



Evaluation of the Special Program in the Arts (SPA) Curriculum: Basis for Program Enhancement

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ABSTRACT

This descriptive study evaluated the implementation status of the Special Program in the Arts (SPA) program (Visual Arts, Music, Media Arts, Creative Writing, Theater Arts, and Dance) of DepEd secondary schools in Western Visayas in terms of faculty, subject offerings, facilities, library, infrastructure, laboratory, ICT facilities, administration, and internal stakeholders. The results of the evaluation were utilized to come up with an enhancement program for improvement. There were 848 respondents who were randomly selected that included students, teachers, parents, SPA school coordinators, and LGU officials specifically the chairperson of the committee on education. A researcher-made instrument, validated by panel of experts with a reliability coefficient of .89, was utilized to gather relevant data. Focus group discussion (FGD) was conducted to validate the quantitative data gathered. Descriptive statistics such as mean, standard deviation, frequency count, and percentage and Inferential statistics such as *t*-test and ANOVA (Analysis of Variance) were utilized with significance level set at .05 alpha. Results showed that the level of implementation of the Special Program in terms of input, process, output was "very high" while the rest were "high". Significant differences were noted in the level of implementation of the special program in the arts curriculum as evaluated by the respondents. The problems included "Lack of laboratory rooms especially in music, dance and theater, "lack of reference materials", and "lack of teacher specialists to handle the different art disciplines. The issues noted included "lack of support from the LGUs", "expensive demand of the SPA program", "curricular reforms brought about by the global and local changes", and "educational challenges to be addressed like student and faculty turn over". The challenges included "sustainability of the program in terms of its demands and standards," and "internal and external affairs that go with the operation of the program". The researcher advanced the strengthening of the program focusing on teachers' needs to develop creative skills needed in the SPA program. The researcher also recommended that regular supervision and monitoring shall be done to achieve consistency and excellence in terms of program implementation.

Keywords: Special Program in the Arts, program evaluation, descriptive research, Iloilo

Introduction

The Philippine curriculum has been the sources of debate and a lot of issues abound in almost every aspect of its development and implementation process and at every bureaucratic level. The quality of education has been the core of all curriculum objectives and that such curriculum reforms are dependent on the quality of local leadership, monitoring and evaluation, and sustainability (Maligalig & Albert, 2008).

The curriculum implementation solely depends on local leadership, teacher quality, and many other factors. Educational experts have observed that monitoring and evaluation of curriculum implementation are also key activities that are not effectively attended to (Balsamo, 2013). For instance, in the area of observation and evaluation, there are many elementary and secondary schools that are not evaluated. Bella O. Mariñas and Maria Pelagia Ditapat in their classic work, "Curriculum: The Philippines," have cited that while supervisors at the regional level are subject specialists, those at the division level are mostly generalists. This implies that professional lack can be experienced when the availability of teacher specialists is at stake (Cañas, Novak & González, 2004). However, the need to look into the viability and sustainability of the Special Program in the Arts curriculum must be taken into consideration to bring about reforms as regards its implementation.

SPA in particular, envisions an excellent young artist among the students, with aesthetic potential and renewed spirituality committed to the preservation of Filipino culture and heritage. SPA aims to develop students with special inclination in the different areas of performing arts namely: music, visual arts, theater arts, creative writing, media arts and dance. It is also the researcher's belief that arts represent a symbolic, universal form of communication and is, therefore, fundamental to quality education. Students use various intelligences that must be recognized and nurtured in developmentally appropriate ways. In addition, SPA is an expensive curriculum and that it is very much dependent on the support of the LGUs and other internal and external stakeholders.

SPA attributes much of its academic and social success to its strong commitment to the arts as an essential form of expression and self-esteem building. Students in the performing arts track take part in a physical conditioning regimen and receive a strong education in the cultural and historical significance of their art as they develop into competent and confident artists. Performing arts education is an integral component of a balanced educational program and provides the background for post-secondary level work, thus, making them nationally or even globally competitive in their chosen art discipline. This brings to the fore, the issue on the implementation of SPA curriculum and the results would serve as the basis for program enhancement. Specifically, evaluation would focus on faculty, curriculum, facilities, library, ICT facilities, administration and internal stakeholders as perceived by teachers, students, parents, SPA school coordinators,

and members of LGU.

The study was mainly anchored on the Multiple Intelligence Theory developed in 1983 by Dr. Howard Gardner, a professor at Harvard University. It suggests that traditional ways of testing for intelligence may be biased to certain types of individuals (Gardner, 1991). It also underscores that individuals have different minds, and no two individuals have similar intelligence. He has suggested 7 primary intelligences, in which an individual may excel in one or two, or even three of these, but nobody's good at them all. The seven intelligences were defined by Gardner as "*the capacity to solve problems or to fashion products that are valued in one or more cultural setting*" (Gardner & Hatch, 1989).

Methods

The study employed descriptive research design among the schools with SPA program in Region VI-Western Visayas, Philippines, which includes the provinces of Aklan, Antique, Negros Occidental, Capiz, Guimaras, and Iloilo. There were 848 respondents of the study from 24 SPA schools in the region. They were composed of parents, teachers, LGUs, SPA coordinators, and students. The simple random sampling method using the lottery technique was employed in the selection of the final respondents of the study.

A researcher-made instrument, validated by expert with reliability coefficient of .89 was used to gather data from the respondents. Two sets of questionnaires were used, one for the evaluation of the program in terms of the different areas considered such as faculty, subject offerings, facilities, library, infrastructure, laboratory, ICT facilities, administration, and internal stakeholders and the other for the evaluation of the different specializations such as dance, theater arts, visual arts, media arts, creative writing, and music. FGD was also utilized to validate the quantitative data gathered from the respondents and to further elaborate on the challenges and difficulties experienced by both teachers and students in the implementation of SPA program.

Descriptive data analysis tools such as frequency, percentage, mean, standard deviation were used to describe the data gathered. Inferential data analysis tools such as t-test and ANOVA were also used to establish the significance of the differences.

Results and Discussion

Level of Implementation of the SPA Curriculum

The results in Table 1 shows that the level of implementation of SPA programs in terms of the different specializations in general was "very high" (M=1.03, SD=0.03). It can also be noted from the results that Music (M=1.02, SD=0.02), Theater Arts (M=1.02, SD=0.03), and Creative Writing (M=1.02, SD=0.03) had the best mean scores while Dance (M=1.04, SD=0.04).

Table 1- Level of Implementation of SPA Curriculum in Terms of Specializations

Specialization	Mean	SD	Description
Dance	1.04	0.04	Very High
Theater Arts	1.02	0.03	Very High
Visual Arts	1.03	0.03	Very high
Creative Writing	1.02	0.03	Very High
Media Arts	1.03	0.03	Very high
Music	1.02	0.02	Very high
Total	1.03	0.03	Very High

Note: Very High (1.00–1.20); High (1.21–1.40); Average (1.41–1.60); Low (1.61–1.80); Very Low (1.81–2.00)

The results in Table 2 shows that the level of implementation of SPA programs in terms of the different areas in general was "very high" (M=4.26, SD=0.14). It can also be noted from the results that Curriculum (M=4.44, SD=0.10) and Internal Stakeholders (M=4.44, SD=0.11) tied with the highest mean scores while Library (M=3.96, SD=0.14) had the lowest mean score. Faculty, Curriculum, Administration, and Internal Stakeholders were described as "very high" while Facilities, Library, Infrastructure, and ICT Facilities were described as "high".

Table 2- Level of Implementation of SPA Curriculum in Terms of Different Areas

Area	Mean	SD	Description
Faculty	4.42	0.12	Very High
Curriculum	4.44	0.10	Very High
Facilities	4.19	0.17	High
Library	3.96	0.14	High
Infrastructure	4.13	0.18	High
ICT Facilities	4.12	0.10	High
Administration	4.39	0.18	Very High
Internal Stakeholders	4.44	0.11	Very High
Total	4.26	0.14	Very High

Note: Very High (4.21-5.00); High (3.41-4.20); Average (2.61-3.40); Low (1.81-2.60); Very Low (1.00-1.80)

In the study of Hoolbrook et al. (2000), it was stressed that in the matter of curriculum implementation, the issue of sustainability cannot be dismissed. The issue therein poses the picture why the respondents had indicated a very high level of implementation. Even if some respondents recorded only a high level, the implementation of the program remained to be in a satisfactory performance. Further, the results of a comprehensive appraisal of the Philippines education system revealed that a great deal was desired as far as the quality of education was concerned. There was a need for students to develop higher critical, logical thinking skills; communication skills, values development and/or general manual skills for higher education or the world of work. It was also projected that, due to financial difficulties, students would remain in the government schools and families would begin to move away from the private schools to less expensive public schools. This study proved that somehow school administrators create strategies to find out the present status of the program by conducted studies to evaluate how far the program has achieved. At certain times, curricular reforms were also undertaken in order to meet the constant new demands being made on the educational system. For the nationwide implementation of the present school curriculum, there has been massive training of schoolteachers and orientation of school heads and supervisors. However, the national-level training of trainers' program was watered down at the regional and division levels and this affected the school implementation. This situation might have been the cause of the differences in the respondents' opinions as regards the program.

Difference in the Implementation of SPA Curriculum

The ANOVA results in Table 3 revealed that significant differences existed in the implementation of the Special Program in the Arts Curriculum in terms of input, process, output as perceived by teachers, students, parents, SPA school coordinators, and LGUs, $F(4,843)=9.267, p=.000$.

Table 3-Differences in the Implementation of SPA Curriculum in Secondary Schools in Western Visayas

Implementation of SPS Curriculum	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig	Description
Between Groups	7.323	4	1.831	9.267	.000*	Significant
Within Groups	166.532	843	.198			
Total	173.855	847				

* $p < .05$

Problems, Issues, and Concerns Encountered in the Implementation of SPA Curriculum

The respondents stated that the "lack of laboratory rooms especially in music, dance, and theater" emerged first in the list of the problems noted, followed by "lack of reference materials," and last "lack of teacher specialists to handle the different disciplines."

In terms of issues that the respondents had noted, the following were the most common responses, "lack of support from the LGUs, expensive demands of the SPA program," "curricular reforms brought about by global and local changes" and "educational challenges to be addressed like student and faculty turn over."

In terms of the challenges, the respondents' most common views were, "sustainability of the program in terms of its demands and standards," and "internal and external affairs that go with the operation of the program."

Enhancement Program for the Implementation of the Special Program in the Arts Curriculum

Table 4 shows the designed Enhancement Program for the Implementation of the Special Program in the Arts Curriculum. This Enhancement Program was made after all the data needed have been secured and collated. Based on the data from the questionnaires generated for this purpose, the interview responses generated from the informal interview and the Focus Group Discussion (FGD), and the other documents specifically made for the purposes of this investigation, the researcher has finally drafted the enhancement program found below. The Enhancement Program has utilized the Focus Group Discussion (FGD) as the primary

source of data. This part of the paper included the following: 1) Focus Group Discussion Protocol for the Enhancement Program for the Implementation of the Special Program in the Arts Curriculum, 2) The Enhancement Program; and the 3) the Discussion Guide. However, the researcher would only show the supervisory enhancement program.

The Supervisory Enhancement Program for the implementation of the Special Program in the Arts Curriculum describes the enhancement strategies/activities that the respondents concerned can engage into assure success in the program's implementation. The matrix below shows the details of the enhancement program that can be utilized by any SPA school.

Table 4-Matrix of the Supervisory Enhancement Program

Significant Findings	Project Course Of Action	Brief Description	Objectives	Implementation Strategies	Expected Output	Desired Outcomes
Lack of teachers specialists to handle different description	Hire qualified teachers (If not resident artists)	Human resource must be tapped to help carry this out	to provide SPA teachers opportunities for professional exposure and skills building	Campaign and incentives to SPA teachers who avail of professional upgrading and trainings	Improve on teacher qualification and training	Leveling up of teacher specialists Tapping of SPA teachers to handle programs
Lack of laboratory rooms	Look for resources, benevolent persons to help in the construction of laboratory classrooms	Organize a mechanism to tap generous people to donate and extent financial support	to look for philanthropists to provide physical facilities to SPA programs	Income generating activities	Enhanced facilities	Provision of state of the art classrooms to cater to the different disciplines
Sustainability of the program in terms of its demands and standards	Creating a program or innovations that can help assure sustainability	Come up with sustainable programs to attract more students to the program	to enhance the program through income generating activities like productions etc.	Periodic evaluation of the SPA program to find out its need in the curriculum	SPA curriculum in place	Sustainable program in the next ten years.
Lack of Skills of Teacher Specialists	Strengthening Creative Diligence in teacher the Arts	To introduce effective teaching strategies in teaching the Arts Conduct regular workshop on skills development	to expose teachers to a different learning environment as well as give them a hands-on experience through skills training-workshop and to provide SPA teachers opportunities for self-expression, creativity, friendship and camaraderie	Skills Training-Workshop for SPA teachers	Improved teachers performance and skills in teaching different art disciplines	Levelling up of teacher specialists through regular progressive skills development training-workshop

Conclusions and Recommendations

The respondents' evaluation was high in the context of the implementation of the SPA program. The implementation of the Special program for the arts has to be looked into to further ascertain the areas where the level of implementation was only "high." SPA problems, issues, and challenges can pave the venue on how the existing curriculum may proceed specifically by conducting similar studies. Moreover, Enhancement Programs implementation and monitoring may assure

sustainability on the part of the SPA curriculum.

This study has the potential value for further research. The researcher recommends that the study be replicated to cover different regions to widen its coverage and to ensure representativeness. A careful scrutiny into how the program is being run in each region must be looked into and further establish enhancement programs to better the functioning of the existing program. Moreover, further research shall be explored particularly on the level of implementation of SPA curriculum in public schools in the country.

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