

Implementation Of Language Proficiency For Teachers (Lpt) Project And Its Impact On Teachers' Social And Professional Advancement

Maria Cristina S. Dela Cerna¹, Rolly G. Salvaleon²

¹North Eastern Mindanao State University, Philippines Email: delacernamariacristina@gmail.com

²North Eastern Mindanao State University, Philippines Email: rgsalvaleon@nemu.edu.ph

Abstract

One of the four-fold function of a State University in the Philippines is its Extension Services, which serves as its Corporate Social Responsibility in the community. Language Proficiency for Teachers (LPT) is one of the extension projects of the North Eastern Mindanao State University since 2016 up to the present under Continuing Professional Development Program. The goal of this project is to provide knowledge and skills to all professionals within the city as well as the province as a whole. Given the duration of its implementation, this impact assessment aimed to answer three objectives; (1) evaluate the implementation of LPT project; (2) measure its impact to the beneficiaries' social and professional advancement; and (3) determine the barriers in the implementation of the project. To this end, the study adopts the concurrent mixed-methods research design, which combines quantitative method through a survey questionnaire and qualitative method through interview. Results reveals that the LPT project in general gets an overall weighted mean of 4.92 described as best. Two themes are identified in terms of the impact of the project to the beneficiaries which are deepening professional knowledge in the discipline and advancement of professional growth. Lastly, the barriers on the project implementation includes time constraint, financial issues, overlapping schedules and delayed supplies due to procurement process. Further, the findings give baseline data which will help the project implementers improve the projects to best serve its purpose.

Keywords: Language proficiency for teachers, extension project, implementation, impact, barriers, social and professional advancement

Introduction

The North Eastern Mindanao State University, as the only state university in the Province of Surigao del Sur, aspires to become a transformative leading university not only in this part of the region, but also in Asia and the Pacific. To achieve this vision, the University intends to carry out its fourfold functions of providing quality instruction, relevant research, sustainable extension, and viable production in an effective and efficient manner.

The University's Extension Services serves as its link to the community and external stakeholders, with the goal of transferring knowledge and technology in accordance with its human resource expertise and programs offered. Extension is not part of academic requirements, but rather an outreach effort to improve the quality of life

in the community (NEMSU MTDP, FY 2021-2025). One of the University's extension programs is the Continuing Professional Development Program. This Program aims to extend the expertise of its faculty to community professionals in response to the government's requirement that Filipino professionals pursue continuing professional development. This is carried out through holding relevant training and seminars to meet the urgent needs of professionals in various agencies and organizations in the community in terms of knowledge, skills, and behavior. Research Capability Building, (b) Content and Pedagogical Skills Improvement, and (c) Communication Skills Development are some of the initiatives and activities under this program.

As a result, the term "Language Proficiency for Teachers" (LPT) was coined. Since 2016, this extension project has been ongoing. The goal of this project is to provide knowledge and skills to all professionals in the city as well as the province as a whole. Professional development includes all natural learning experiences as well as conscious and planned activities that are intended to be of direct or indirect benefit to the individual, group, or school, and which contribute to the quality of education in the classroom. It is the process by which teachers, alone or in collaboration with others, review, renew, and extend their commitment as change agents to the moral purpose of teaching; and by which they acquire and critically develop the knowledge, skills, and emotional intelligence required for good professional thinking, planning, and practice with children, young people, and colleagues at all stages of their teaching careers" (Day, 2016). Reynolds et al. (2015) stated that for a school's development plan to have an impact on students' achievement, a link between development strategies and curriculum or teaching modifications must be in place. Continuing professional development should be a lifelong, systematic, and planned process for maintaining and developing professional competence, creativity, and innovation (Kloosterman, 2017).

Given the duration of its implementation, it was timely and relevant to conduct an impact evaluation of the extension project on the beneficiaries' social and professional lives. Based on this argument, the present impact assessment aimed to evaluate the implementation of Language Proficiency for Teachers' Project as one of the community extension projects of the North Eastern Mindanao State University, at the same time measure its impact to the beneficiaries. Specifically, it sought to:

1. Determine the implementation of all activities of LPT project in terms of planning and management; timely conduct of the activity; choice of topics; relevance of the activity; monitoring and evaluation; sustainable funding; and impact to beneficiaries;
2. Determine the the impact of the project to the beneficiaries in term of their

social and professional advancement; and

3. Describe the barriers in the implementation of the project.

Literature review

Theoretical background

This research was founded on the Theory of Change (ToC). The theory emphasizes how the inputs provided (funds, people, training, and regulatory or policy changes) result in the desired outcomes and impacts. The theory identifies the causal chain steps (the DMF in ADB terminology) and the underlying assumptions that must be true for the theory to work as expected (Carvalho and White, 2004). The Theory of Change also aids in the identification of the indicators or variables on which data should be collected, and it may identify "countertheories" in which the intervention works in ways other than those intended, resulting in unintended consequences. Problem trees, which are used for intervention design at ADB and elsewhere, can be useful inputs for defining theory.

This theory is initially conceptualized when projects, policies, and programs (hereinafter referred to as "interventions") are designed, but IE is frequently planned after this point, when there is greater certainty about whether an intervention will occur. This means that the first step is to review existing ToC expressions, such as logical frameworks (DMFs), and consult with relevant stakeholders about updates and revisions. In most cases, more detail than was previously developed for project preparation will be required to inform IE design (Vogel, 2012).

The ToC preparation process is best informed by regularly involving key stakeholders, whose perspectives may be sought as the ToC is developed. During the IE design phase, one method is to hold preparatory workshops with program staff and management. Obtaining program staff buy-in to identifying the ToC that underpins evaluation questions will aid in obtaining their support for proposed evaluation designs (White, 2013).

Another theory that supported this study was Bibb Latané's Social Impact

Theory. This theory emphasizes four fundamental rules that address how individuals can be sources or targets of social influence. The strength of the source of impact, the immediacy of the event, and the number of sources exerting the impact all contribute to social impact. The more impact targets there are, the less impact each individual target has. As a result, social impact theory proposes that the amount of influence a person feels in group settings is determined by (a) the group's strength (power or social status), (b) the group's immediacy (physical or psychological distance), and (c) the number of people in the group exerting the social influence (Jackson, 1987).

Impact assessment and its importance to education

According to Français (2019), impact evaluation assists in demonstrating project success or failure as well as providing accountability to all stakeholders, including implementer and beneficiaries. It aids in determining whether and how well an intervention worked to effect change in a specific community of interest or in the lives of our target populations, while demonstrating the magnitude of the impact and how it occurred. Furthermore, Peralta (2021) articulated that impact evaluations are also useful in navigating real-world needs and providing answers to project or program design questions to determine which, among several alternatives, is the most effective approach, represents the greatest benefits to the target communities, offers the best value for money, and is best suited for scale-up and replication. This provides evidence for organizations to make informed decisions about redesigning current projects or planning future interventions. Impact evaluation also enables organizations to use evaluation findings to advocate for changes in behavior, attitudes, policy, and legislation at all levels (Peralta, 2021).

Indeed, the importance of extension service as an educational imperative cannot be overstated, given how closely it is linked to socioeconomic growth as a component of university administration. It is concerned not only with the process, output, and outcome,

but also with the impact on the beneficiaries and the community as a whole. Impact assessment also functions as a framework for addressing community development issues. This strategy assists implementer in determining the impact of a particular project on a community early on.

Research method

The concurrent mixed-methods research design was used in this study, which combined qualitative and quantitative methodologies. According to Creswell (2003), in concurrent mixed methods research strategies, qualitative and quantitative data were collected at the same time or in parallel, as the name implies. Concurrent nested design was specifically used for this study. The term concurrent denoted the collection of both qualitative and quantitative data at the same time. In concurrent nested studies, however, one of the methods predominated while the other was embedded or nested.

The quantitative component of the study was used to describe the implementation of the extension project. After each training session, participants were given a University-standardized survey questionnaire to evaluate its implementation. Their responses were analyzed using the frequency distribution weighted mean.

The qualitative design, on the other hand, was used through the conduct of interviews to analyze the impact of the project on the beneficiaries' social and professional advancement, and the barriers in the implementation of the project. Interviews were conducted with various participants, including extension implementer, extension personnel, and beneficiaries, in a semi-structured format. During the transcription of the collected data, thematic analysis was also used. Transcripts from each interview were also examined and categorized into themes. Each primary concept has been illustrated with quotations.

Under the Language Proficiency for Teachers' Project, a total of fourteen (14) training were conducted from 2016 up to the present. These were attended by a total of 584 participants.

Table 1. Training conducted and distribution of participants under LPT project

Activities	Participants
Webinar on Using Effective Strategies in Teaching English in the New Normal	27
Webinar on Using Effective Instructional Materials (IMs) in Teaching English in the New Normal	25
Webinar on Technical Writing	35
Webinar on Skills Enhancement on Effective Communication	93
Webinar on Speech Improvement Training/Workshop for Teachers	40
Webinar on Enhancing Technical Skills of the Local Officials through Technical Writing	20
Webinar on Enhancing Schools Resources through Instructional Aids	38
Webinar Sa Makabagong Estratihiya sa Pgtuturo	45
Webinar on Pedagogy in the New Normal	24
Seminar on Approaches in Teaching English	95
Seminar on Language Study and Language Teaching	35
Seminar on Language Studies and Language Teaching: From Theory to Practice	35
Language Change and Varieties of English	50
Thesis Seminar on Sociolinguistics	20
Total - 14 Training	584

Results and discussion

LPT extension project implementation
 This section discusses the evaluation results of the various training that were completed. Participants are asked to rate the indicators on

the assessment form, with 5 being the best and 1 being the poor. This evaluation form is distributed on a regular basis in order to learn about the beneficiaries' reactions to the training.

Table 2. LPT extension project implementation

Activities	Implementation Indices								
		Planni ng and Manag ement	Time ly Cond uct of the Activ ity	Cho ice of Topi cs	Releva nce of the Activit y	Monitorin g and Evaluation	Sustain -able Fundin g	Impact to Benefi ciaries	Overall Mean and Adject ival Rating
Webinar on Using Effective Strategies in Teaching English in the New Normal	WD	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
Webinar on Using Effective Instructional Materials (IMs) in Teaching English in the New Normal	AR	Best	Best	Best	Best	Best	Best	Best	Best
Webinar on Technical Writing	WD	5	4.92	5	4.88	5	5	5	4.97
Webinar on Skills Enhancement on Effective Communication	AR	Best	Best	Best	Best	Best	Best	Best	Best
Webinar on Technical Writing	WD	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
Webinar on Skills Enhancement on Effective Communication	AR	Best	Best	Best	Best	Best	Best	Best	Best
Webinar on Skills Enhancement on Effective Communication	WD	4.94	4.88	4.93	4.97	5	5	5	4.96

Effective Communication Webinar on Speech Improvement Training/Workshop for Teachers	AR	Best	Best	Best	Best	Best	Best	Best	Best
Webinar on Enhancing Technical Skills of the Local Officials through Technical Writing	WD	4.92	4.97	5	5	4.9	5	5	4.97
Webinar on Enhancing Schools Resources through Instructional Aids	AR	Best	Best	Best	Best	Best	Best	Best	Best
Webinar Sa Makabagong Estratihiya sa Pgtuturo	WD	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
Webinar on Pedagogy in the New Normal	AR	Best	Best	Best	Best	Best	Best	Best	Best
Seminar on Approaches in Teaching English	WD	4.90	4.85	4.96	4.90	4.83	5	5	4.92
Seminar on Language Study and Language Teaching	AR	Best	Best	Best	Best	Best	Best	Best	Best
Seminar on Language Studies and Language Teaching: From Theory to Practice	WD	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
Language Change and Varieties of English	AR	Best	Best	Best	Best	Best	Best	Best	Best
Thesis Seminar on Sociolinguistics	WD	4.9	4.84	5	5	5	5	5	4.96
	AR	Best	Best	Best	Best	Best	Best	Best	Best
Overall Weighted Mean	WD	4.96	4.95	4.98	4.98	4.61	4.99	5	4.92

Range: 1.00 - 1.79 Poor
 1.80 - 2.39 Fair
 2.40 - 3.19 Good
 3.20 - 4.09 Better
 4.10 - 5.00 Best

Table 2 denotes that the LPT projects in general got an overall weighted mean of 4.92 described as best. This indicates that all beneficiaries found all the training to have the best planning and management; that they are conducted timely; that training topics are well chosen and relevant; that they are effectively monitored and evaluated; that the

funding supports was sustainable; and that they had positive impact to the beneficiaries.

Among all the indicators, Impact to Beneficiaries gets the highest weighted mean of perfect 5 described as best. This means that the LPT project provide a positive impact to the beneficiaries in effectively extending the expertise of the University faculty to community professionals in response to the

government's requirement that Filipino professionals pursue continuing professional development.

On the other hand, Monitoring and Evaluation get the lowest weighted mean of 4.61 described as best. This is because after project's third year of implementation was also the time when the global pandemic hits the world. As a result, the University has to temporarily close its door and do its best to perform its functions remotely until pandemic related concerns are resolved. This forceful shift comes with little warning and forces school leaders and faculty to be relentless in adapting to this transition (Malong, 2021). Moreover, as the University's office of the Extension Services follows flexible mechanism in the delivery of their extension programs to the adopted communities and partner agencies,

monitoring and evaluation of the extension projects bring another challenge to project implementer.

Impact to the LPT project to the beneficiaries' social and professional advancement

The transcripts of the interviews with the participants are shown in Table 3. This is done through the use of thematic analysis. The outcome reveals that there is a genuine influence or beneficial effect on the participants. In general, it boosted professional confidence and competence, as well as teacher motivation, abilities, and classroom practice. It demonstrates that the knowledge has been digested and integrated into practice. It allows the teacher to see the student's progress.

Table 3. Thematic analysis of the impact of the LPT project to the beneficiaries' social and professional advancement

Themes	Illustrative Quotes
Deepening Professional Knowledge in the Discipline	“ when I first attended the seminar, I could say it benefited me a lot especially I am new to teaching. It is an added knowledge which I can apply in the classroom”
	“ through the series of activities conducted from the LPT, I learned to face the challenges I face in my teaching career especially in applying different approaches in the classroom.”
	“ the inputs are helpful”
	“very informative”
Advancement of Professional Growth	“ the topic which I could not forget that I could say there is really an impact to my professional growth was on research. I really had no background since I have not tried writing. Because of this, I got now the idea where to start and how to do it. Thank you NEMSU! 'much more effective teacher now'

According to Bolam (2000), training and seminar leads the participants to believe that the impact of one person's professional development can be significant within their particular context. What is important is that the skills are used alongside the implementation of changes in systems and practices. This is the key that brings a qualitative difference to change by encouraging the the continuing development of practice. Hence, it would open up wider opportunities within their respective schools and further opportunities outside it, and that it would widen their interests, increase confidence and provide them with the information on current issues in education.

Barriers in the implementation of the LPT project

The most prevalent hurdles to project implementation include time constraints, money concerns, schedule overlap, and the procurement procedure, according to the most popular responses. Time constraints affect not just the project's implementation but also its goals. The implementer has a lot of responsibilities, which makes it difficult for them to complete the project on schedule. It simply states that if the expansion project is not completed on time, it will have an impact on the timeline and objective for each quarter. Berman (2014) stresses that any

delay of the task delays the project, which can effectively be significant. If the tasks cannot be performed when scheduled something is lost.

Another concern is financial issues, which refers to the project's money allocation. Although expansion has a fund, issues are unavoidable. The COA governs all financial matters. To put it another way, the lengthy procedure stymies implementation. There are some budgetary requirements that have yet to be fulfilled. For example, the transportation of specialists and their honorarium has been questioned. As a result, it has an impact on the implementation.

On the other hand, the implementer and participants have a wide range of duties. Even though they would like to accomplish all of the initiatives and activities, they have lost motivation because their priorities have been altered. They lost sight of what they needed to do and when they needed to do it. An anxious and exhausted implementer will never believe he's made any progress. Several of the participants, however, were unable to participate in the events due to the same reason. They have a lot of academic activities, deadlines, and other duties to juggle. This occurrence suggests that being overburdened with activities and functions is detrimental to their motivation to learn and perform.

Conclusion

With the positive findings of the study, it has been discovered that the LPT has a positive impact on the beneficiaries. With this finding, it is worth noting that the LPT project contributes to the goal of the University's Extension Services to the improvement of the lives of the rural and urban poor through transfer of technology and knowledge in consonance to the University's Medium Term Development Plan for FY 2021-2025. On the other hand, extensive programs, too, should be carefully monitored and analyzed to determine their impact on participants.

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