

Pedagogical Practices of Tutors at DMMMSU Open University System

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Abstract

Pedagogical practices support students' learning. This is in line with the dynamic teaching pedagogy that facilitates student's professional growth and career advancement. In so doing, classroom teaching models are introduced to spearhead the needs of the students along their way to a higher career choice. Quality education rests primarily on the ability of the teachers to deliver quality instructional performance. It has been said that the best instructional medium inside the classroom is the teacher. It is imperative then that the teacher is equipped with an outstanding or excellent personal facility and teaching attributes that ensure effective teaching and learning outcomes that contribute immensely to the attainment of quality education. The study assessed the pedagogical practices of tutors at DMMMSU Open University System. The descriptive method was used in this study. The primary instrument used in gathering data was the two-part guide questionnaire. Data were collected, tallied and analyzed in accordance with the study. The quantitative data were analyzed using mean under the Microsoft Analysis Tool Pack. In light of the findings of the study, the pedagogical practices of tutors were globally competitive and highly recommended for quality distance learning education at its finest, the stakeholders and the clientele were key components for quality distance learning education, and the formulation of an enhancement program contributed to the sustainability of the best instructional practices of DMMMSU Open University System.

Keywords: pedagogical practices, instructional practices, implementation

Introduction

Pedagogical practices support students' learning. This is in line with the dynamic teaching pedagogy that facilitates student's professional growth and career advancement. In so doing, classroom teaching models are introduced to spearhead the needs of the students along their way to a higher career choice.

Quality education rests primarily on the ability of the teachers to deliver quality instructional performance. It has been said that the best instructional medium inside the classroom is the teacher. It is imperative then that the teacher is equipped with an outstanding or excellent personal facility and teaching attributes that ensure effective teaching and learning outcomes that contribute immensely to the attainment of quality education.

With the mounting competition among higher educational institutions, one of the keys to their survival is setting instructional and local standards. Teachers take the vanguard role for this crusade in ensuring quality instruction. It is imperative however, that teachers do not only display good instructional practices, but the best instructional practices. The competency of teachers then to deliver the best instructional practices becomes the competitive advantage of the school to survive the competition for instructional service delivery and in meet reforms.

Best instructional practices are specific teaching methods that guide interaction in the classroom. These effective practices have been identified through research on student learning. Best instructional practices are like vehicles used by teachers to efficiently improve learning of more students (Library of congress, 2016)

According to Quiros, as cited by the best teachers in the classroom are world class. Being world class does not mean going internally and showing their best out there, but instead entails passion and commitment to the teaching profession. Being world class is giving the best to teaching and starts right inside the classroom.

DMMMSU-Open University System (OUS) is one of the academic units of Don Mariano Marcos Memorial State University recognized as an operating unit of the University directly under the Office of the University President pursuant to BOR Resolution No. 98-024. It aims to provide distance education to people who have no access to schools, colleges, and universities or those who, for one reason or another, cannot profit from the formal education system. As such, it offers formal, and non-formal distance education programs in agriculture, science, education, business education, and development administration that will promote access, quality, effective and efficient education (www.dmmmsu.edu.ph).

Anent thereto, the modes of learning include group-paced, individualized, and on-line services. Tutors are selected based from the qualifications set forth by the University to the extent that all of them are vertically aligned, qualified, and competent to teach the subjects being offered.

However, becoming the best teacher in the classroom and manifesting the best instructional practices are easier said than done. Based on the tutor's evaluation (Second Semester, School Year 2014-2015), much is expected for the delivery of instructional practices in view of the categorical commentaries of the students relative to the performance of the tutors (although arguably half-truths may ignite curiosity and warrant further investigation). Stated differently, DMMMSU Open University System expects its tutors to be delivering an outstanding performance in the realm of a globally competitive and a world class academe.

Methodology

The descriptive method was used in this study. A descriptive research states that the focus of the study is the present condition. The purpose is to find new truth. The truth may have many different forms such as increased quantity of knowledge, a new generalization or new law, increased insights into factors which are operating, the discovery of a new causal relationship, a more accurate formulation of the problem to be solved and many others (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2006). Anent thereto, information relative to the study to be taken from DMMMSU-Open University System were gathered, reviewed and analyzed. A questionnaire was prepared by the researchers to determine the extent of implementation in order to gather additional data. Respondents included the three-hundred ten (310) students of DMMMSU Open University System who were enrolled in grouped paced learning within the second semester (SY 2014-2015) and twenty-nine (29) tutors under bachelor's program/s for a total of three-hundred thirty-nine (339). Unfortunately, only two-hundred eighty-five (285) students and twenty-six (26) tutors' responses were collected; this can be explained by student absences during the administration of questionnaires. Since the total number of respondents was less than 500, total enumeration was utilized. The questionnaire that was utilized was prepared by the researcher. The statistical tools used were: weighted mean and t-test. Data categorization was based on the institutional standard for rating the tutors as prescribed hence, the following scale:

Point Value	Statistical Range	Descriptive Equivalent
5	4.20 – 5.00	Excellent
4	3.40 – 4.19	Very Good
3	2.60 – 3.39	Satisfactory
2	1.80 – 2.59	Fair
1	1.00 – 1.79	Poor

Results and Discussion

Implementation of Pedagogical Practices of DOUS

Teacher's Personal Attributes

Table 2 reflects the teacher's personal attributes of the respondents of DMMMSU-Open University System. It can be gleaned from the table that teacher's personal attributes obtained an overall mean of 4.45, described as excellent. This signifies that the personal characteristics of teachers of the respondents contributed to excellent performance and highly profound quality instruction.

Table 2 Teacher's Personal Attributes

Indicators	Tutors	Students	Mean	DE
The Tutor. . .				
1. Observes proper teaching decorum.	4.52	4.40	4.46	E
2. Delivers the lesson in a well-modulated voice.	4.48	4.47	4.48	E
3. Uses multi-lingual education as a medium of instruction.	4.40	4.34	4.37	E
4. Treats students without any discrimination on account of gender, status, or religious affiliation.	4.48	4.56	4.52	E
5. Does not embarrass students and considers their individual differences.	4.20	4.53	4.36	E
6. Always approachable and compassionate to the needs of students.	4.40	4.60	4.50	E
Grand Mean	4.41	4.48	4.45	E

Legend: DE – Descriptive Equivalent

E - Excellent

Taking it singly, treating the students without any discrimination on account of gender, status, or religious affiliation garnered the highest mean rating of 4.52, described as Excellent. This implies that students of DOUS were treated with high regard to fairness, equality and sound discretion in the learning environment.

In the study of good instructional practices included the following: treating all students in a fair and equitable manner, involving the whole class and not just calling on any particular group of students based on gender, race, or ethnicity, and offering both shy and extroverted students opportunities to excel in the classroom. Maintaining an equitable and fair teaching relationship with all students is a key practice to discourage any unnecessary competition in the classroom. This sometimes involves the teacher-student role.

On the other hand, does not embarrass students and considers their individual differences obtained the lowest mean ratings of 4.36, described as Excellent. Apparently, this indicated high respect for individual capacities and consideration of the needs and convenience in harmonious development of the student.

One good instructional practice is to encourage students to be engaged in and responsible for their own learning. She/he must challenge and motivate students to achieve at higher levels. The teacher communicates to all students their progress so they know where they stand grade-wise at any moment of the semester. When there is a guest speaker, the instructor requires students to develop questions in advance. As such, the students go to the white board to demonstrate their knowledge in math and accounting class.

Instructional Efficiency

Table 3 shows the instructional efficiency of the respondents of DMMMSU-Open University System. It had an overall mean of 4.47, described as Excellent. Chief among these is the assigning grades according to the academic requirements prescribed by the academe, which obtained the highest mean of 4.60, described as Excellent. This implies high regard of evaluation as to academic requirements of the students with utmost equality and good faith according to the standards set forth by the academe. This is supported by the study of Schraw (2011), which states that students need to be challenged academically and they should be expected to meet high standards. Just because the teacher expects a high quality of work from them does not guarantee they will produce high quality work. Part of the process requires the teacher to provide excellent feedback, and give very specific comments so that students can improve their work. On the contrary, explaining the objectives and expectations of the course garnered the lowest mean of 4.16, described as Very Good. This implies that objectives and expectations should be given priority in the outset of formal and informal education, to introduce the framework of the course and sustain its goals. Moreover, information and communication technology is also essential to sustain learning objective integration. According to the study conducted by Parkes and Harris (2009), one of the best practices along instruction is providing an overview of what the class will cover through the class learning objectives. Learning objectives let students know the skills and knowledge that will be taught in a particular class. Think of them as a road map to follow. This is typically

accomplished by the instructor distributing a clearly written syllabus to students. A well-written course syllabus is a very effective learning tool that helps students prepare for the class, lists the resources that are available to them, facilitates comprehension of the goals of the class, and provides the philosophy of the instructor.

Table 3 Instructional Efficiency

Indicators	Tutors	Students	Mean	DE
The Tutor...				
1. Introduces the Vision-Mission-Goals and Objectives (VMGO) of the DOUS.	4.48	4.37	4.43	E
2. Highlights the framework/parts/synopsis of the module according to the course subject.	4.56	4.30	4.43	E
3. Explains the objectives and expectations of the course.	4.18	4.14	4.16	VG
4. Fosters a learning environment that suits best to the interest of the students.	4.40	4.37	4.39	E
5. Encourages a motivating and democratic classroom atmosphere during face to face meetings.	4.24	4.53	4.39	E
6. Encourages students to dwell more on their weaknesses and to study more about the subject.	4.16	4.18	4.17	VG
7. Employs appropriate teaching techniques and other related activities (like lecture, symposium, seminar, group discussion, and collaborative learning).	4.45	4.43	4.44	E
8. Has broad mastery of the subject matter.	4.57	4.43	4.50	E
9. Gives synthesis/summary/evaluation after every end of the face to face meeting.	4.69	4.45	4.57	E
10. Fair in giving grades according to the academic requirements prescribed by the academe.	4.72	4.47	4.60	E
Grand Mean	3.63	4.01	3.82	VG

Legend: DE – Descriptive Equivalent

E – Excellent

VG – Very Good

Time Productivity

Table 4 shows the time productivity as perceived by the respondents. It can be gleaned from the table that the over-all mean is 4.58, which is described as Excellent. Among the indicators, not incurring under time obtained the highest mean of 4.72, which is described as Excellent. This implies that time is really of the essence; this should be considered to assure learning satisfaction of the students according to the lesson prepared by the tutor under the module assigned. On the other hand, starting the classes on time obtained the lowest with a mean of 4.46, albeit described as excellent. This signifies that the tutors were well-prepared as to their modular lessons and gave their fullest interest to teach for the welfare of students.

Table 4 Time Productivity

Indicators	Tutors	Students	Mean	DE
The Tutor. . .				
1. Meets the students according to the assigned module.	4.82	4.45	4.63	E
2. Starts the classes on time.	4.56	4.36	4.46	E
3. Uses the time productively.	4.65	4.41	4.53	E
4. Maximizes the time according to the scheduled activity.	4.72	4.43	4.58	E
5. Does not incur under time.	4.97	4.47	4.72	E
Grand Mean	4.74	4.42	4.58	E

Legend: DE – Descriptive Equivalent
E - Excellent

Summary Table of the Pedagogical Practices

Table 5 shows the summary table of the pedagogical practices of tutors. Among the indicators below, time productivity obtained the highest with a mean of 4.58, described as excellent, while instructional efficiency obtained the lowest with a mean rating of 3.82, described as Very Good.

Table 5 Summary Table

Indicators	Tutors	Students	Mean	DE
A. Teacher's Personal Attributes	4.41	4.48	4.45	E
B. Instructional Efficiency	3.63	4.01	3.82	VG
C. Time Productivity	4.74	4.42	4.58	E
Grand Mean	4.26	4.30	4.28	E

Legend: DE – Descriptive Equivalent

E – Excellent

VG – Very Good

Comparative Analysis between the Pedagogical Practices as perceived by the Respondents

Table 6 shows the differences in the instructional practices as perceived by the 2 groups of respondents compared. The table also shows that the weighted means were 4.26 for tutors and 4.30 for students. The computed F-value stood at 0.0026 vis-à-vis the p-value of 0.96 which means that there is no significant difference in the respondents' perceptions as to the extent of instructional practices of the tutors of DMMMSU Open University System. The two groups of respondents fell squarely as compared that their perceptions to that extent are excellent. These would only mean that all of them were key factors in providing the best instructional practices of the academe in line with the school's goals, mission and vision. An enhancement program is indeed vital to the sustainability of these effective instructional practices.

Table 6 Comparative Analysis between the Instructional Practices as Perceived by the Respondents

Group	Mean	Standard Deviation	F-value	p-value
Tutors	4.26	2.93	0.00*	0.96
Students	4.30	3.42		

*not significant

Pedagogical Practices of Tutors

Teacher's Personal Attributes through Total Human Formation

Tutors of the institution reflect high regard of character and value education in the learning environment, notwithstanding their fields of specialization. As tutors of the academe, they are not merely to teach but also to transform human resources into productive, self-reliant citizens, and responsible leaders in the community.

Instructional Efficiency through Quality Instruction

Since the mission of the university is to provide relevant quality instruction, research, and extension, it is essential that teaching pedagogy is effective and efficient. This is evident among the tutors of DMMMSU-Open University System who inculcate outcomes-based education in the existing curriculum by integrating the current trends in educational technology.

Time Productivity through Pedagogical Planning and Development

Time is of the essence. Tutors prepare lessons according to their respective lesson plan as what transpired in the syllabus or even in the curriculum. Since the academic unit is a distance education, modules are prepared as the main learning materials vis-à-vis the existing curriculum. In fact, the university has an operational and academic plan that is geared towards the direction, as well as the implementation, of the series of activities under instruction for the new school year.

Pedagogical Media

A. Main Media

The institution uses *Course Modules/printed materials* which serve as the main learning materials. These materials contain the discussions of lessons/topics, course descriptions, course objectives, study methods, instructions on how to use the modules, self-evaluation every lesson, learning exercises and reports, together with summative tests for each module.

B. Supplementary Media

The institution provides *Tutorials/Consultations* to individualized learners at the DMMMSU Learning Centers. The purpose of tutorials is to expand students' knowledge and understanding of the course content, which they study on their own. The unit utilizes communication tools such as fax, telephone, mobile phone for short messaging services, and internet for electronic mail.

C. Student Support Services

This includes: scholarship grants, student loan assistance, students' awards, guidance and counseling, accommodation services, student body organization, library and IT-related services, and students' publications.

D. Online Services

This includes online learning using the learning management system under *www.edu.2.0* since the unit is a distance learning institution wherein students exchange ideas, submit modular assignments/exercises, take examinations with their respective tutor/s through online. Close coordination is essential between the tutor and the student to monitor/supervise the activities of the latter.

Discussion

This study entitled "Pedagogical Practices of Tutors at DMMMSU Open University System" utilized the descriptive research design. The set of questionnaires about the implementation of instructional practices in the aforementioned study was assessed.

Specifically, this study sought to answer the following:

1. Extent of implementation of the pedagogical practices of the tutors of DMMMSU Open University System for:
 - a. teacher's personal attributes
 - b. instructional efficiency
 - c. time productivity
2. Significant differences in the extent of implementation of the pedagogical practices of the tutors when they were grouped.
3. The pedagogical practices of the tutors for the identified dimensions.

The study assessed the pedagogical practices of tutors at DMMMSU Open University System. The respondents of this study comprised two sets: (1) Tutor and (2) Students. They were considered as respondents in view of their awareness and observation with regards to the subject matter of the research. Since the number of respondents was less than five hundred (500), the total enumeration was utilized. Data were collected, tallied and analyzed in accordance with the study. Mean values and t-test were the statistical tools used in the computation of the gathered data.

The data gathered, analyzed, and interpreted produced the following salient findings:

1. The extent of implementation of the pedagogical practices of tutors along the identified dimensions was excellent.
2. There were no significant differences of the pedagogical practices as perceived by the respondents.
3. The pedagogical practices of DMMMSU Open University System included: total human formation, quality instruction, pedagogical planning and development, as well as pedagogical media.

Conclusions

Based on the findings of the study, the following conclusions were made:

1. The pedagogical practices of tutors are globally competitive and highly recommended for quality distance learning education at its finest.
2. The stakeholders and the clientele are key components towards quality distance learning education.
3. The pedagogical practices embrace world class standards in the realm of distance learning.

Suggestions

Based on the findings of this study, the following are highly suggested:

1. The University should maintain the distinct characteristic of DOUS as the only distance learning of best instructional practices worldwide.
2. The University should provide more innovative instructional designs to cater to the needs of the clientele.
3. The University should ensure employment opportunities among its clientele, both domestic and abroad, as the springboard of a world class open university system.
4. The tutors should sustain the best pedagogical practices during the ASEAN integration to encourage distance learning towards global competitiveness.

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