



Language Education Program: Its Relevance from Graduate School Students Perspectives

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HIGHLIGHTS

- ✓ Teaching quality is the main strength of the Language Education Program. The ways and features of how teachers facilitate learning as an indicator of curriculum evaluation can present various bases for strengthening and improving the curriculum and teacher skills and methods.
- ✓ Facilities and industry linkages are the common weaknesses of the program. The Department has to expose PhD Language Program students to necessary technologies and involve them in extension activities.
- ✓ In maintaining the relevance of the degree program, as to pedagogy and classroom activities, the continuous exposure of students to not only theories but also to the practical application such as planning and implementation of seminars and research capability activities are admired by students.
- ✓ The learning-by-doing principle still encourages active learning even in the graduate school level.



INTRODUCTION

Curriculum evaluation involves looking at the merit of an educational program, activity, or any aspect of the curriculum, and learner satisfaction is a key factor to consider.

The Sustainable Development Goals prioritize Quality Education, and Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) can help achieve this by integrating teaching methods, environments, and values in the curriculum. The curriculum plays a crucial role in promoting inclusivity and equity in education as well as emphasizing lifelong learning and holistic development (Stabback, 2016).

Literature suggests that the relevance of a curriculum to workplace functions is vital for achieving organizational goals. Studies on English programs show that some students enroll in courses they do not like, leading to a lack of academic distinction (Gagalang, Tibay, and Matela, 2017). This tracer study described the profile of graduates of Doctor of Philosophy of Language Education program; determined the relevance of the degree program to various functions, and identified strengths and weaknesses of the program.



METHODOLOGY

The study used a combined methods in which quantitative data was yielded thru a survey questionnaire. Furthermore, qualitative data was yielded thru interviews. The respondents are 28 (out of 46) graduates of the program Doctor in Philosophy in Language Education from 1994-2018 at Benguet State University. A modified survey questionnaire from the CHED Graduate School Tracer Survey and interview guide were used to collect data. Descriptive statistics were used to analyze the quantitative data – frequency, percentage, and rank; and qualitative data was used to further explain the results.



FINDINGS

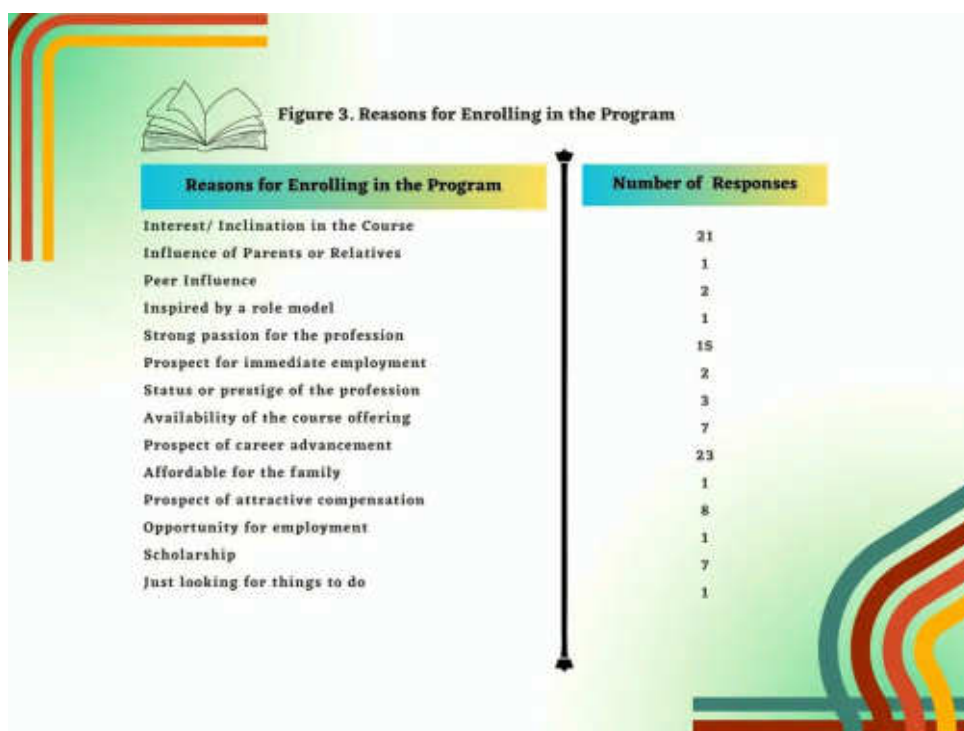
Age of Respondents

The respondents were mostly ranging from 41- 45 years old (10 respondents) when they enrolled in the program followed by respondents who were 36 - 40 years old. When participants were asked as to why they enrolled at age 41-45, a participant said it was only the time when she decided taking it after prioritizing her children. Moreover, it is also worth noting that there were three respondents who were 22-25 years old when they enrolled in the program. One participant said that he was goal-driven at that time; he was at the peak of motivation, encouragement, and drive. Another participant shared that he started his Ph.D. degree at age 23. He thought of pursuing it because he assumed it could be a strength for his qualifications and credentials.

Geographical Location of the Respondents

Out of the 28 respondents, 14 were from the Cordillera Administrative Region while the other 14 were from neighboring regions (Regions 1, 2, & 3). Some participants from other regions said that they enrolled in BSU because it was the only state university offering the degree or because of positive feedback from colleagues. For their employment status, 24 respondents were employed as permanent faculty while four were in temporary status. Furthermore, all respondents were employed in educational institutions during their enrollment in the program and most did not change employment after graduation.

Reasons for Enrolling in the Program



Three common reasons emerged as to why they enrolled in the program – the prospect of career development (82.14%), interest/inclination in the course (75%), and strong passion for the profession (53.57%). Summarizing their responses, they admittedly said that they took the degree for promotion purposes but later, they realized that it is not only for promotion but much more with the accumulation of knowledge to be shared with their students. Furthermore, a participant also highlighted their early exposure to English and the influence of family members who share the same interest.

Extent of Relevance of the Curriculum to the Skills in the Workplace

Instruction

In the survey, 96.43 % respondents rated the language education program's curriculum as contributing to their knowledge of different subjects and their commitment to teaching. Several activities and practices in the program, such as reading multiple references and analyzing content, attending seminars, and pursuing higher studies, were identified as helpful. Respondents also found the curriculum very relevant to developing materials, planning the curriculum, and managing classrooms. Curriculum planning involved proposing a matrix and content, developing prototype dissertation outputs, designing instructional materials, and maximizing authentic teaching materials. The process ensured that materials were designed, implemented, and evaluated to suit what students should learn, with the option of revising or updating them (teaching for independent learning).



Research

Respondents find the curriculum very relevant to their publication in journals (96.43%), presenting at conferences (96.43%), teaching/mentoring research (92.59%), and advising roles (85.71%). One participant noted that the degree provided more exposure to research advising, paneling, and speakership. The degree also paved the way for research opportunities and a better understanding of research principles through exposure and actual conduct.



Extension

In state universities and colleges, faculty members are required to share their expertise with the community. Most of the respondents rated the curriculum as Very Relevant to leadership in organizations (78.57%), participation as a resource person (82.14%), and consultancy to public and private organizations (67.85%). To a certain extent, since the students have more expertise in the specialization, they are invited to serve as speakers and consultants. The program has greatly benefited the participants by developing their skills and personalities, allowing for more open expression of thoughts, and training them to become leaders and organizers. They have gained experience in presenting seminars, collaborating, and sharing resources, which has helped them in their current roles as resource persons, consultants, trainers, speakers, and tutors.





CALL TO ACTION

- ✓ There is a need to upgrade facilities and classrooms at the Graduate program as this was the weakness identified by the graduates; PhD Language Program students should have to be exposed to technology necessary for language teaching and research.
- ✓ The Department has to involve PhD Language Program students in extension activities since they are also affiliated with other agencies. As such strong partnerships with professional organizations and local and international academic communities may already be established.
- ✓ The Department should organize intensified orientation or seminar-workshops about the program that include collaborative discussions addressing the situation of students' confusion after graduation.



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ABOUT THE MATERIAL

Informing Policy and Practice is published quarterly by the Institute of Social Research and Development and R & E Publications Office of Benguet State University. It synthesizes findings from research and development activities, or presents results of quick survey and opinion poll on social, economic, and policy issues and concerns affecting the Cordillera region. It also distills the key messages and provides recommendations for the information and consideration of relevant stakeholders and policymakers.

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