

Problems Encountered in the Alternative Learning System in Tanauan City

Ivan Perry B. Mercado

Centro Escolar University, Makati Campus
Philippines

Abstract

This paper discusses a recent study on the problems encountered in the Alternative Learning System in Tanauan City. The respondents were the students who were enrolled in ALS Tanauan. They belong to different grade and year levels. First, the researcher tried to determine the possible problems that the students encounter or experience in their school. Then they were asked to assess the extent of the problem in terms of content and instruction, assessment and evaluation and lastly the resources. The respondents were also asked for their suggestions to address or solve the problems that they encounter. The results were then used to discuss its implications in the implementation of Alternative Learning System in the city.

Keywords: Alternative Learning System, education, teaching, learning

Introduction

Alternative learning system is a program that serves students at any level, serves suspended or expelled students, serves students whose learning styles are better served in an alternative program, or provides individualized programs outside of a standard classroom setting in a caring atmosphere in which students learn the skills necessary to redirect their lives.

The Alternative Learning System (ALS) is a ladderized, modular non-formal education program in the Philippines for dropouts in elementary and secondary schools, out-of-school youths, non-readers, working Filipinos and even senior citizens. It is part of the education system of the Philippines but an alternative to the regular classroom studies where Filipino students are required to attend daily. The alternative system only requires students to choose schedules according to their choice and availability.[1]

The program has two different ways for conducting instruction; school-based and community-based. On the school-based program for ALS, instructions are conducted in school campuses while in the community-based program, formal instruction are conducted in community halls or on private places. The ALS program follows uniform lesson modules for all academic subjects covering the sciences, mathematics, English, Filipino, social studies, current events among others. Delivery of instructions is provided by government-paid instructors or by private non-government organization.[2]

The Department of Education in Tanauan City has successfully accomplished the different Alternative Learning System programs and projects such as the (BLP) Basic Literacy Program, (A&E) Accreditation & Equivalency System both Elementary and Secondary Level which were undertaken with the help of their service provider the (ACLC) AMA Computer Learning Center Tanauan Branch, the wives of the members of Rotary Club of Tanauan, and the LGU'S such as the Barangay Officials and Barangay Secretary in the different Community Learning Center (CLC) within the District. They also had (AGAP) ALS Gabay sa Pamayanan funded by BALS (Bureau of Alternative Learning System). They also offered Literacy Cum Livelihood to their learners and they already gave them certification for completion.

The ALS in Tanauan South District has one full time District ALS Coordinator, two Mobile Teachers and one Instructional Manager. Although they are only four in the District, they did their best to help their learners to improve their lives through their literacy classes and livelihood trainings offered to them.

There are many objectives in establishing ALS in Tanauan City. The first one is to lessen if not totally eradicate the existing number of illiterates in the City. Another objective is to develop positive attitude, interest and proper discipline of the learners through the literacy classes, literacy cum livelihood and trainings, sports, foundation day and other worthwhile activities. The last objective is to help the Out-of-School Children, Youth and Adults to participate in all ALS programs and projects to be able to assimilate themselves in their surroundings and community.

Like any organization, ALS Tanauan has not been spared with challenges and problems. One problem is the difficulty in recruiting learners especially in Basic Literacy Program (BLP) owing to shyness and indifferences. This is true and prevalent among adults. There are some behavioural problems like absenteeism. There are also some negative thoughts from the parents and even barangay officials on ALS programs and projects. Another problem is insufficient fund to sustain the programs and projects of ALS.

It is in this vein that the researcher decided to conduct a study on the problems encountered by the students of the Alternative Learning System in Tanauan.

Materials and Methods

Sampling Site

The study was conducted in Tanauan South Central School. The school has the section for the alternative learning system.

Population Frame and Sample Size

The study included the students enrolled in the Alternative Learning System in Tanauan. They were chosen through random sampling technique. There were 42 students who answered the questionnaires. Their age ranges from 14-20 years old. They were secondary and elementary students in ALS.

Data Gathering Procedure

The data pertaining to the study were gathered using a researcher made questionnaire. The first part of the questionnaire was the profile of the respondents. Part two was the assessment of the different problems encountered by the students in the alternative learning system in Tanauan. The researcher divided the problems into three. The first is about the content and instruction. The second section is about assessment and evaluation. The third part is about the resources. The last part was about the suggestions of the students to address the problems that they encounter in ALS Tanauan. All the gathered data from the respondents were computed using the SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) program.

Statistical Treatment

The researcher used different statistical measures in the treatment of data, depending on its appropriateness. For the profile of the respondents, the percentage was used. Then, the research computed the Mean of the assessment of the students regarding the problems encountered by the students of ALS in Tanauan. The verbal interpretation was also given.

Results and Discussion

1. Gender of the Respondents

Gender	F	%
Female	17	40.48
Male	25	59.52
TOTAL	42	100

The data shows that most of the respondents were represented by males with 59.52% while females were represented by 40.48% of the total number of respondents. In the ALS in Tanauan, there are more male than female students. The common reasons why there are more male students are because they are usually the students who stopped from their regular schooling. Some of them were the so called problematic students before. They were also either the bully or the bullied. Some of the male respondents were also working students. The female students were mostly asked by their parents to stop from attending the regular school to prioritize either their male siblings or their older siblings.

2. Grade and Year Level of the Respondents

	F	%
Secondary	34	80.95
Elementary	8	19.05
TOTAL	243	100

The table shows that majority of the students are enrolled in the secondary level with the frequency of 34 and the percentage of 80.95%. Meanwhile the elementary students were only 8 with the percentage of 19.05. There are more secondary students because they are usually the students who stopped when they were in high school in the regular school. Although there were eight elementary students, they were already 14 years old and above. They just have to pass the equivalency test for them to enroll in the secondary level. They are given a chance to study again then pass the accreditation and equivalency test.

3. Problems in the Content and Instruction in the Alternative Learning System

Content and Instruction	Mean	Verbal Interpretation
Length of the program	3.39	Some Extent
Mastery of the Subject Matter	3.13	Some Extent
Instructional Delivery	2.95	Some Extent
Scheduling Activities	2.96	Some Extent
Teacher-Student Ratio	2.99	Some Extent
Availability of Relevant and Innovative Programs	2.52	Some Extent
Number of Curricular and Extra Curricular	2.25	Little Extent
Flexibility of the Teachers	2.36	Little Extent
Ability to Match the Demands of the Labor Market	2.41	Little Extent
Implementation of School's Policies and Procedures	2.71	Some Extent
TOTAL	2.77	Some Extent

The table shows the problems of the students in the content and instruction in the alternative learning system in Tanauan. The length of the program/course had a mean of 3.39 and verbal interpretation of some extent. The mastery of the subject matter had mean of 3.13 and verbal interpretation of some extent. The instructional delivery had a mean of 2.95 verbal interpretation of some extent. Scheduling of Activities had the mean of 2.96 and verbal interpretation of some extent. The teacher-student ratio had a mean of 2.99 and verbal interpretation of some extent. The availability of relevant and innovative programs had a mean of 2.52 and verbal interpretation of some extent. The number of curricular and co-curricular activities had mean of 2.25 and verbal interpretation of little extent. Flexibility of the teachers to the individual needs of the students had mean of 2.36 and verbal interpretation of little extent. The ability to match the demands of the labor market and industry had a mean of 2.41 and verbal interpretation of little extent. Lastly, the implementation of school's policies and procedures had mean of 2.71 and verbal interpretation of some.

The data reveal that the students had minimal problems in the content and instruction. They encountered more problems in the length of the program or course. This can be attributed to the fact that some students are having a hard time attending all their classes because of different reasons. There are also some suspensions of classes that affect the number of days that they go to school. Some students said that the course is too short. But there are also some students who are saying that the length of the program is too long.

Meanwhile, the number of curricular and co-curricular activities had the lowest mean which shows that the students experience fewer problems with that aspect. They are contended with the number of activities that they have in the school. These activities include the Brigada Eskwela, tree planting, sports fest and other activities.

4. Problems in the Assessment and Evaluation in the Alternative Learning System

Assessment and Evaluation	Mean	Verbal Interpretation
Performance of the Graduates in the A&E Test	2.75	Some Extent
Quality of Various Assessment Tools	2.74	Some Extent
Content of Examination	2.64	Some Extent
Scheduling of Examination	2.45	Little Extent
Number of Examination and Assessment Tests	2.61	Some Extent
Quality of Examination and Assessment Tests	2.38	Little Extent
Practicability of Assessment Procedures	2.60	Some Extent
Measurement of Practical Application in Real Life Situation	2.59	Some Extent
TOTAL	2.60	Some Extent

As seen in the table, the students rated the problems that they encountered in the assessment and evaluation in the alternative learning system. The performance of the graduates in the A&E Test had a mean of 2.75 and verbal interpretation of some extent. Quality of various assessment tools had mean of 2.74 and verbal interpretation of some extent. Content of examination had a mean of 2.64 and verbal interpretation of some extent. Scheduling of examination had a mean of 2.45 and verbal interpretation of some extent. Number of examination and assessment tools had a mean of 2.61 and verbal interpretation of some extent. Quality of examination and assessment tools had a mean of 2.38 and verbal interpretation of little extent. Practicability of Assessment procedures had a mean of 2.60 and verbal interpretation of some extent. Lastly, measurement of practical application in real situation had a mean of 2.59 and verbal interpretation of some extent.

The ALS in Tanauan had minimal problems in the assessment and evaluation. The performance of the students in the Accreditation and Equivalency Test had the highest mean may be because they know some students who were not able to pass the test in their first take. The school can do so much. The student is still responsible to study really hard to pass the test.

On the contrary, the quality of the examination and assessment tests got the lowest mean which means that the students experienced very minimal problems with that aspect. They are are contented with their exams. They know that these exams are carefully made by the experts to really gauge what they learned from their lessons. The scheduling of the exams also got a low mean which that means the students are not having a hard time with the schedule of the examination. They are scheduled based on the availability and convenience of the students. They consider that some of their students are also working.

5. Problems in the Resources in the Alternative Learning System

Resources	Mean	Verbal Interpretation
Availability of Instructional Resources	2.57	Some Extent
Provision for Expanded Scholarship Program	2.37	Little Extent
Availability of the State of the Art Equipment	2.83	Some Extent
Accessibility and Relevance of Educational Materials	2.64	Some Extent
Construction, Maintenance and Improvement of School Facilities	2.79	Some Extent
Appropriateness of Educational Materials	2.29	Little Extent
TOTAL	2.58	Some Extent

The table shows the problems encountered by the respondents in the resources used in the alternative learning system. Availability of instructional materials had mean of 2.57 and verbal interpretation of some extent. Provision for expanded scholarship program had a mean of 2.37 and verbal interpretation of little extent. Availability of the state of the art equipment had a mean of 2.83 and verbal interpretation of some extent. Accessibility and relevance of educational materials had a mean of 2.64 and verbal interpretation of some extent. Construction, maintenance and improvement of school facilities had a mean of 2.79 and verbal interpretation of some extent. Lastly the appropriateness of educational materials had a mean of 2.29 and verbal interpretation of little extent.

The data reveals that the students also experienced minimal problems when it comes to resources. The students rated the availability of the state of the art equipment with the highest mean. The students said that there are some still need to have more equipment that will help them with their studies.

Meanwhile, the lowest mean belonged to the appropriateness of the educational materials which means that the students are contented with the materials that they have in school. The ALS Tanauan City provides enough number and adequate number of educational materials. There are some educational materials that the student can even borrow. The materials are highly engaging and very interesting to use. The students enjoy using it and at the same time they learn a lot from it.

6. Solutions Suggested by the Students to Solve the Problems Encountered in the Alternative Learning System in Tanauan City.

The students gave some suggestions to solve the problems that they encountered in ALS Tanauan. Some students suggested that all ALS students should donate more bottles for them to sell so that they have more additional funds that can help the improvement of the school facilities. They also suggested seeking funds from the government even to their barangay captains and other barangay officials. They also suggested improving the materials and apparatus that they use in their experiments. They also suggested that there should be more improvements in their school facilities. Some students also suggested if they can have more teachers. There are some students also that suggested that they should help one another in addressing the problems that they encounter. They should not rely only from their teachers and coordinators in solving the problems. There are also many students that suggested that they should help one another in addressing the problems that they encounter. They should not rely only from their teachers and coordinators in solving the problems. They can do this by means of making sure that they are using the school facilities properly and maintaining the cleanliness of the school. They suggesting of having some fund raising activities so that they can have more funds for the improvement of the school. They can also solicit some funds from their successful alumni.

In general, the students are actually contented with the ALS system in Tanauan, they only gave some suggestions to further improve the services that they render to the students.

7. The Implications of the Results in the Implementation of the Alternative Learning System

The results imply that although the students encounter problems in ALS Tanauan, they only consider these problems to some extent. It also shows that there are still some improvements to be done for better implementation of ALS. Although the ALS is doing great in Tanauan, some problems are still encountered that should be solved. These problems should be addressed right away for the sake of the students. These students should be given special attention since they are not regular students. They deserve the right kind of education so that they can have a better future.

Conclusions

1. The students experience some problems in ALS Tanauan like the length of the program and course; the performance in the accreditation and equivalency test; and the availability of the state-of-the art equipment.
2. The problems encountered by the students have implications to the services rendered by ALS Tanauan.
3. The students of ALS Tanauan are willing to help in solving the problems that they encounter.

Recommendations

1. The Alternative Learning System officials and administration should address the problems encountered by the students.
2. The administration should think of ways to raise more funds and not rely only to the budget given to them by DEPED.
3. The students should do their part in maintaining the school facilities and equipment in good condition.
4. The students should perform well in school by attending the classes regularly, having discipline in the classes and studying their lessons well.

References

- [1] [www.courses.com.ph/alternative learning system](http://www.courses.com.ph/alternative%20learning%20system).
- [2] alternativelearningph.blogspot.com