

THE PEDAGOGICAL JOURNEY OF SCHOOL HEADS: ICeXCELS LEARNING COURSE IN CONTEXT

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Abstract— The Instructional and Curricular Excellence for School Leadership in Southeast Asia (ICeXCELS) Learning Course came in the midst when most of the neophyte school heads were looking for the right direction on how to govern their schools as an offshoot of the principal empowerment as provided by Republic Act 9155. This study ascertained the experiences, support from stakeholders and realizations and insights of the school heads of DepED, Panabo City Division as they implemented the learnings they got from the ICeXCELS Learning Course. In the course of the study, those essential experiences, support from stakeholders and realizations and insights of 14 school heads were identified. Using phenomenology as the qualitative method, analysis of data revealed experiences in the transformation in school governance, affirmation of prior knowledge, curriculum enhancement and providing solutions to challenges. In the process, the school heads attained internal stakeholders support and collaboration, and gained support from external stakeholders. As a result, the school heads realized that the ICeXCELS Learning Course is a potent tool where they considered the experiences in the implementation as productive gains, avenue for change and deserving to be shared. These key elements propped up because the ICeXCELS Learning Course provided the school heads with the timely information that they need to effectively govern their schools for the good of the teachers and the benefit of the learners, the center of the educative process.

Index Terms— Pedagogical Journey, Instructional Supervision, Administrative Functions, School Heads, ICeXCELS Learning Course, Philippines

1 INTRODUCTION

INSTRUCTIONAL leadership is one major role of school heads both in elementary and secondary that oftentimes is neglected because they tend to focus their attention to their other function as administrative managers. Flath (1989) pointed out that the gap between the bias of some school heads to function more as administrative manager than instructional leader is due to the fact that the public perception of their role is mainly managerial and for some principals, this is a safe and comfortable one.

It was found out that 62.2% of the time of the elementary principals is devoted on management issues and only 6.2% is focused on program concerns. He concludes that if the principals heed to the mandate of the state and to the call of education reformers, they must take a dramatically different role (Stronge, Richard and Catano, 2008).

It is a common knowledge that school leaders matter for school success. Numerous studies in the past three decades associate high-quality leadership with positive school outcomes. The acknowledgment of the importance of school leadership has led to better attention to recruiting and preparing school leaders. Many new principal preparation and development programs emphasize the role of principals as instructional leaders (Hornig and Loeb, 2010). This focus on instructional leadership was driven in multitude by the effective schools movement of the 1970s and 1980s and has since been renewed because of increasing demands that school leaders be held accountable for student performance (Hallinger, 2005). Informed by observations and interviews in hundreds of schools, Hornig and Loeb (2010) call for a different view of instructional leadership, one that includes broader personnel practices and resource allocation practices as central to instructional improvement.

As a result, decentralization and school-based management are redefining the role of the school principal from school building manager to instructional leader. The principal's core responsibility is to ensure quality teaching and learning in the classroom. However, in Asia many principals are unprepared for this new role and new focus (Sindhvad, 2009).

In the Philippines, Republic Act 9155 otherwise known as "An Act Instituting a Framework of Governance for Basic Education, Establishing Authority and Accountability, Renaming the Department Of Education, Culture And Sports as the Department of Education, and for Other Purposes" in August, 2001, clearly defines the role of school head, that of an instructional leader and administrative manager. According to Ganad (2014), this indicates that the principal must provide constructive support and should obtain the resources and materials necessary for teachers to be successful in the classroom, and should be abreast of the latest development in teaching, learning, assessment, motivation, classroom management and assessment. However, in the past, school heads tend to focus on the second role and delegating the role of an instructional leader functions to the teachers in the school.

Various reforms have been made with the institutionalization of the School Based Management (SBM) by the Department of Education (DepED) and just recently, the introduction of the Instructional and Curricular Excellence for School Leadership in Southeast Asia (ICeXCELS). ICeXCELS is a short course on instructional and curricular leadership comprised of two flexible learning modules designed for Southeast Asian school heads. The online platform is being managed by SEAMEO-INNOTECH Flexible Learning Management System or iFLEX.

It is flexible insofar as the instructional design of the learn-

ing materials is self-instructional, incorporating adult learning principles and gives the learner, opportunities to study the materials at their own pace and preferred time and place when they are on their own. The principal source of learning is print-based self-instructional learning modules but online discussion sessions through chat and discussion boards via a learning management system make the course more interactive. The modules are also in CD and Web formats (ICeXCELS Handbook).

2 PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

I have come across an international study on ICeXCELS but dealt on an investigation of the instructional leadership capacity of school principals in the Philippines (Sindhvad, 2009). I also traced a research on building trust among educational stakeholders through participatory school administration, leadership and management (San Antonio and Gamage, 2007). The said researches gave me the interest to conduct a phenomenological research to find out how effective the said online training to align the thinking of the school heads on their real role and how they are using it to transform their schools as envisioned in the provisions of RA 9155 and in line with the unified Vision, Mission and Core Values of the Department of Education. The goal of the course in transforming the education leaders to be inclined more in performing their duties as instructional leaders more than that of administrative managers aligned well with the provisions of RA 9155.

So, being a Division Co-Head, I am very eager to know whether the school heads under my supervision have really put to heart and done in practice the knowledge they learned from participating in ICeXCELS Learning Course.

3 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This study seeks to find out how ICeXCELS was implemented to increase the learning outcomes of the learners with the following questions:

1. What are the experiences of school heads in their implementation of ICeXCELS Learning Course?
2. How has the course improved the level of participation and collaboration of the stakeholders?
3. What are the insights and realizations of the participants of the study?

4 THEORETICAL LENS

Instructional leadership narrowly defined focuses on leadership functions directly related to teaching and learning (Murphy, 1988). In a broader view, instructional leadership also refers to all other functions that contribute to student learning, including managerial behaviors (Donmoyer and Wagstaff, 1990; Murphy, 1988). Such an action orientation theoretically encompasses everything a principal does during the day to support the achievement of students and the ability of teachers to teach (Sebring and Bryk, 2000). Moreover, principals should be concerned with facilitating teachers' exercise of initiative and responsibility in instructional matters (Glanz and

Neville, 1997; Senge, 2000).

5 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The significant contributions and sharing of best practices of the selected school heads in this phenomenological study are beneficial to DepED officials from division to national levels like us so that the emphasis on playing the role of instructional leader and administrative manager of the school heads will be given much attention in order to increase the learning outcomes of the students. Similarly, it will dramatically change the perception of those school heads who are graduates of the ICeXCELS course but are not putting what they learned to practice and those who are about to be part of the system for them to embrace the need for school heads to balance their time in doing their instructional and administrative functions.

In addition, they will be able to guide and assist teachers to facilitate teaching and learning through innovative and technology tools and applications. Moreover, this will also be an avenue where teachers work collaboratively with their school heads in planning, implementing and assessing significant curriculum changes or enhancement to better suit their situations and conditions. As a result, they will be able to use highly interactive, easy-to-use multimedia packages designed to increase motivation and made learning fun and more meaningful among learners.

Lastly, the real beneficiaries of this study are the learners who are the center of the educative process. Whatever positive changes that will be employed that increase the learning outcomes will mean increase of their self-worth. For future researchers, they may explore on capacitating school heads in promoting the use of Teachers' Toolkit which is online resource package for teachers.

6 RESULTS OF THE STUDY

Based from the accounts revealed by the school heads who underwent the ICeXCELS Learning Course and who are participants of this study, most of them thought that school leadership was focused mainly on administrative side, thereby relegating their most important function, that of an instructional leader to the sideline. Most of them opined that the said perception and practice were corrected after their participation to the online course for school heads offered by SEAMEO-INNOTECH, the ICeXCELS Learning Course.

After the course, they already started playing the role as instructional leader. Some had already formed committees in their schools to discuss on how they could enhance the curriculum to improve student outcomes. Most of them made the learnings in ICeXCELS as a guide in governance, a source of wisdom to govern and helped them to handle people. On a more personal note, one confided that her participation in the course helped her in passing the Principal Test.

For some, the course served as an affirmation of their previous knowledge and practices in handling their schools. They also learned additional knowledge and defined their roles as servant leaders. Most of all they felt guilty because they have taken their role as instructional leader for granted in the past in lieu of their administrative functions.

Most of them are already confident in implementing curriculum enhancement mostly in the field of reading and learned together with their teachers in repackaging the major subjects so that they would appeal more to the interest of their students. They also planned together with their teachers in retooling their teaching styles from traditional to contemporary, maximized their task in doing instructional supervision and are now monitoring what the teachers teach and the students learn.

However, along the way, they faced challenges ranging from teachers' acceptance to the innovations that they are implementing, lack of resources, time constraint and the situation where all teachers are not yet national paid. It became even worse with some negative responses from the internal and external stakeholders. Being empowered as provided by RA 9155 and after learning the ICeXCELS course, they were able to look for means on how to address those issues and concerns thus getting solutions from the different challenges.

In time when they faced challenges, they have people to lean on in the presence of their stakeholders who if motivated well would be potent source of moral and financial assistance to any programs and projects the school heads would implement in the school. They experienced valuable support of their PTA in different projects especially for those who have the right motivations and schemes in asking support like involving them in the planning and updating the parents of the accomplishments and achievements of the schools. Assistance from the barangays where their schools were located as well as from industries and philanthropists are within reach if only they know how to network and deal with them.

With regard to their realization after they took the course and upon implementing what they have learned, they were amazed of the transformation that happened to their teachers in particular and the schools in general. The things that happened are for their productive gains from the course that served as eye-opener and a mirror of the reality.

They are now transformed school heads who know fully well that 70% to 80% shall be devoted to their instructional functions and 20% to 30% in their administrative concerns. It led to empowering their teachers to achieve great result and together, they are changing paradigm for improved student outcomes.

As a result, they are very open in telling other school heads to take the said course and gained the benefits that they have harvested after taking the course and encouraging those who have not yet maximized their knowledge to continue implementing in order to get the full revenue of what they have invested in terms of efforts and time.

7 DISCUSSION

7.1 Experiences of School Heads as They Implement the ICeXCELS Learning Course

The experiences of school heads in their implementation of ICeXCELS Learning Course resulted to *transformation in school governance, affirmation of prior knowledge, curriculum enhancement and providing solutions to challenges*

Transformation in School Governance

The school heads of Panabo City who attended the ICeXCELS learning course revealed the transformation in the way they governed their schools before and after the course. They appreciated much the opportunity given to them and thankful that the sacrifices and time they had devoted to finish the course gave them a new dimension to face their roles as school heads in this 21st century era, that of an instructional leader. They tried hard to be more of an instructional leader though there are barriers along the way especially that they were comfortable doing their administrative work.

Marks and Printy (2003) revealed that there is a potential of the active collaboration of transformational leadership around instructional matters to enhance the quality of teaching and student performance. They further revealed that when transformational and shared instructional leadership coexist in an integrated form of leadership, the influence on school performance, measured by the quality of its pedagogy and the achievement of its students, is substantial. It was further emphasized by Robinson, Lloyd and Rowe (2008) that the more leaders focus their relationships, their work, and their learning on the core business of teaching and learning, the greater their influence on student outcomes.

Relatively, there was a study that provides new empirical evidence of how successful principals directly and indirectly achieve and sustain improvement over time through combining both transformational and instructional leadership strategies (Day, Stobart, Sammons and Kington, 2006). The findings show that schools' abilities to improve and sustain effectiveness over the long term are not primarily the result of the principals' leadership style but of their understanding and diagnosis of the school's needs and their application of clearly articulated, organizationally shared educational values through multiple combinations and accumulations of time and context-sensitive strategies that are "layered" and progressively embedded in the school's work, culture, and achievements. Shields (2010) also found out that transformative leadership begins with questions of justice and democracy, critiques inequitable practices, and addresses both individual and public good. The author traced the practices of the subjects and concluded that the best fit for transformative leadership are those with relevance for leadership for equity, deep democracy, and social justice.

The above mentioned practices according to Mafora (2012) is meant to mark a departure from the pre-democracy era when school principals could decide unilaterally or manipulate the decisions made on both school management and governance matters, resulting in the school decision-making climate being characterised by, among others, domination, coercion, withdrawal and fear.

The said transformation affirmed a recent study that shows that the said strategy made the work of the school heads not only

confined to management and instructional leadership but on environment that entice stakeholders to do their share in managing the school (Lingard, Hayes and Mills, 2002). In another development, Dinham and Crawter (2011) conducted a study of the school head's participation and reveal that it is transforming tremendously and is turning to be more difficult especially if no training or enhancement activities are introduced.

It can be reiterated that time and again, it was proven that their governance can stimulate human relationships, management motivation, collegial relationships, school improvement, and partnership with stakeholders including students, teachers, parents, staff, and the community. It was cited that Mondol (2014) mentioned that a good principal envisions a mission for the school that accomplishes the needs of the community. Based on the studies of LaPointe and Davis (2006), only effective principals can deal with the fast-paced changes and the demanding expectations of today's society.

Affirmation of Prior Knowledge

The school heads revealed that the learnings they had in the ICeXCELS course served as affirmation of their previous knowledge attained through their experience and observation of their previous school heads who were really doing the roles given to them in Republic Act (RA) 9155 during the time when they were still plain teachers.

In a relevant study made by Major and Palmer (2006), they found out existing knowledge and whatever innovation or intervention being institutionalized solidified the transformation. Studies demonstrate that, compared to consumers with lower prior knowledge, those with higher prior knowledge learn less about a new product. Further, higher knowledge consumers are able to learn more but learn less due to motivational deficits; inferior learning of new product information by those with higher prior knowledge is caused by inattention at encoding rather than reconstructive errors at retrieval (Wood and Lynch, 2002)

In a study conducted by Shapiro (2004) it showed that prior knowledge has a marked effect on learning outcomes. Researchers typically rely on a number of methodologies to control for that factor in learning research, including the use of fictional stimuli and domain-novice subjects. In Experiment 1, students read texts about fictional places and events. In Experiment 2, novice students in a cognition course were asked to read several advanced texts. In both experiments, prior knowledge accounted for a large portion of the subjects' posttest performance. The data demonstrate that methodological approaches intended to control for prior knowledge may be insufficient to prevent that variable from influencing learning outcomes. Thus researchers are urged to include measures of prior knowledge in their analyses.

Moreover, Suttona (1980) recognized that the learner's prior knowledge is a critical review of techniques for probing its organization. It helps a teacher to quickly gain a useful insight into a pupil's present ideas. He can discern the major connections in the learner's existing thought content. The theoretical assumptions underlying them and considers how easily they could be adapted in the classroom can be a part of a diagnostic approach to teaching.

The research of Gijlers and de Jong (2005) showed that qualitative analyses of two dialogues illustrated that prior knowledge influences the discovery learning processes, and knowledge development in a pair of students. Assessments of

student and dyad definitional (domain-specific) knowledge, generic (mathematical and graph) knowledge, and generic (discovery) skills were related to the students' dialogue in different discovery learning processes. Results show that a high level of definitional prior knowledge is positively related to the proportion of communication regarding the interpretation of results. Heterogeneity with respect to generic prior knowledge was positively related to the number of utterances made in the discovery process categories "hypotheses generation" and "experimentation." Results of the qualitative analyses indicated that collaboration between extremely heterogeneous dyads is difficult when the high achiever is not willing to scaffold information and work in the low achiever's zone of proximal development.

Curriculum Enhancement

The school heads implemented in their school, as an offshoot to the knowledge they learned from the ICeXCELS course, activities that gave emphasis to curriculum enhancement as direction for them to play the role of instructional leaders. They focused on program to enhance the reading proficiency, repackaging the core subjects to make it more appealing to students and host of other activities to increase the student outcomes.

Accordingly, Simpkins, Mastropieri and Scruggs (2008) studied a differentiated curriculum enhancements in Science Classes. Analysis of gain score data revealed that students scored higher on production tests when in the experimental condition. Student and teacher reports indicated a high degree of satisfaction with experimental methods and materials.

In presenting the concepts and skills of curriculum development and showing how to apply them to actual course planning, Posner and Rudnitsky (1994) made an attempt to bridge theory and practice in curriculum development. They found out that by developing a greater awareness of the important decisions to be made and the alternative courses of action available at each decision point, teachers are assisted in becoming flexible and systematic curriculum planners. Consequently, the planning process is explained by the provision of relevant design theory, frequent exercises, representative examples, a glossary of terms, and sample course designs completed by students.

Evidence-based quality assurance system for teaching and learning has achieved its goals of fostering an evidence-based approach to teaching consistent with the student learning perspective on which the policy and systems are based (Bambara, Nonnemacher and Kern, 2009). The study also showed student learning experiences showing reliable changes in the quality of the student learning experience. It was found out that the focus institution applied significance of these changes, with a particular focus on changes in the experiences of commencing first year university students.

Enhancing the curriculum also involves curriculum mapping (Jacobs and Johnson, 2009). This supports the teachers and the staff in the successful implementation of curriculum enhancement especially if the teachers buy the idea of doing it particularly in special situation.

The concept of teaching and learning regimes (TLRs) help explore a set of questions about why some academic staff in universities thrive on and benefit from accredited programs designed to improve higher education learning and teaching practices (Trowler and Cooper, 2002). Opposite of this result to

experience periods of resistance or some drop out altogether. "TLR" is a shorthand term for a constellation of rules, assumptions, practices and relationships related to teaching and learning issues in higher education. These include aspects of the following salient to teaching and learning, each of which we elaborate and illustrate in the paper: identities in interaction, power relations, codes of signification, tacit assumptions, rules of appropriateness, recurrent practices, discursive repertoires, implicit theories of learning and of teaching.

Critical thinking skills are also needed to effectively implement curriculum enhancement (Gul, Khan, Ahmad, Cassum, Saeed, Parpio and Schopflocher, 2014). According to their study, to achieve the true goal of education, educators must have the knowledge and skills to integrate critical thinking in the development and delivery of the curriculum. Moreover, faculty members must be educated to develop their own critical thinking skills before they are expected to impart critical thinking to their students. The study further revealed that while the new generation of faculty members may have access to learn critical thinking in their formal educational programs, others must be educated via faculty development programs.

In one of the researches of Hallinger (2005), he had previously mentioned that as instructional leaders, it is their role to give emphasis on providing opportunities to advance the effective implementation of instructional program destined to increase students' performance. It must be coupled with providing ideal educational learning conditions that will promote enhanced environment where effective learning takes place.

Providing Solutions to Challenges

The school heads recognized that leading a public school is really challenging especially that as provided by RA 9155, they are empowered to make a difference in the schools they are handling. Part of the experiences of the school heads after their ICeXCELS course is their ability to face challenges and provide solutions to the best of their ability. During the discussion and interview, each of them was given a chance to share the challenges that they faced and the solutions they proposed and implemented.

A study made by Mulford (2008) elaborates on issues raised by the ACER Research Conference 2007: The Leadership Challenge - Improving learning in schools. It identified leadership as an area of interest to school leaders requiring explicit policy development at both a school and system level. It further revealed that a great deal of a school's success depends on which areas of school life the educational leader chooses to spend time and attention. Issues of leader recruitment and retention; leadership in pre-retirement, or small schools, or high-poverty communities; leader autonomy and responsibility; and new shared models of leadership prompted school leaders to move beyond mere technical competence but be contextually literate, organizationally savvy and leadership smart.

It was found out that for the last 15 years, schools in the UK have been experiencing an unprecedented number of government imposed reforms in the quest to raise standards and increase accountability (Day, Gronn and Salas, 2004). The report revealed that the said reforms have relied for their implementation on the compliance and cooperation of principals and have generated a number of tensions and dilemmas. Various researches on successful principals in schools located in challenging socio-economic contexts reveals that vision and distributed leadership, so often key features in writings about

leadership qualities, were accompanied by strong core values and beliefs, an abiding sense of agency, identity, moral purpose, resilience, and trust.

Like in schools, companies are also exposed to an ever more complex web of stakeholder groups, whose interests and expectations they are expected to manage (Kourula and Halme, 2008). They said that this is not all one-way traffic. The long-held belief, recently espoused by The Economist, 2 that financial performance conflicts with social and environmental performance is being challenged by companies themselves. In addition to being seen as a way to manage costly reputational and regulatory risks, leading companies and entrepreneurs see well managed corporate responsibility as a way to improve performance and create new business opportunities. Moreover, the traditional 'externalities' of economics, usually defined, and often still taught, as outside of business' remit, are steadily becoming very real factors in corporate decision making. However, despite these developments, integrating corporate responsibility into the mainstream operations of the vast majority of companies is a challenge that remains to be met.

Despite the challenges, Moir (2010) still maintains that there are inspiring times to be in education. This is despite of discouraging news about student achievement gaps, the conditions of our urban classrooms, and the loss of confidence in our public schools. Further, she confessed that we hear more and more calls for reform from politicians to parents, and from educators to employers. She continued that what gives hope is that the conversation has begun to settle on what those of us who have devoted our lives to education have always known: The single most important element in a child's education is the teacher.

The study further revealed that support for new teachers can transform our nation's schools. By focusing on new teachers, we begin to address the student achievement gap. New teachers are traditionally assigned to the most challenging classrooms in the hardest-to-staff schools. When districts and schools organize to accelerate new teacher development, they break the cycle of inequity and provide children who are most in need of a high-quality education with teachers capable of helping them.

To give solutions to challenges, one must need to be an effective principal. It was mentioned previously that the "harmonious development" of each student is made possible by an effective leadership and in the same manner that the support of constituents, stakeholders, teachers, students, parents and community is inspired by effective principals. But, who are these so called "effective principals." Effective principals are individuals who pursue their leadership capabilities to foster the school's philosophy with farsighted horizons; they understand the diverse characteristics of their school and their stakeholders, and they promote a team building spirit to generate collaboration and commitment to fulfill their mission. Effective principals are individuals "who exhibit the principles of positive psychology in their everyday work, and bring to their school something extra that produces greater growth for all involved" (O'Hanlon and Clifton, 2004).

7.2 Improvement in the Participation and Collaboration of the Stakeholders

The improvement on the level of participation and collaboration of the stakeholders yielded the emerging theme of *Stakeholders Support and Collaboration and Gaining Support from External Stakeholders*.

Stakeholders Support and Collaboration

It is a common belief that school cannot exist without the help of stakeholders who will extend moral and financial support to the different programs and projects that the school will implement after its consultation with some or all of them. It was already mentioned that it is already a foregone conclusion that the stakeholders like the LGU, barangay officials, PTA, alumni, industries and philanthropists really help the school in various ways. Further, the situation is different now school heads who are already embracing their role as instructional leaders will present a more concrete ways to help the learners achieve improved learning outcomes. Therefore, the support of the stakeholders is based on the informed decision on what they can do to help in improving the academic performance of the learners which is a product of their collaboration.

“Collaboration” is a ubiquitously championed concept and widely recognized across the public and private sectors as the foundation on which the capacity for addressing complex issues is predicated (Gajda and Koliba, 2007). The study further emphasized that for those invested in organizational improvement, high-quality collaboration has become no less than an imperative. To do this, there is a need to do an approach to demystifying and assessing interpersonal collaboration and use their consultancy work with school improvement stakeholders to illustrate a multistage collaboration evaluation process. At this stage, a wide range of organizational settings are encouraged to utilize collaboration theory and the evaluation strategies presented herein to cultivate stakeholder capacity to understand, examine, and capitalize on the power of collaboration.

In a study conducted by Lawson (2010), it emphasized that collaboration is a complex intervention with multiple components. It is both a process innovation and a product innovation, and it entails institutional development and change. These and other defining features implicate its contingencies. The study added that in fact, collaboration may be a defining feature of competent and optimal practice, and the failure to collaborate may be indicative of negligence and malpractice. It was pointed out by Runhaar, Sanders and Yang (2010) the importance of stakeholders for effective school functioning, student support and well-being, community health and development. Furthermore, schools can collaborate with a wide variety of stakeholders to obtain the resources they need to achieve important goals for students’ learning. Working successfully with stakeholders, the study further revealed, will improve school programs and curricula, strengthen families and expand students’ learning experiences.

Key stakeholders like teachers, students and parents can be a source of potent force to help the school head achieve effective school leadership (Odhiambo and Hii, 2012). Findings highlight the complexity of school leadership practices. Key stakeholders provided with a useful emphasis on core school leadership dimensions, which they associate with effective school outcomes and improvement. These include admin-

istration, responsibility to ensure quality teaching and learning and relational leadership. Stakeholders answer most consistent with school effectiveness and improvement provides principals with an important knowledge base for practice.

Leinhardt and Willert (2002) reported collaborative project on school violence and safety that was conducted for a partnership on the nature, extent, awareness, and management of violence in schools from school stakeholders. Recommendations for enhancing building-level leadership by creating more effective channels of communication with the entire educational community are included. Collaboration also provides strategies for enlisting support within a community for designing or enhancing effective violence prevention and intervention programs.

Collaboration among stakeholders is needed in youth development efforts (Anderson-Butcher, Stetler and Midle, 2006). Respondents described the need for further partnership expansion with the business sector, parents and residents, the juvenile justice sector, and youth development organizations, particularly in relation to academic support, youth development, and prevention and social service programming. Given the importance of youth development organizations in supporting these program and service delivery needs, the second study surveyed 389 school staff members working in schools that had out-of-school-time programs operating in their communities. Results indicated that communication, coordination, and collaboration within these partnerships were often limited in scope. The study further revealed the need for more expansive and strategic school-community partnerships particularly the role of the school social worker in fostering these linkages and system designs.

Aside from capitalizing on their support, a study made by Bambara et al (2009) pointed out the need to also address perceived barriers and enablers. These, according to the study are important to implementing and sustaining individualized positive behavior support across the stakeholders. Cornell and Mayer (2010) revealed that school safety and order are essential conditions for learning stimulated in large part by repeated episodes of school violence that have generated considerable public concern and triggered substantial changes in school discipline and security practices over the past two decades. They pointed out that the school leadership should address this and map a school safety perspective to multiple bodies of education stakeholders to sustain the gains of the implementation of curriculum enhancement.

In a study on implementing Participatory School Administration, Leadership and Management (PSALM) on the levels of trust among the educational stakeholders in Philippine public secondary schools made by San Antonio and Gamage (2007) it suggested that the Philippines should expedite the process of establishing school councils in its public schools to effectively build trust among stakeholders. Adelman and Taylor (2007), however, pointed out that despite the nationwide emphasis on school improvement, the complexities of accomplishing desired systemic changes have been given short shrift in policy, research, training, and practice. The study further emphasized the need of expanding school improvement planning to better address how schools and districts intend to accomplish designated changes in the situations with the school

heads and the teachers.

The contention gave credit to Section E (10) of Republic Act 9155 which emphasizes the need for school heads "to establish school and community networks, encourage the active participation of teacher organizations, non-academic personnel of public schools and parents-teachers-community associations." This implies that school heads and administrators must provide opportunities for collaboration of school's internal and external stakeholders, to develop leadership and shared responsibility for student/pupil outcomes, and must instill intensive supervision to achieve higher academic achievement as its instructional functionality (Ganad, 2014).

Gaining Support from External Stakeholders

External stakeholders like the officials of the barangay, city or municipality where the school belongs, major industries and business establishments, philanthropists and others played important role in pursuing the proposed programs and projects especially that funding is needed to realize them.

Morsing (2006) in his study mentioned that the corporate social responsibility (CSR) of a company/institution can be a potent force to get necessary funding support to the recipient projects/programs. Meanwhile, Chun and Davies (2010) revealed that significant gaps are observed between the different perspectives on the management team responded to the data and in particular to the differences between what was expected from the corporation/institution.

Trends in accountability mechanisms and processes and argues that vertical measures of accountability, that is, regulatory and school performance accountability, can be usefully augmented by horizontal measures involving multiple stakeholders (Hooze, Burns and Wilkoszewski, 2012). This system of multiple school accountability aims to efficiently and effectively take into account the nuanced nature and purposes of education. By combining various forms of accountability, it has the potential to enhance the overall education system, policy for reform, and therefore ultimately improve the quality of education.

Meanwhile, Kuhn (2008) found a framework based on the stakeholder, organizational identity, and strategic response literatures to specify how organizational identity influences an organization's responses to negative evaluation in the public domain by external stakeholders. The framework proposes how the number of organizational identities possessed by an organization and the level of perceived organizational identity threat affect which type of response an organization will adopt. Ohman, Häckner and Sörbom (2012) maintained the distinction between client satisfaction with the audit and client perceptions of the usefulness of the audit to external stakeholders.

However, Deschesnes, Couturier, Laberge and Campeau (2010) found out the differences in conceptualization between provincial authorities of the two sectors concerning the way to disseminate information have been observed. These differences represented a significant barrier to optimal dissemination. A dialogue between the two authorities appears to be essential to arrive at a negotiated and shared conceptualization of this issue in the Quebec context, thus allowing agreements for adequate support.

7.3 Realizations of ICeXCELS Learning Course Completers and Imparting to Their Colleagues

The insights and realizations of the participants of the study produced the emerging themes of *Productive Gains, Avenue for Change and Deserving to be Shared*.

Productive Gains

Gaining knowledge and as a consequence implementing what they have gained is expected for the participant school heads in this study. In the course of their implementation, they were able to develop certain realizations and insights which they can share to those who have not yet participated in the ICeXCELS course and for those who have participated but have not maximized the benefits of the course.

Robinson et al (2008) in a study pointed out that the more leaders focus their relationships, their work, and their learning on the core business of teaching and learning, the greater their influence on student outcomes. The article further illustrates with a discussion of the need for leadership research and practice to be more closely linked to the evidence on effective teaching and effective teacher learning. With that alignment, it could increase the impact of school leadership on student outcomes even further.

In a study conducted by Horng and Loeb (2010), there is a different view of instructional leadership that emphasizes organizational management for instructional improvement rather than day to day teaching and learning. The study gives more emphasis that a school leader can have a tremendous effect on student learning through the teachers they hire and how they assigned them. Robinsona (2010) that while there is considerable evidence about the impact of instructional leadership on student outcomes, there is far less known about the leadership capabilities that are required to confidently engage in the practices involved. Research is suggestive of the importance of three interrelated capabilities: (a) using deep leadership content knowledge to (b) solve complex school-based problems, while (c) building relational trust with staff, parents, and students.

Contemporary educational reform places a great premium on the effective leadership and management of schools (Hopkins, 2013). The logic of this position is that an orderly school environment, that is efficient and well managed, provides the preconditions for enhanced student learning. Empirical backing for a relationship between leadership and higher levels of student outcomes is often claimed, and the school effects research is usually cited in support. At one level this contention is self-evidently true. However, the correlational nature of the research evidence that is often cited in support inevitably masks the exact relationship between leadership and enhanced student learning.

Interestingly, Halverson, Grigg, Prichett and Thomas (2007) pointed out that in part, this was because there was no "one primary reason," no silver bullet, to explain the gains. The study further stated that the gains did not result from a particular program, a new policy, or new personnel. It was the broad improvements in student learning achieved in New York and in schools across the country were the results of many factors designed by school leaders to work together in shaping complex instructional systems. Moreover, the capaci-

ty of school leaders and teachers to transform traditional schools into organizations able to respond to the feedback needed in this 21st century era represents a significant step in our understanding of the next generation of school leadership practice.

Furthermore, the study also revealed that focus on student outcomes will lead to behavioral changes by students, teachers, and schools to align with the performance goals of the system. Naturally, part of this is presumed to be more or less automatic like in public reporting of outcomes that will bring everybody onto course with those outcomes. The said initiative also comes from the development of explicit incentives that will lead to innovation, efficiency and fixes to any observed performance problems.

In his study, Harris (2004) considers the relationship between distributed leadership and school improvement. Drawing upon empirical evidence from two contemporary studies of successful school leadership and recent studies of school improvement, it explores the extent to which distributed forms of leadership can contribute to school improvement. The study argues that the distributed perspective offers a new and important theoretical lens through which leadership practice in school can be reconfigured and reconceptualized. It concludes by suggesting that, while evidence would suggest that distributed forms of leadership can assist capacity building within schools which contributes to school improvement, further research is needed to confirm a relationship between distributed forms of leadership and improved student learning outcomes.

Avenue for Change

Transformation in the school and the teachers happened as the school heads play their role as a transformational leader. They implemented in their schools with their teachers, stakeholders and students what they learned in the ICeXCELS course.

Theoharis (2009) draws on the experiences and words of successful public school principals committed to advancing equity, social justice, and school reform to show why social justice leadership is needed and how it can be effective. Although facing tremendous barriers, these principals made important strides toward closing the achievement gap in their schools through the use of humane and equitable practices. Featuring a mix of theory and practical strategies, this timely book portrays how real school leaders seek, create, and sustain equitable schools, especially for marginalized students.

Thailand's system-level leaders look to school principals for leadership in implementing these large-scale educational reforms at the local level (Hallinger, 2004). As in other nations throughout the world, Thai policy makers accept the dictum that principals hold the keys to educational change at the school level. Yet, there are serious doubts as to whether the current (and future) corps of Thai principals has the will and the skill to implement education reform.

Hallinger and Heck (2010) maintained that there has been sizeable growth in the number of empirical studies of shared form of leadership over the past decade. The research found significant effects of distributed leadership on change in the schools' academic capacity and indirect effects on student

growth rates in Mathematics subject. It also aims at building the academic capacity of schools as a means of improving student learning outcomes.

In a research conducted by Reese, Lindle, Della Sala, Klar, Knoeppel, Campbell and Flores (2013) suggests that placing leadership responsibility in the hands of teachers to act as instructional mentors and coaches to their peers might serve as an antidote to persistent barriers to instructional change. For example, a recent randomized trial found that teachers who received a coaching treatment had significantly more positive outcomes than control teachers, including higher levels of positive emotional climate in their classrooms, greater sensitivity to their students' needs, and more effective classroom management.

Over the past 20 years there has been a paradigm shift gathering momentum with regard to the professional development of teachers (Vescio, Ross and Adams, 2008). Fueled by the complexities of teaching and learning within a climate of increasing accountability, this reform moves professional development beyond merely supporting the acquisition of new knowledge and skills for teachers.

Deserving to be Shared

With the tremendous transformation happened in their lives as school heads, the experience needs to be shared so that it will be advocated by those who have not yet experienced being an ICeXCELS learners.

In a research conducted by Mazzarella and Smith (1989), it viewed that the summary or analysis of research findings should not be an end in itself. Rather, keeping in mind that our main audience is school principals we have sought to point out the practical implications of the research findings what they mean for the operation of schools and the day-to-day interactions of school leaders with other administrators, teachers, students, and the public. Hence, all sections that spell out implications, recommendations, or guidelines for putting knowledge into practice are to be included.

The principal is the building leader who structures the climate to empower both teachers and students at the site (Ocbian and Dichoso, 2015). Empowerment translates in to teacher leadership and exemplifies a paradigm shift with the decisions made by those working most closely with students rather than those at the top of the pyramid. It is natural that the principal should be the leader in implementing and supporting empowerment and teacher leadership.

In a study by Sindhvad (2009), decentralization and school-based management are redefining the role of the school principal from school building manager to instructional leader. The principal's core responsibility is to ensure quality teaching and learning in the classroom. However, in Asia many principals are not prepared for this new role and new focus. With this, ICeXCELS comes into picture.

The identification and development of effective school leaders, both individuals and teams, however, has been significantly hampered by the paucity of technically sound tools for assessing and monitoring leadership performance (Murphy, Elliott, Goldring and Porter, 2007). Finding practical ways to thoughtfully and appropriately assess and develop leaders can have an important impact on the quality of leadership, and

through that, on the quality of education in our schools. Leadership evaluation holds great promise in providing educators with much needed information which can be used to both improve leadership practices and provide information for accountability purposes.

By not doing the best way in doing all of the reforms needed may result to failed endeavor for change (Scott, 2008). Failed change in higher education has costs – not just economically but strategically, socially and psychologically. When enthusiastic university staff commit to a change project and that project fails they take the scars of that experience with them. Students and the country receive no benefit from failed change. Institutions that take on an essential reform project that founders suffer a loss of reputation and, in the current climate, this can lead to a loss of income and, as a consequence, closure of courses, schools or faculties with an associated risk of redundancies.

8 CONCLUSION

As a co-leader in the Division Office, I have gained substantial knowledge on how my people work in their respective stations. I have already gained a huge amount of information on what went right and what went wrong which will be my bases to propose to the management team, the appropriate follow up training and capability building training-workshops to be given to school heads with various needs.

This will also provide the three units in the Office, the Office of the Schools Division Superintendent (OSDS), Curriculum Implementation Division (CID) and the School Governance and Operations Division (SGOD) a pad to launch their Monitoring and Evaluation (M & E) activities. The options will be to provide either technical assistance or a chance for successful school heads to share their best practices first to the Division and eventually to the whole region and perhaps in the country.

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