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A MULTIPLE CASE STUDY CAPTURING THE WORLD OF THE ENGLISH MODULE WRITERS: TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE IN FOCUS

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ABSTRACT

This multiple case study aimed to discover and understand the experiences of the English module writers on the provision of technical assistance at the Division of Tagum City. This study was hinged on Technical Assistance Model for Guiding Services and System Change of Le et al. (2014), Vygotsky's Social Constructivism (1962), and Skinner's Operant Conditioning Theory (1938). Data were taken from four (4) participants and four (4) informants whose responses were collected through in-depth interviews. The data were analyzed using thematic and cross-case analysis. The results revealed seven (7) major themes on the lived experiences of the participants on technical assistance, which include: encountering lack of technical assistance, gaining professional growth and skills development, having lack of proper guidance on selecting best module contents and design, and being given limited time for crafting modules. Moreover, on how they overcome their struggles on technical assistance, the following four (4) themes emerged: seeking and receiving assistance from other people, having the passion for teaching, researching, and following module templates and guidelines. Furthermore, on the insights gained by the English module writers on technical assistance, six (6) major themes emerged which include: provide sufficient technical assistance, maintain positive mindset and attitudes, and seek assistance from experts. The study highlights the need for a structured and consistent technical assistance for English module writers.

KEYWORDS: *Education, Technical Assistance, Self-Learning Modules, English Module Writers, Multiple Case Study, Cross-Case Analysis*

1. INTRODUCTION

Designing self-learning modules (SLMs) has become a crucial alternative delivery mode to ensure that young learners continue their education in the absence of face-to-face classes. This task carries significant responsibility and presents considerable challenges for teachers. It requires meeting specific qualifications and adhering to established standards. At the same time, it offers writers the creative freedom to develop content and activities without concerns over copyright infringement. However, despite these opportunities, many module writers face dilemmas in crafting effective SLMs. Common challenges include uncertainty about how to initiate the writing process and difficulty in sustaining the effort needed to produce high-quality outputs. These issues highlight the essential role of technical assistance from educational leaders and organizational members. Timely and consistent support is vital to help teacher-writers to complete modules effectively and within designated timelines.

Issues related to technical assistance also exist in various settings. In Turkey, Uyangor et al. (2013), found that module writers encountered significant difficulties in completing their outputs due to a lack of knowledge, insufficiency of environment, equipment, time, and high cost. Similar issues were reported in Buenos Aires. As mentioned by Lutz (2016), factors that hinder the completion of output involve time, inadequacy of funds, scarcity of materials, and the lack of essential skillsets, many of which can be acquired through various training opportunities.

In the Philippines, Malipot (2020) reported that Filipino teachers face problems in receiving enough technical assistance for developing self-learning modules. He noted that the lack of training opportunities and limited time allocation hinder teachers from completing outputs effectively within the blended or distance learning setup. Furthermore, he emphasized that the task of module development should ideally be handled by specialists from the Department of Education rather than classroom teachers. Malipot also cited DepEd Secretary Briones, who acknowledged that preparing modules, particularly in specific subject areas such as English, poses a considerable challenge for writers. This process, she asserted, requires intensive training aligned with the teachers' respective fields of specialization.

In the Division of Tagum City, it was observed that several secondary school English module writers have raised issues regarding the provision of technical assistance from their school heads and even their co-writers. These writers require adequate time, training, and guidance before the self-learning modules (SLMs) can be submitted to the division office for mass reproduction. Additionally, some of the module writers are new

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to the task and continue to struggle in establishing strong connections and open communication with their school heads and fellow teachers. Moreover, there is a noticeable lack of reference materials and resources to support the module development process. Compounding this issue, not all module writers are given the opportunity to attend webinars that provide guidelines, orientations on best practices, and instruction on effective techniques and approaches for planning and implementation.

Furthermore, this study was hinged on the Technical Assistance Model for Guiding Services and System Change of Le et al. (2014), Vygotsky's Social Constructivism (1962), and Operant Conditioning Theory of B.F. Skinner (1938). While many research papers studied about the effect of utilizing modules in the curriculum (Alelaimat, 2012; Abbasi et al., 2013; Bakar, 2015) and even its importance in the conduct of the distance learning (Dangle & Sumaoang, 2020); however, there is a lack of studies in the Division of Tagum City that delves on surpassing the challenges of the secondary school module writers in English on technical assistance. Thus, there must be an immediate action for this to give attention to the existing problem. Furthermore, this study is of greater significance since this serves a basis in understanding the diverse and unique experiences of the English module writers on technical assistance. Moreover, this highlights the positive social influence of technical assistance to secondary school module writers in English in honing more their writing skills and building of support systems amidst any global pandemic. The purpose of this multiple case study was to discover and understand the experiences of various English module writers on technical assistance at the Division of Tagum City.

2. METHODOLOGY

This study employed a qualitative research design, specifically utilizing a multiple case study approach. This provides an opportunity to develop rich descriptions that vividly convey the experiences of English module writers regarding technical assistance (Creswell, 2018, as cited in Aspers & Corte, 2019). Furthermore, this approach allows for an extensive collection of data from varied and diverse sources, as well as detailed descriptions of each case, facilitating the identification of emerging themes (Cronin, 2015).

Using purposive sampling, four (4) participants and four (4) informants were selected, all of whom were public secondary school English module writers in the Division of Tagum City. Each underwent a virtual in-depth interview conducted via Google Meet, ensuring the trustworthiness of the study and adherence to ethical research guidelines. Moreover, a validated interview guide was also utilized during the interview. In selecting the participants, inclusion criteria were followed such as: (1) must be either a beginning or a distinguished teacher from a public secondary school in the Division of Tagum City; (2) must be English module writers currently in service, regardless of their field of specialization; and (3) must be teaching English at any grade level from Grade 7 to Grade 12.

The data collected were analyzed using a coding system, thematic analysis, and cross-case analysis. Ethical principles were rigorously observed throughout the study, including obtaining informed consent from all participants, respecting their rights, and maintaining the privacy and confidentiality of their responses.

3. RESULTS

This section presents the data that has been gathered and are shown in tabular form with their corresponding interpretations and analyses.

Table 1. ***Profiles of the Module Writers in English***

CASE (Pseudonym)	Length of Service Before the Writing Process	Position	Department
Newly Hired Writer	6 months	Teacher I	Junior High School
Mismatched Writer	Almost 3 years	Teacher I	Senior High School
Multifunctional Writer	More than 3 years	Teacher III	Senior High School
Seasoned Writer	25 years	Master Teacher II	Junior High School

Table 2. ***Unique Characteristics of the Module Writers in English***

Case	Essential Theme	Core Ideas
Newly Hired Writer	Being a Class Adviser and a Coordinator with Multiple Ancillaries	• Having difficulty in writing modules because of having ancillaries and advisory class • Being assigned as an LR Coordinator
	Teaching Non-English Subjects	• Teaching other subject not related to English • Handling Edukasyon sa Pagpapakatao (ESP)
	Having Adjustments in the DepEd System	• Adapting with the workflow of the system • Having the feeling of adjustment in the workplace
	Being Dedicated and Intelligent Worker	• Having the intellect and passion in teaching
Mismatched Writer	Having Sufficient Teaching Experiences	• Teaching in the Department of Education for almost (3) years • Working in the public service for almost three (3) years
	Having Exposed to the English Subject	• Teaching 21st century literature for 3 years

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	Being Handled	• Handling the same subject for 3 years
	Having Only a Class Advisory and No Ancillary Function	• Having no ancillary function while focusing attention to advisory class • Handling an advisory class only
	Teaching Subjects Aligned to Original Expertise	• Teaching Entrepreneurship subjects • Receiving subject loads that are aligned to original college degree
Multifunctional Writer	Coordinator of Multiple Areas and English Related Programs	• Handling multiple ancillaries and coordinatorship • Being assigned as in-charge of a reading program
	Mentor with a Teaching Background in English and Other Subjects	• Having a teaching background in English and other subjects • Teaching Research subjects
	Graduate of Doctor of Philosophy in Applied Linguistics	• Being chosen as a module writer because of her doctorate degree • Having a postgraduate study
	Evaluator of Self-Learning Modules in English	• Being assigned as one of the evaluators of Self-Learning Modules (SLMs) in the division
	Scriptwriter and Host for Radio-based Instruction in English	• Writing scripts for radio – based instruction • Performing the duty as a broadcaster
Seasoned Writer	Educator with Rich Teaching Experience	• Teaching for 25 years • Being chosen because of her teaching experiences • Feeling grateful within the department for 25 years • Honing her expertise as an English teacher
	Appointee of English-Related Office Positions	• Being assigned as the Department Head • Having experiences as School Paper Coordinator • Being a School Paper Adviser and a Team Leader

Table 3. ***Cross-Case Analysis on the Experiences of Module Writers in English on Technical Assistance***

Essential Theme	**Cases**			
	1	2	3	4
Encountering Lack of Technical Assistance	√	√	√	√
Gaining Professional Growth and Skills Development	√		√	√
Having Lack of Proper Guidance on Selecting Best Module Contents and Design		√	√	√
Having Difficulty in Getting Responses for Inquiries Related to Writing SLMs	√		√	√
Being Given Limited Time for Crafting Modules			√	√
Having Lack of Learning Materials and References for Module Writers in English			√	√
Producing Less Quality Modules Due to Lack of Technical Knowledge		√		√
Facing Inconsistencies on the Instructions Given in Making Module Outputs	√			
Affecting Student's Learning	√			
Asking Many Questions Related to Module Writing	√			
Being Given Target Learning Competencies for Module Writing		√		
Being Given Orientation on Module Content and Structure			√	

Table 4. ***Cross-Case Analysis on the Coping Strategies of Module Writers in English on the Challenges They Encountered on Technical Assistance***

Essential Themes	**Cases**			
	1	2	3	4
Seeking and Receiving Assistance from the Other People	√	√	√	√
Having the Passion for Teaching		√	√	√
Researching	√	√		
Following Module Templates and Guidelines	√	√		
Learning from the Inputs Given by the Division Office				√
Participating in Webinar-Workshops	√			
Staying Focused			√	
Having Patience on Revising Modules				√

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Table 5. ***Cross-Case Analysis on the Insights of Module Writers in English Regarding Technical Assistance***

Essential Theme	Cases			
	1	2	3	4
Provide Sufficient Technical Assistance		√	√	√
Maintain Positive Mindset and Attitudes		√	√	√
Seek Assistance from Experts	√	√		√
Have a Proper Coordination and Communication Between Administrators and Writers		√	√	√
Allot Sufficient Time for Preparation and Deadlines	√	√		
Consider the Writers' Needs and Well-being			√	√
Provide More Webinars and Training-Workshops	√			
Procure Additional Manpower			√	
Conduct a Thorough Checking of Module Quality				√

4. DISCUSSIONS

English module writers have their own distinct characteristics that set them apart from others. They have also encountered various challenges related to technical assistance and have developed ways to cope with these adversities. Through their experiences, they offer valuable insights that can benefit fellow writers.

While English module writers share some commonalities, their experiences with technical assistance throughout the process of developing self-learning modules also differ. The following themes emerged from the results of the second question posed on their experiences as a module writer: 1) encountering lack of technical assistance; 2) gaining professional growth and skills development; 3) having lack of proper guidance on selecting best module contents and design; 4) being given limited time for crafting modules; 5) having difficulty in getting responses for inquiries related to writing SLMs; 6) having lack of learning materials and references for module writers in English; and 7) producing less quality modules due to lack of technical knowledge.

As mentioned by Fixson et al. (2015), technical assistance may be provided to various aspects such as individualized mentoring, small group conferences, or even through virtual assistance. This is also considered as one of the most efficient approaches for ensuring capacity building in the organization.

With all the struggles encountered by the module writers in English, it can be seen on their responses as well that they do have similarities and differences in their coping strategies in writing SLMs on technical assistance. The following themes transpired from the results of the third question posed on their coping strategies as module writers: 1) seeking and receiving assistance from other people; 2) having the passion for teaching; 3) researching; and 4) following module templates and guidelines.

Whereas the observance of guidance in module writing could also lead to the module writers to unleash their strategies to be utilized in crafting the learning modules. Since module writing is a tedious process, module writers should always ensure that the element of the teaching is also included in the process such as the objectives, content, methodology, assessment (marking and reporting), the personality of the teacher, and the quality of the learner. The success of the process is anchored on the type of guidance received by the module writers from their colleagues or even from their leaders (Ayua, 2017).

The participants also shared some views regarding their experiences of technical assistance which can also be shared with others. The following themes emerged from the results of the fourth question posed on their insights as module writers: 1) asking for help from reliable people; 2) provision of sufficient technical assistance; 3) necessity for constant checking and updates; 4) maintaining positive attributes; 5) learning from the given technical assistance; and 6) consideration on the writers' needs and well-being.

Indeed, Penuel et al. (2017) added that in accomplishing output, provision of technical support and time for the module writers to plan before the implementation process is highly suggested. With the ample time provide for them, they are allowed to design what should be included in the written outputs before this can be implemented in the curriculum.

5. IMPLICATIONS FOR TEACHING PRACTICE

To produce excellent English module writers across the Division of Tagum City and ensure the submission of high-quality outputs to the central office, the results highlight that teachers, who were tasked with creating materials for the implementation of distance learning, faced significant challenges due to the lack of technical assistance.

Addressing this issue requires collaborative efforts among Department of Education Officials, school administrators, and fellow English module writers. The findings underscore the importance of providing structured, consistent, and responsive technical support tailored to the writers' needs, including mentoring, access to relevant resources, and sufficient time for module development. Since English module writers have diverse experiences and coping strategies, peer support and professional collaboration must be institutionalized to promote capacity-building, boost motivation, and ensure instructional quality. Active involvement of education program supervisors, school heads, team leaders, and technical working committees is essential, not only in providing guidance, but also in cultivating a supportive environment where writers can integrate key teaching elements such as objectives, content, methodology, assessments, and learner-centered approaches.

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Furthermore, empowering module writers through technical assistance and collaborative practices contributes to the success of distance learning and the overall quality of education delivery.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

This study effectively achieved its primary objective of capturing the experiences of English module writers in relation to technical assistance, highlighting their distinct characteristics, lived experiences, coping strategies, and insights for fellow writers. For future research, it is recommended that a similar study be conducted with a larger sample size and across a broader range of educational settings to generate more comprehensive and generalizable findings. Additionally, follow-up interviews with selected participants could be conducted to determine whether their perspectives and insights have changed over time, thereby adding depth and longitudinal value to the study. Aspiring researchers are also encouraged to employ similar or alternative methodological approaches to either validate or challenge the findings presented here. Replicating the study in different contexts or locations may further enhance the credibility and applicability of the results through triangulation and comparative analysis.

7. PATENTS

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