka tamayan”. [Some of the factors that make writing a composition difficult include spacing, capitalization, correct usage of punctuation marks and word choice. It is also important to have a legible handwriting so that you will not be ridiculed or be embarrassed].

Given the testimonies above, the clientele contested that composition writing entails: knowledge on paragraph structure, aesthetics, and mechanics. These themes explain the phases and cognitive considerations the clientele have to hurdle in generating a composition of academic value. Theme One is about topic choice. This phase is characterized by the clientele as cognitively demanding as it calls for sentence generation, ideas organization, and adoption of paragraph styles which can only be realized if one has already a stock knowledge and prompt thinking ability. Theme 2, on the other hand, is about paragraph aesthetics which the clientele referred to as logical sequencing of details vis-à-vis adopted paragraph style. Meanwhile, the last theme, capitalizes on the idea that successful paragraph writing requires a sizeable vocabulary, and mastery of the writing mechanics.

These plights of the clientele are not surprising at all as Flower and Hayes (1981) did acknowledge of the agony writers need to endure as writing demands complex cognitive processes that require planning, organizing, generating, evaluating, and revising both the text and its objectives. Given these, it is thus imperative for the ALS implementers to consider these factors when facilitating this skill. Undoubtedly, a rich knowledge about the best scaffolds for this skill could certainly be advantage to them, and, in turn, beneficial to the clientele.

DISCUSSION

The end goal for teaching the curriculum is to develop the composition writing skill of the clientele. Its attainment is done by tailoring the lesson objectives and content to their entry competencies and overall instructional needs. FLASH IT is a method commonly used and is aided

by visuals and various graphics. Skill mastery is assessed through theme writing generation. The assessment also revealed that the clientele can easily write a composition in Waray but find it rather challenging to generate the same using the English language. Meanwhile, learning issues associated to absenteeism, age, economic standing, and marital affiliations tops the lists of concerns of the implementers that is further aggravated by logistics inadequacy. The clientele, on the other hand, regarded skill's cognitive demand as their core concerns. Content, organization, and vocabulary are writing components most challenging to teach while mechanics, vocabulary, and content to learn by the implementers and clientele respectively.

The results of this study suggest that the teaching of the Writing skill in the A&E program is rather challenging; thus, calls for circumspections on the part of the implementers. One of the ways in which the implementers can be circumspect in the delivery of the instruction-learning episodes of the skill is to embrace the principles of the theory of Scaffolding of Bruner (1977). This theory in cognition puts premium on the role of adults as well as an encouraging social interaction in language acquisition. Basically, effective scaffolds are those that are able to: (1) outline meaningful activities and specific skills to be learned, (2) allow errors to occur in the process, (3) apply dynamic and skill generative scaffolds, and (4) extend learning beyond the cognitive domain by including the emotive and affective domains (Rosenshein and Meister, 1992, cited in Araya, 2016).

Reflecting on how the skill is facilitated as revealed in the assessment results, the existing instructional scaffolds employed by the implementers rather fell short of the criteria suggestive of effective scaffolding in language skill learning as enumerated above. Therefore, the need for the A&E writing skill facilitators to adopt various scaffolds empirically tested to have enhanced the learners' ability to convey ideas in written format. The use of visuals, the common scaffolds use by the A&E implementers, though is undoubtedly still a sound practice. Its efficacy is corroborated by a research finding reported by Pineda, Dupa, and Torio (2008) which claims that its usage had augmented the writing performance of the slow-learners' elementary pupils which they operationally defined as those who require attention sustainability, non-participative, and parental help.

However, if the criteria on effective scaffolds are to be met, A&E implementers may go beyond using visuals and graphics as scaffolds in such a way that the clientele's interest to write and pursue proficiency is sustained. Thereby, realize the end goal of teaching the skill. For example, Araya (2016) averred that process writing and error correction are must try scaffolds in enhancing writing skill especially when the target goals are on the development of the learners' skill on central/controlling ideas, development, organization, style, mechanics, and audience awareness. Using educational technology tools such as computer-based puzzles, games, among others may likewise serve as vital scaffolds that the implementers may utilize in teaching the skill. The studies of Montecalvo (2014) proved that CD-ROM module is effective in augmenting the content, organization, and grammar writing mechanics of the learners. Similarly, Maricimoi's (2017) action research affirmed the effectiveness of audio visual media in enhancing students' writing skill.

Given this, the DepEd should then ensure that the A&E program implementers are continuously provided with professional development activities such as seminar-workshops on the teaching of writing vis-à-vis the nature of the learning environment and needs of the clientele. By so doing, knowledge gap among the implementers especially the newly hired is addressed. Similarly, curriculum planners for ALS may also adopt the theoretical frameworks of OBTL as another mechanism to ensure that delivery of the key elements of instruction and learning are deliberately aligned.

In sum, the result of the assessment conducted was able to unravel of a dire need for a curricular reengineering of the current instructional delivery for writing as a macro language skill. Among the many ways to refashion its instructional process currently adhered to by the A&E implementers is by adopting the scaffolding theory, empirically tested scaffolds, and adherence to the OBTL. Its adoption may tweak the conventional process; thus, meet the end goal of teaching the skill, and, in turn, create a turnaround of the clientele's writing skill. Thereby, enhance their performance in the written expression of ideas in the classroom, A&E Test, and beyond.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The study concentrated in a single district ALS learning center and employed its small population. As such, its results then may not be suggestive of a holistic picture of the field actualization of the curriculum, the clientele's performance in the written expression, and the concerns of both the implementers and clientele in its implementation. It is thus imperative that a division-wide assessment of the same be conducted and may extend to other macro language skills. In this way, an empirical-based results derived from a wider audience maybe generated and referred to for future policy formulation of the DepEd to the advance of the country's ALS.

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