Preparedness of [K-12] teachers for the implementation of the senior high curriculum in a selected Philippine private school

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Abstract. The study investigates the preparedness of teachers at a private school for the implementation of the K-12 Senior High School curriculum. To know this, inquiries were made to determine whether the teachers considered themselves ready for the new curriculum and whether they actually possess the eligibilities and competencies required to satisfy the criteria for prepared teachers. Investigations were also conducted to identify the supports that the school provides which the teachers recognize as contributory to their preparedness for the implementation of the new curriculum. Results of the study show that teacher perceptions of preparedness are integral to the success of curriculum implementation.

Keywords: K-12, senior high school, teacher-preparedness, professional development

1. Introduction

Readying teachers for the senior high is one of the major preparations that schools must consider in the implementation of K-12. The fuss for teacher preparation did not only occur in the Philippine educational system but in other countries as well when they decided to implement the K-12 program in their own jurisdictions. For example, when the K-12 was just about to be implemented in Canada, their Department of Education highlights that “Professional development and in-servicing opportunities for consultants and teachers must be a high priority in this program revision” (Prince Edward Island Department of Education, 1998, p. 17) while insisting on their feasibility. When it comes to teacher preparation, it is asserted that it must include “firm grounding on academic subject-matter content, the development of pedagogical knowledge, and a substantial amount of structured, supervised time in the classroom” (Hightower et al., 2011, p. 19).

In the Philippine context, readiness or preparedness of teachers in teaching in the senior high is determined according to these factors: length of service, eligibility, and courses taught (Acosta & Acosta, 2016, p. 2448-2449). For their part, the government and private educational institutions have to consider “eligibility, staffing guidelines, course streamlining, workforce surplus management, and alternative programs ensure sustainability and the promotion and protection of the welfare of the affected faculty and other employees in the higher education sector” (Ibid, 2016, p. 2448). The source of this data seeks to determine the readiness of teachers and of educational institutions in organizing their workforce for the national implementation of the senior high school. However, no study has been conducted yet to point out the level of preparedness of Xavier School in implementing the senior high school program and on how ready are their teachers in teaching in it.

1.1. Teacher Preparedness
In a study entitled “Job Preparedness and Program Effectiveness of a Teacher Preparation Program”, Kim, Skellenger & Lee (2012) aimed in identifying the independent predictors of perceived job preparedness (rated by the employers) and perceived program effectiveness (rated by the graduates) of a teacher preparation program in visual impairment. The study talks about the predictors of the program’s effectiveness. They state that gender, ethnicity, educational level and income were not good indicators. Neither are student performance or GPAs of their graduates. However effective communication skills, and behavior management skills were essential in their professions. They conducted a survey to gather information from the respondents who have recently finished a teacher preparation program. The results show that the age and the presence of visual impairment are negative indicators of perceived job preparedness and that the interaction between the faculty and the students are positive indicators of program effectiveness. The study implies that evaluation of the teacher preparation programs be checked for its efficiency. Not only should they get feedback from their graduates but also from the graduates’ employers.

In a study by Zientek & Thompson (2008) entitled “Preparing High Quality Mathematics and Science Teachers: Are we meeting the challenge?” the researchers talk about the importance of preparing high-quality teachers. The study involved online and novice teachers both teaching math (n=116) and science (n=103). The researchers utilized Darling-Hammond et. al’s Teachers’ Pop (35 items), Self-Efficacy (9 items and Overall Preparedness (1 item) with a six point rating scale. Results show that math teachers did not feel prepared to teach high-poverty school districts and that positive mentoring experiences are not sufficient, and that it was not enough for the math teachers to overcome their feelings of inadequacy. The study indicates that perhaps teachers need more exposure to curriculum design and other lessons to help them feel more confident in teaching. They may also benefit from additional training so as to result in better-prepared teachers and higher student outcomes.

Vamos & Zhou (2007) in their study “Educator Preparedness to teach Health Education in British Columbia examine the self-perceptions of how well prepared practicing and pre-service teachers feel when they are to teach health education in the K-12 system. The study also aims to assess the health teachers’ preparedness level as well as their relationships between their overall preparation, personal beliefs and satisfaction with their current curricula. The sample size included 166 practicing teachers and 78 pre-service teachers in health education. Participants were asked about their current level of knowledge and skill to teach health relevant topics. They also rated their level of preparedness to accomplish evaluate the health programs. They were also asked to rank their top choices for seeking health information, preparing the lesson plan and perceived challenges in teaching health education. The last part aimed at asking in general what were the attitudes of the teachers towards training for health education. Findings reveal that the experiences of practicing teachers that underwent health education training and teaching health education were positively correlated with their knowledge and skill level, preparedness and beliefs about health education. On the other hand it was negatively related to their satisfaction with the curriculum. The pre-service teachers’ satisfaction with the health curricula’s efficacy in helping them teach health education was found to be significantly correlated with their health-course teaching experiences. The study supports teacher training in health education in fine-tuning the knowledge, skills, preparedness and beliefs with regard to the health curricula.

Vannatta & Fordham (2004) examined teacher’s proclivities that predict technology use among K-12 teachers. The study utilized the 71- item Teacher Attribute Survey, which was administered to 177 K-12 teachers in Ohio. The survey aimed at determining teacher’s philosophy, openness to change, extent of professional development, self-efficacy and the frequency of technological use in the classroom. Results indicate that the use of technology training, time spent beyond the work week and openness to change were good predictors of classroom technology use. As educators, it is important to know that these findings suggest that “whereas technology training is obviously important in developing technology-using educators, a willingness to commit one's time "above and beyond the call of duty” and a risk-taking attitude are also essential” (p. 270).

Eidetis & Jewkes (2011) in their study “Making curriculum decisions in K8 Science: The relationship between teacher dispositions and curriculum content” they explore teachers’ dispositions in teaching
ocean science using a survey design. The study included 89 in-service K-8 teachers from the US. It is presumed that dispositions can affect their decision making in instruction. Decisions about the content of the science curricula are distressing because there is limited time for science instruction in US K-8 education. This study focuses on how they teach the science content and the dispositional factors that affect the teachers’ choices on whether or not they will include ocean literacy. The findings indicate that the teachers’ feelings of preparedness to teach the content and the teachers’ decisions can be observed. In addition, perceived science teaching efficacy can foresee teacher’s behaviors.

According to Darling-Hammond, Wei & Johnson (2012), in their Handbook of Education Policy Research, they dedicate a chapter on Teacher Preparation and Teacher Learning. According to the authors, teacher preparation should include the following: opportunities to learn, be given high quality general education, deepening of both content and pedagogical knowledge, teaching experience and be given opportunities to develop specific practices through professional development and assessment.

2. Conceptual Framework

The figure below represents the review of related literature on the definition of teacher preparedness.

![Teacher Preparedness Diagram]

**Figure 1. Teacher Preparedness**

3. Research Questions

This paper aims to investigate what strategies did Xavier School, in San Juan City, in preparation for the implementation of the K-12 Senior High School curriculum. This study also aims to determine the self-perceptions of the teachers with regards to their preparedness in developing and implementing the new curriculum. Since this study is expected to be completed in a certain amount of time, the researchers shall specifically limit the number of respondents by selecting only the teachers from the STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics), ABM (Accountancy, Business, and Management), HUMSS (Humanities and Social Sciences) and GAS (General Academic) strands of Xavier School. Hence, the study shall seek to answer the following questions:

1. What are the perceptions of the senior high school teachers regarding their own preparedness of the implementation of the senior high school curriculum?
2. What level of eligibility have the teachers acquired in the senior high school?
3. What forms of preparation did the teachers engage in for the K-12 implementation?
4. What supports have the school provided in preparing the senior high school teachers for the K-12 implementation?
5. How do the administrators and teachers cope with the challenges of implementing the senior high school curriculum in the different academic tracks, if there are any?

4. Methodology
To quantify the preparedness of SHS teachers in Xavier School, the group shall use the survey tool based on the study of Harris (2015), an 18-item Likert-scale self-survey questionnaire that measures the degree of teacher pedagogical improvements through instructional support, professional development and feedback.

Another tool can also be used for this purpose - the Senior High School Readiness Survey (Acosta & Acosta, 2016, p. 2458-2459) - a self-survey checklist that determines the readiness of teachers and educational institutions in implementing the senior high school program.

The researchers also went to Xavier School and interviewed the principal and the coordinator for the Senior High School regarding the research problems. The interview probes about the preparations and the challenges that the administration encountered in the aspect of adapting their entire basic education curriculum for the implementation of the senior high. The interview also inquires about the plan laid down by the administration in organizing the professional development programs for teachers, and how preparations for the senior high curriculum implementation are communicated to parents and students.

5. Results and Discussion

5.1. What are the perceptions of the senior high school teachers regarding their preparedness of the implementation of the senior high school curriculum?

The table shows the perceptions of the teachers on how prepared they were in implementing the K-12 curriculum. As can be gleaned from the table, most of the teachers are partially prepared in the implementation of K-12. One of the reasons might be because not all senior high school teachers are fully eligible in teaching because they are not yet licensed teachers and do not have any background in education as shown in Table 2.

|                      | N | %   | Rank |
|----------------------|---|-----|------|
| Yes                  | 9 | 37.5| 2    |
| Partially            | 12| 50.0| 1    |
| No                   | 0 | 0.00| 4    |
| Uncertain            | 3 | 12.5| 3    |

5.2. What level of eligibility have the teachers acquired in the senior high school?

The table shows the eligibility of teachers in teaching the senior high school. It shows that around ¼ of the respondents have not taken the licensure examination for teachers yet. This explains why teachers deem themselves as only partially prepared as shown in Table 1. The correlation between eligibility and perceived preparedness is even supported by Acosta & Acosta (2016) who discuss that preparedness is manifested by length of service, eligibility, and courses taught. However, the Xavier School SHS situation is understandable since the Department of Education allows a five-year grace period for teachers who have not yet taken and passed the LET examination even for those who apply for permanent teaching positions in the Senior High (TeacherPH, 2017, Table IV).
Table 2. Eligibility of Teachers

|       | N | %    |
|-------|---|------|
| LET   | 17| 70.8 |
| Civil Service | 1 | 4.2  |
| Others | 6 | 25   |

n=24

5.3. What forms of preparation did the teachers engage in for the K-12 implementation?

The table shows the perception of the teachers in their development of personal preparation plans of the teachers to mitigate the impact of K-12 implementation. It shows that most of the teachers did partial development plans in mitigating the impact of the K-12 curriculum. This might also be a reason why the teachers are partially prepared in the implementation of the K-12 curriculum.

Table 3. Development of personal preparation plans to mitigate the impact of K-12 implementation

|       | N | %  | Rank |
|-------|---|----|------|
| Yes   | 9 | 37.5| 2    |
| Partially | 12| 50 | 1    |
| No    | 1 | 4.2| 4    |
| Uncertain | 2| 8.3| 3    |

n=24

Table 4. Teachers’ Preparedness Survey

| Descriptor                                                                 | Mean | Interpretation |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|------|----------------|
| I can use a variety of assessment techniques to explicitly meet the academic needs of my students in the SHS | 3.89 | Agree          |
| I can evaluate students’ work and provide explicit feedback based on the focused standards in the SHS | 4    | Agree          |
| I can facilitate class discussions to deepen students’ understanding of the standard or skills in the SHS. | 4    | Agree          |
| I can address all learning styles by differentiating the lessons in the SHS. | 3.6  | Agree          |
| I can create cross-curricular lessons and activities to teach the standards of the SHS curriculum. | 3.7  | Agree          |

The table shows the mean score of the teacher’s preparedness in K-12 implementation. Based from the questions given, the respondents gave a positive feedback regarding their preparedness in the implementation of the K-12. Most of them agreed that they can use a variety of assessment techniques to explicitly meet the academic needs of my students in the SHS; evaluate students’ work and provide explicit feedback based on the focused standards in the SHS; facilitate class discussions to deepen students’ understanding of the standard or skills in the SHS; address all learning styles by differentiating the lessons in the SHS; and create cross-curricular lessons and activities to teach the standards of the SHS curriculum.

5.4. What supports have the school provided in preparing the senior high school teachers for the K-12 curriculum?
Table 5 shows the chosen indicators of educators when it comes to staffing guidelines. Upgrading of faculty skills (n=17 or 94.4%) is the most chosen indicator as regards to staffing guidelines, which is necessary to make the faculty be aligned with the new K-12 curriculum. Drawing on the current discourse, studies and loud views of the K-12 program, Calderon’s study concluded that improving the quality of teachers is vital to meet the goal of K-12 in improving the nation’s student achievement. It may be advisable for basic education schools to formulate appropriate policies and procedures, and study different options in terms of staffing guidelines, particularly in the enhancement of faculty skills; to provide equal opportunity for development and to ensure the promotion and protection of the rights, interests, and welfare of the teachers.

Table 5. Staffing Guidelines

| Indicator                                             | N | %  |
|-------------------------------------------------------|---|----|
| Review of faculty credentials                         | 13| 54.2|
| Upgrading of faculty skills                           | 23| 95.8|
| Retooling of teaching faculty                         | 18| 75  |
| Reclassify faculty to academic support or administrative positions | 5 | 20.8|
| Review of employment status                           | 12| 50  |
| Review of hiring process                              | 4 | 16.7|
| Community service employment                          | 6 | 25  |
| Age bracketing                                         | 2 | 8.3 |

Table 6. Curriculum Restructuring

| Indicator                                             | N | %  |
|-------------------------------------------------------|---|----|
| Review of credit unit per subject                     | 7 | 29.2|
| Review of academic calendar                          | 13| 54.2|
| Review of curricular programs offered by unit         | 21| 87.5|
| Review of admission process                           | 3 | 12.5|
| Review of teaching pedagogy                           | 16| 66.7|
| Review of faculty workload                            | 12| 50  |

Table 6 shows the chosen indicators of educators when it comes to curriculum restructuring. Review of curricular programs offered per unit (n=17 or 94.4%) is the most chosen indicator pertaining to curriculum restructuring. Although, some academic units will not be affected due to the offering of electives and specialized courses; the review of subject offering with the existing program should be designed and reengineered in line with the new curriculum that warrants a smooth transition to the new educational system.

5.5. How do the teachers cope with the challenges of implementing the senior high school curriculum in the different academic tracks (ABM, STEM, GAS & HUMMS), if there are any?

Table 7. Survey on Alternative Plans by the School

|                | N | %  |
|----------------|---|----|
| Yes            | 8 | 44.4|
In the survey given to the teachers when asked on how they were able to cope with the challenges of the implementation of the K-12 SHS curriculum, some common themes are the following:
1. There should be familiarity of the International Baccalaureate Diploma Program (IBDP), which is the basis of Xavier School’s senior high school program
2. There should be constant communication with the team for curriculum mapping and articulation.
3. One must be open-minded about the possibilities of the K-12 curriculum.
4. A teacher should continue to pursue professional development and competence and dedication in job performance.

### 6. Conclusion

Survey results showed that half of the senior high school teachers at the school deemed themselves as partially prepared for the implementation of the K-12 senior high school curriculum. It may be because a good number of these teachers has not yet taken and passed the LET examination. This data regarding the teacher’s perceived preparedness, however, is understandable and do not lessen the teachers’ eligibility since the Department of Education gives a five-year grace period for those who have not yet taken and passed the LET examination even for those applying for permanent teaching positions in the Senior High. In fact, survey results even show that even if teachers deem themselves as partially prepared, they still perceived that they are highly competent in the use of a variety of assessment techniques, evaluate students’ work and provide explicit feedback based on SHS standards, facilitating class discussions to deepen students’ understanding of the standard or skills in the SHS, address all learning styles by differentiating the lessons in the SHS, and create cross-curricular lessons and activities to teach the standards of the SHS curriculum.

The supports that Xavier School provides in preparing the senior high school teachers for the K-12 curriculum is seen in the implementation of its staffing guidelines and in the restructuring of its curriculum. Among the strategies that the school has conducted for its staffing guidelines, the upgrading of the faculty skills and the retooling of the teaching faculty was seen as the most imminent support provided by the school. The review of curricular programs offered per unit was the support felt most by teachers in the area of curriculum restructuring.

The supports provided by the school may serve as its means in coping with the challenges posed in the implementation of the K-12 SHS curriculum. In the personal level, teachers also see themselves as having conducted personal preparations to mitigate the impact of the implementation of the SHS.

| Partially | 5 | 27.8 |
| No | 1 | 5.6 |
| Uncertain | 4 | 22.2 |
Thus, with the high presence of the required competencies among teachers in delivering the SHS curriculum to the students, reinforced by the supports provided by the school and the personal preparations of the teachers themselves, this study concludes that the SHS teachers of the Xavier School are prepared for the implementation of the new curriculum.

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