

Official Conference Proceedings
The 5th LSCIC 2024 Language, Society and Culture
International Conference

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August 16th, 2024

Interdisciplinary Perspectives on Soft Power
in Humanities and Social Sciences

At Pattaya, Thailand

The Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences
Mahasarakham University, Thailand

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Official Conference Proceedings
The 5th Language, Society and Culture International Conference
(LSCIC 2024)

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Published by

Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences,
Mahasarakham University, Thailand

Published on

October, 50 copies

Editor-in-Chief

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Nittaya Wannakit

Editor

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Theera Rongtheera

Page layout/Cover

Phongsak Sangkhamanee

Poster/Website

Patipan Sanggapas, Attasit Srirak

Printed by

Taksila Printing 205/2 Srisawat Dumnoen Road,
Mueang District, Maha Sarakham Province, Thailand 44000
Tel: 081-5465776, 088-5608139, tatsanawadee@gmail.com

Official website of the conference

<https://human.msu.ac.th/lscic>

Contact info

Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Mahasarakham University
Khamriang Subdistrict, Kantarawichai District, Maha Sarakham Province 44150 Thailand
Phone: +66 43 754369 Email: lscic@gmail.com

National Library of Thailand Cataloging in Publication data

Theera Rongtheera.

Official conference proceedings The 5th LSCIC 2024 Language, Society and Culture International Conference.-- Maha Sarakham : Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences Mahasarakham University, 2024.

100 p.

1. Social sciences -- Congresses. 2. Language and languages -- Congresses.

3. Culture -- Congresses. I. Title.

300

ISBN 978-974-19-6120-7



Proceedings of the 5th LSCIC 2024 Language, Society and Culture International Conference

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Assoc. Prof. Dr. Nittaya Wannakit
Dean of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences
Maharakham University

This year, we are excited to explore the theme of “Interdisciplinary Perspectives on Soft Power in Humanities and Social Sciences.” Soft power, the ability to influence and attract rather than coerce, plays a crucial role in shaping global interactions and cultural exchanges. For instance, cultural diplomacy through arts and education has fostered mutual understanding between nations. By examining this concept through interdisciplinary lenses, including language, literature, history, sociology, political science, and cultural studies, we aim to uncover new insights into how humanities and social sciences can address contemporary challenges and foster positive global relationships.

Our commitment to this theme reflects our belief in the power of education to drive meaningful change. By integrating perspectives from various disciplines, we can enhance our understanding of soft power and its implications for global cooperation, cultural diplomacy, and societal progress, leading to practical solutions and policies.

We extend a warm welcome to all our speakers and delegates who have joined us for this conference. Your participation is invaluable, and we appreciate the effort you have made to contribute to this important dialogue. We also extend our heartfelt thanks to everyone who has supported the organization of this event; your dedication has made this conference possible.

We hope this conference will serve as a dynamic platform for networking, collaboration, and the exploration of new ideas related to soft power in the humanities and social sciences. To all the participants from around the world, thank you for your engagement. We wish you a successful and enriching conference and look forward to the lasting connections and innovative ideas that will emerge from our discussions.

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Nittaya Wannakit

Dean of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences

Maharakham University, Thailand





Assoc. Prof. Dr. Theera Rongtheera

Editor

On behalf of the 5th Language, Society, and Culture International Conference (LSCIC 2024), I am pleased to present this official conference proceedings. The theme for LSCIC 2024, ‘Interdisciplinary Perspectives on Soft Power in Humanities and Social Sciences,’ underscores our commitment to explore how various academic disciplines can work together to address today’s global challenges.

This year’s conference aims to investigate soft power through an interdisciplinary approach, focusing on its effects on global interactions, cultural diplomacy, and societal progress. We hope to generate new insights and solutions through the integration of perspectives from the humanities and social sciences.

We are delighted to include 13 abstracts and 4 articles from participants representing China, France, Japan, Laos PDR, the Philippines, and Thailand. The diversity of perspectives and expertise represented here reflects the vibrant and dynamic nature of our academic community.

I extend my sincere thanks to all authors and participants for their valuable contributions. On behalf of the organizing committee, I wish you a successful and engaging conference experience and look forward to seeing you at the 6th LSCIC next year.

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Theera Rongtheera

Chair of the LSCIC 2024





Assoc. Prof. Dr. Natthanai Prasannam
Associate Dean for Research & Creation
Faculty of Humanities, Kasetsart University, Thailand

Keynote Abstract 1

SISSYPHILIA AND THE TROPICOPOLITAN SENSIBILITIES: QUEERING THE STAR IN THAI BOYS LOVE MEDIA

Abstract

This keynote speech hopes to investigate the queered star image in Thai Boys Love (BL)/Y media texts released after 2020 through the lens of sissyphilia, queer scholarship, and a newly proposed idea—tropicopolitan sensibilities. The study concentrates on PP Krit Amnuaydechorn's BL-star persona. PP Krit practices his sissyphilic persona both within and beyond the Thai live-action BL framework, incorporating elements such as costume, makeup, mannerism, coupling culture, and the spectacle of diverse cultures. Arguably, sissyphilia in Thai BL media of the 2020s is no longer a mere withdrawal from gay men's sissyphobic masculinity. Instead, it should be approached as a testament to another "queer turn" in the Thai mediascape, where an increasing number of internet celebrities are disrupting and diversifying Thai LGBTQ stereotypes. The BL industry employs critical-creative maneuvers to resonate with the socio-political atmosphere of the period and embrace new tropes of transnational queer media.

Keywords: Boys Love, Yaoi, Sissyness, Queer, Tropicopolitans





Prof. Dr. Neil J. Anderson
Professor Emeritus,
Brigham Young University–Hawaii, USA

Keynote Abstract 2

THE BENEFITS OF SOFT POWER AND TEACHING LEARNERS TO BE PROACTIVE

Abstract

Second language teachers and learners access soft power during reading instruction as they proactively take advantage of learning affordances. Reading provides access to knowledge in all fields of study that can then be used to improve relationships across communities. The more we learn through reading allows us to use our knowledge in positive ways. Rather than being compelled or coerced to learn to read in an additional language, successful learners take charge of their own learning by being purposeful and proactive. Teachers work collaboratively with the learners to create a learning environment where all benefit from instruction.

Papi and Hiver (2024) highlight that proactive L2 learning is agentic, strategic, and requires self-regulation. These attributes can be developed through a carefully scaffolded curriculum. University faculty must be prepared to explicitly teach these attributes and provide ample opportunities to practice them in a variety of reading contexts. Additionally, part of the instructional process must allow for students to learn how to “fail well” (Edmondson, 2023) and learn from their mistakes in a safe learning environment.

This keynote session will focus on the benefits of soft power and teaching learners to be proactive. We will explore how learning in higher education contexts creates positive learning and teaching experiences from which true growth results.

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EXPLORING STUDENT EXPERIENCES WITH EXTENSIVE READING: INSIGHTS FROM MAHASARAKHAM UNIVERSITY

NUCHSARA C. THONGSAN¹, AMPIKA PATARAPONGSANTI²
Maharakham University, Thailand^{1,2}
nuchsara.ch@msu.ac.th¹

ABSTRACT

Extensive Reading (ER), characterized by reading large quantities of material at a comfortable level of understanding, aims to enhance language proficiency and promote a lifelong reading habit. At Maharakham University, the ER program was integrated into compulsory courses in English for Humanities and Social Sciences, as well as a course for non-English major students at the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences. The objectives of this study were to explore students' experiences with Extensive Reading and identify the challenges they faced during the program. The study involved 450 undergraduate students who were encouraged to select their own reading materials from a diverse range of genres and difficulty levels. Feedback was gathered through surveys and in-depth interviews, focusing on students' attitudes towards reading, perceived improvements in language skills, and overall satisfaction with the ER program. The results reveal a generally positive reception towards Extensive Reading. A significant proportion of students reported high motivation and enjoyment in reading, attributing their increased interest to the autonomy in selecting reading materials. Many students also observed notable improvements in vocabulary acquisition, reading speed, and comprehension abilities. These findings suggest that ER can be an effective approach to language learning, promoting both linguistic development and positive reading habits. However, the study also identified several challenges. Students cited time constraints and difficulty accessing appropriate reading materials as major barriers to fully engaging with the ER program. These issues highlight the need for institutional support, including a well-stocked and accessible library, and the integration of ER into the regular curriculum to ensure students can allocate sufficient time for reading.

Keywords: Extensive reading, Extensive reading program, Student's motivation

DEVELOPING AN AUTOMATIC REPLY SYSTEM FOR PROVIDING WRITTEN CORRECTIVE FEEDBACK IN EFL WRITING CLASSROOMS: GUIDELINES AND IMPLEMENTATION

SUWITCHAN UN-UDOM

Rajabhat Maha Sarakham University, Thailand

suwitchan.un@rmu.ac.th

ABSTRACT

The current study utilized an automatic reply system, commonly used in online retailing, government pages, and business websites, to provide immediate responses to customers interacting with them via synchronous CMC. This system was adapted to develop electronic written corrective feedback for use in an EFL writing classroom. The participants were 30 EFL students from a public school in Thailand, selected through purposive random sampling. The study's results offer guidelines for developing a written feedback method using an automatic reply system. This contribution is significant as it demonstrates how a free service system can support EFL instruction, particularly in the demanding area of writing.

Keywords: WCF, Chatbot, EFL writing



DIFFICULTIES AND SOLUTIONS IN APPLYING ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE TO ENGLISH WRITING IN COLLEGE ENGLISH TEACHING

ZHENTAN LI

Nanning University, China

328458543@qq.com

ABSTRACT

The incorporation of Artificial Intelligence (AI) into English writing instruction in college settings has garnered significant interest due to its potential to enhance learning outcomes. However, its implementation presents several challenges. This study aims to identify the difficulties faced by educators and students in utilizing AI tools for English writing and propose effective solutions. A mixed-methods approach was employed, combining surveys and interviews with college English teachers and 89 students from two classes at a private university. Several well-known AI teaching platforms in China were applied during the experimental teaching stage. The survey data revealed common issues such as technical difficulties, lack of training, and resistance to adoption. Concurrently, interviews provided deeper insights into participants' personal experiences and perceptions. The study found that while AI tools are beneficial for grammar checking, plagiarism detection, and personalized feedback, they often face obstacles like inadequate infrastructure and insufficient support. To address these challenges, comprehensive training programs for both teachers and students, investment in robust technological infrastructure, and the development of user-friendly AI applications are recommended. Additionally, the study suggests exploring innovative aspects of integrating AI in college English writing instruction, such as analysing common errors and difficulties in student writing to provide data support for teachers to adjust teaching strategies and content, thereby improving teaching effectiveness. By overcoming these barriers, AI can be more effectively integrated into college English writing instruction, enhancing student writing skills and the overall learning experience. This research contributes to the ongoing discourse on AI in education, offering practical recommendations to improve the quality and accessibility of English writing instruction in college settings.

Keywords: Artificial Intelligence, English writing, college English teaching, difficulties, solutions



ENGLISH FOR ARCHITECTS: CREATING CONTENT-BASED MATERIALS TO TEACH SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT TOPICS AS A NON-EXPERT

KEVIN BALLOU
Kindai University, Japan
balloukevin@arch.kindai.ac.jp

ABSTRACT

Sustainable development lies at the intersection of local needs, technical expertise, and international cooperation. The international nature of development necessitates proficiency in local and foreign languages, with English as lingua franca serving as one of the most widely used common languages in academic, business, cultural, and development contexts. Students of architecture and urban planning in Japan usually study technical subjects in Japanese, however after graduating from university, they may be involved in international projects, in particular in Southeast Asia, that require communicating with stakeholders who often do not speak Japanese. An effective way to prepare these students to use English for international collaborative projects is to teach them using a content-based English approach (Coyle, Hood, & Marsh, 2010). However, English-language academic texts and articles on technical topics are often too difficult for students with a lower level language proficiency, and typical English-as-a-foreign-language textbooks do not address the types of concepts and vocabulary needed by architects and urban planners. This case study looks at the creation and implementation of English study materials for students of architecture and urban planning at a large, private university in Japan. These materials were based on video lectures by professional architects, designers, and engineers in order to teach students terminology and concepts that would help them discuss and plan projects related to architecture and urban planning in English. Using the language and concepts from the lesson, students engaged in task-based activities relevant to their future careers as architects. Students participated in these content and task-based lessons several times throughout two semesters, and at the end of the course the researcher collected survey data on the students' opinions about the efficacy of these lessons. Students described the materials as useful, and in some cases, even found inspiration for graduate level study in English-medium programs based on topics from the lessons.

Keywords: English language education, Sustainable development, Architecture, Urban planning, Materials development



FOSTERING HIGHER-ORDER THINKING SKILLS OF UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS: THE INTEGRATION OF BLENDED LEARNING IN COLLEGE ENGLISH TEACHING

LUO LING

Thammasat University, Thailand and Guangxi University of Foreign Languages, China
luoedu2022@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

This thesis probes into the essential role of higher-order thinking skills (HOTS) in English language learning, particularly in nurturing independent, innovative, and critical thinkers who are prepared for the challenges of the contemporary world. The study provides a thorough evaluation of how blended teaching methods impact the cultivation of these skills among undergraduate students. The research involves 112 students and 3 college English teachers at Guangxi University of Foreign Languages, focusing on freshmen, sophomores, and juniors enrolled in a general compulsory course called College English for non-English majors. The proficiency level of these students is generally below the average of Chinese undergraduates, as most have not passed the College English Test Band-4 (CET-4) in China. By employing a mixed-method approach that includes quantitative questionnaires, qualitative classroom observations, and in-depth interviews with both students and teachers, this research offers a comprehensive insight into the effectiveness of blended learning in promoting critical thinking, creativity, and problem-solving abilities. The findings suggest that blended teaching not only stimulates active student participation in the learning process but also creates a collaborative learning environment that significantly enhances their HOTS. Furthermore, the study proposes several strategies to optimize blended teaching practices, aiming to fully harness its potential in cultivating a new generation of undergraduates equipped with the critical thinking and innovative skills necessary for success in the modern world. These strategies include the integration of technology-enhanced learning tools, the incorporation of problem-based learning activities, and the fostering of a supportive and interactive classroom atmosphere. By implementing these recommendations, teachers can more effectively nurture students' higher-order thinking skills, ultimately contributing to their academic achievements. This research underscores the importance of adapting teaching methodologies to meet the evolving demands of education, ensuring that students are not only receivers of knowledge but also active, innovative contributors to society.

Keywords: Higher-order thinking skills (HOTS), Blended teaching, Critical thinking, Creativity, Problem-solving abilities



EFFECTS OF DIFFERENT TYPES OF ILLUSTRATIONS ON INTERCULTURAL CONTENTS COMPREHENSION IN EFL LEARNERS

CHUTIPA KONGSOMBUT

Rajabhat Maha Sarakham University, Thailand

chutipa.ko@rmu.ac.th

ABSTRACT

This study aims to examine the effects of different types of illustrations (decorational, explainable, and promotive) integrated into reading materials on comprehension and engagement among English as a Foreign Language learners. The study is based on the Dual Coding Theory, which suggests that verbal and visual information contribute to comprehension. The participants included 44 Thai university students selected using cluster-random sampling. They were divided into four groups, each reading a passage with one of the three types of illustrations, while a control group read a passage without illustrations. Pre- and post-tests were conducted to assess reading comprehension, and a questionnaire was used to investigate participants' engagement. The data was analyzed using t-tests and ANOVA to compare comprehension scores across groups with different types of illustrations. The findings of the study are expected to explain the impact of each illustration type on learners' comprehension and engagement and identify the types that best support learners. This will provide insights into the optimal use of illustrations in reading materials for EFL learners. The study will also discuss its limitations and suggest areas for further research.

Keywords: Picture-text integration, Reading comprehension, Intercultural content



ENHANCING GLOBAL COMPETENCE: THE IMPACT OF INTERNATIONALIZATION PROGRAMS ON ENGLISH MAJOR STUDENTS

ZIYU LI

Guangxi University of Foreign Languages, China
lizzy615516@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

In the context of increasing globalization, global competence is crucial for English major students as it equips them with the skills necessary to effectively navigate and address common global challenges such as environmental protection and energy management. Additionally, international study programs can enhance these competencies, thereby preparing students to succeed in a multicultural and interconnected world. This study explores the impact of international study programs on the global competence of students majoring in English. The global competence framework used in this study is based on the three core dimensions proposed by Tsinghua University: cognitive, interpersonal, and intrapersonal dimensions. The study adopted questionnaires and interviews as the research methods. A total of 216 English major students from four different universities, who had participated in international study programs for varying periods, were randomly selected for the questionnaire. Additionally, 8 students were randomly selected for in-depth interviews. Stata software was employed to analyse the questionnaire data quantitatively, while the interview responses were analysed qualitatively to gain deeper insights into the students' experiences and the impact of international study programs on their global competence. The results of the study indicated that international programs significantly improved students' intercultural communication skills, self-awareness, and social responsibility. There were notable advancements in language proficiency, cultural confidence, and global awareness. Specifically, the students' comprehensive language application abilities were significantly enhanced. The programs bolstered students' self-cognition and cultural confidence, particularly in understanding and valuing traditional Chinese culture under the influence of foreign cultures. Additionally, students demonstrated a high willingness to communicate and build relationships with foreigners, reflecting openness and enthusiasm, and an ability to adapt communication strategies to different cultural backgrounds. These findings provide practical experience for cultivating talents with



international perspectives and global competitiveness. Furthermore, they offer valuable insights for the development of internationalized education programs.

Keywords: Global Competence, Internationalization programs, Language proficiency, Cultural confidence, Global awareness

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SCRIPT SELECTION IN JAPANESE BILINGUAL LANGUAGE TESTING

RICHARD H. DERRAH
Kindai University, Japan
rderrah@socio.kindai.ac.jp

ABSTRACT

This study examines item behaviour with a focus on answer choices written in katakana on the multiple-choice Vocabulary Size Test (VST) bilingual Japanese version. The Japanese language uses three scripts, kanji, hiragana, and katakana. One of these scripts, katakana, is often used to write words with a foreign origin. These words may also demonstrate a Stroop-like effect since this script often indicates foreign words so test options written in katakana could influence item difficulty. Some foreign words written in katakana are loanwords. In this study loanwords are defined as words written in katakana based upon an original English word. These loanwords may significantly reduce the difficulty of items on the VST. The VST was administered to 181 Japanese junior and senior high school students and analysed using Rasch analysis to examine item functioning. A second administration of the VST given to 176 Japanese junior high school students utilized the original Japanese bilingual VST and a modified version with all katakana options rewritten in hiragana. Results showed loanwords significantly reduced item difficulty while items rewritten from katakana into hiragana showed little difference in item functioning.

Keywords: Vocabulary testing, Katakana, Loanwords, Japanese

INTRODUCTION AND LITERATURE REVIEW

The Vocabulary Size Test Bilingual Japanese Version

The understanding of vocabulary is one of the central components to language learning (Alqahtani, 2015; Nation, 2001). Since all levels of language teaching include some type of vocabulary component, being able to measure the range of a student's vocabulary knowledge is beneficial to all involved in language acquisition. The Vocabulary Size Test (VST) (Nation & Beglar, 2007) was developed to measure receptive vocabulary knowledge. Based on lists developed from the British National Corpus (BNC), the test is designed to measure vocabulary size knowledge up to the 14,000-word level. In other words, vocabulary items



are placed in bands of 1,000 words based upon their frequency. This assumes that words in the first 1,000 band are more common and thus more likely to be known to a student than words in higher bands. The VST has 10 questions per 1,000-word level measuring up to the 14,000-word level making a total of 140 questions on the test. The questions are multiple-choice with the vocabulary item and a sample sentence in English. The four answer options are also in English except on bilingual versions of the test. On the Japanese bilingual test, the four answer options are written in Japanese. An example of a bilingual test item is shown below:

shoe: Where is your shoe?

- 1) 親
- 2) 財布
- 3) ペン
- 4) くつ

Bilingual versions of the VST include Korean, Mandarin, Russian, Vietnamese, and Japanese. These are freely available on Paul Nation's website (<https://www.wgtn.ac.nz/lals/resources/paul-nations-resources>). Research on the bilingual versions of the VST have generally shown a more accurate measure of the test takers vocabulary (Derrah & Rowe, 2015; Karami, 2012; Elgort, 2013; Nguyen & Nation, 2011). There are several possible reasons for this including a lessening of the burden on test takers since only the test item or prompt is in the foreign language. When the answer choices are in English as well, the test taker needs to deal with both the test item and all of the answer options in order to make a decision. They are, in effect, being tested multiple times for each item.

Previous studies have been conducted on the Iranian bilingual version (Karami, 2012), the Russian bilingual version (Elgort, 2013), and the Vietnamese bilingual version (Nguyen & Nation, 2011). These studies demonstrate positive benefits for using a bilingual version of the VST which is in the test takers' L1.

The Vocabulary Size Test and Katakana

The Japanese language is written in three scripts, kanji, hiragana, and katakana. While there is overlap between the roles of these scripts and words can be written in all three scripts, the katakana script is often used to write words not having a Japanese or Chinese origin. In this study, loanwords are defined as words written in katakana that are based upon an original English word. For example, the word ケーキ (keeki) is the word 'cake' written in katakana. The use of katakana to write loanwords on a vocabulary size test may cause difficult items



(less frequent vocabulary) to be more easily recognized and thus be more of a test of a test-taker's native vocabulary.

As well as English based words, katakana can also be used for words with a non-English origin such as words from German, Portuguese, or French. Some examples of non-English based words written using katakana include アルバイト (arubeito) part-time job and パン (pan) bread. For this study, these words are not defined as loanwords. A total of 49 items on the 140 item VST bilingual Japanese version contain answer options in katakana.

In addition to the possible influence of loanwords on difficulty, the use of different scripts (kanji, hiragana, and katakana) on a multiple-choice test may have other costs. Some studies have shown different scripts are processed in different ways. "Successful reading in Japanese must require readers to maintain two somewhat distinct sets of lexical structures and processes" (Nakayama et al., 2011). Overall research concerning kana words (hiragana and katakana) shows a different way of processing for these kinds of words, as they are identified at the letter level (Usui, 1998), while Kanji seems to be processed more as a meaning-containing unit. This helps to explain why kanji is typically easier to recognize than katakana (Yamada et al., 1991). In other words, some scripts such as kanji may be processed by the reader as a unit of meaning rather than a sound group. Katakana and hiragana, in contrast to kanji, are processed as sounds and are then combined to form meaning. Morikawa (1981) asserts respondents had slower responses to kanji-kana combinations than to kana-kana combinations. Using different types of Japanese scripts on a language test could influence the assessment of test takers' abilities.

The close association between katakana and words from a non-Japanese or Chinese origin may produce a Stroop-like effect. The Stroop effect shows the influence of visual clues. For example, the word "red" written in green may influence recall and cause respondents, if asked what word they had just read, to answer "green." Some studies have indicated "significant Stroop effect when the words are foreign loan words" (Hatta & Ogawa, 1983). If a Stroop-like effect is associated with katakana options on an English language vocabulary test, those katakana answer options may be unduly attractive to test respondents. In other words, since this is a test of English, katakana choices will be favored because they are generally expected to come from a foreign language. In the following example, if all the answer options are equally unknown by the respondent, a Stroop-like effect may make option number two (プラントン) the most attractive.



plankton: We saw a lot of plankton.

- 1) 成長の早い有毒植物
- 2) プランクトン
- 3) 堅い材木となる木
- 4) 地滑りの原因となる灰色粘土

In addition to the processing costs and possible influence of a Stroop-like effect, script selection in Japanese may influence a reader in other ways. Script selection in Japanese has also been shown to influence emotional meanings (Iwahara et al., 2003). Burt and Hutchinson (2000) have shown that script selection could influence multiple choice test takers and cause a “superficial comparison of alternatives.” The possible interaction of script selection in Japanese on the VST Japanese bilingual version leads to the following two research questions.

1) Does the use of katakana to represent loan-words influence the difficulty of those items on the vocabulary size test?

2) Do the 49 test items which include katakana perform in a similar fashion when re-written using the hiragana text in the 14,000-word vocabulary size test bilingual Japanese version?

METHOD

To address the two research questions two administrations of the test were conducted. The first administration was the complete 140 question VST without any adjustments to investigate if the 49 items which containing katakana were easier in difficulty than words at the same frequency level. In the second administration, to investigate research question two, two forms of the VST were used. Test A was the same 140 item VST as used in the first administration. Test B was the 140 item VST with the 49 items using katakana rewritten in hiragana.

First Round Administration

Participants

The participants included three groups of Japanese students from a private junior/senior high school in Western Japan. The students were studying English and data was collected in intact classes as a convenience sample. The students have approximately 5-7 hours of English instruction per week conducted in Japanese including 2 hours of an oral communication class overseen by a native speaker of English. The three groups of students included third year junior high school students (n = 4), first year high school students (n = 16) and second year high school students (n = 161) giving a total of 181 participants.



Procedure

The vocabulary size test was placed on a website (<http://www.surveymonkey.com/>), password protected, and assigned a unique web address to allow students to access the test. Within intact classes students were asked to complete the test on a voluntary basis during a two-week period in their own time. The test was not part of the classroom instruction. The test was not timed, but this data was reported to the investigator. Students were not able to go back and change answers. Data was collected, downloaded in excel files from the surveymonkey website, and prepared for Rasch analysis. The analysis was conducted using Winsteps software version 3.69.1.15 (<http://www.winsteps.com/index.htm>).

In the Rasch model, raw scores are converted into log-odd units also known as logits or equal-distant scales for both item difficulty and person measures of ability. Logits of difficulty (for items) and ability (for persons) can then be examined for comparison since they are equal-distant (for a more detailed explanation of the Rasch model see Bond et al., 2021). In other words, an item with a logit of difficulty of 6 is twice as difficult as an item with a logit of difficulty of 3. In this study raw data was converted to logits using Winsteps software to allow for a comparison of item difficulty as this is the focus of the study.

Second Round Administration

Participants

The participants included one group of Japanese students from a private junior high school in Western Japan. This school is a different school from the one in the first-round administration. The students have approximately 4 hours of English instruction per week conducted in Japanese with 1 hour of a general English class overseen by a native speaker of English for a total of 5 hours per week. The students were all second-year junior high school students (n = 176).

Procedure

The complete 140 question vocabulary size test was placed on a survey website (<http://www.surveymonkey.com/>), password protected, and assigned a unique web address to allow students to access the test. A second version of the test was then prepared following the same steps; however, all answer choices in katakana were rewritten in hiragana. This created two versions of the test. Test A was the original version of the bilingual test with answer options written in kanji, hiragana, or katakana depending upon the item. The second test, Test B, has the same 140 English vocabulary questions, however, the 49 items with answers containing



katakana were rewritten in hiragana. For example, the following item (shoe) had one of the answer choices rewritten.

shoe: Where is your shoe?

- 1) 親
- 2) 財布
- 3) ペン
- 4) くつ

In this question answer choice number 3 (ペン) was rewritten in hiragana as shown below.

shoe: Where is your shoe?

- 1) 親
- 2) 財布
- 3) ぺん
- 4) くつ

Within intact classes students were randomly assigned to either Test A (original bilingual Japanese VST) or Test B (VST rewritten to eliminate katakana). The students were asked to complete the test during a two-week window in their own time. Due to random assignment, 106 students completed Test A, and 70 students completed Test B.

Data was collected and prepared for Rasch analysis using Winsteps software version 3.69.1.15 (<http://www.winsteps.com/index.htm>). Logits of difficulty and fit statistics were calculated for 49 items containing some katakana answer options in Test A. The analysis was conducted for the same 49 items in Test B. Using IBM's SPSS version 21 (<http://www-01.ibm.com/software/analytics/spss/>) a correlation of the logits of difficulty of items containing katakana options from VST version A (Japanese bilingual) and VST version B (katakana rewritten into hiragana) was conducted. The purpose was to look for a difference in item difficulty between items containing katakana in Test A and the same items rewritten in hiragana in Test B.



RESULTS

First Round Results

Rasch analysis showed a range of item difficulty that was slightly higher than the student population taking the test. Figure 1 below shows the distribution of questions on the right side and the distribution of students on the left side. The mean difficulty of the items is above the mean of ability for the students indicating that the test was challenging for average and lower ability students. This is not problematic, however, as the test is measuring student vocabulary size and should avoid a ceiling effect which would simply indicate the test is too easy for the student population sitting the exam.

Analysis of the difficulty of the vocabulary items highlighted some loanwords not having a logit of difficulty reflecting their frequency level. Five items at the 11,000 to 13,000 frequency levels had item difficulty logits below the mean item difficulty. These loanwords (see Table 1) were easier than the test average despite their frequency level, thus indicating that loanwords can influence the difficulty of the VST. In addition to loanwords, an analysis of mis-fitting items was conducted. According to the Rasch model, item predicted by the model are identified. The Rasch model expects test takers to have a higher chance of correctly answering questions which have a lower measure of difficulty than their measure of ability. Once the ability of the student matches the item difficulty, the test takers will have an even chance of answering the question correctly. Test takers missing questions well below their ability, correctly answering items above their ability or answering a string either correctly or incorrectly near their level of ability could cause the model to indicate those items as mis-fitting the expected model. The measure of model fit is calculated difficulty and test taker's ability are compared with responses. When items show more variance than for both test takers and the test items. In this first round administration of the VST, five of the top ten mis-fitting items contained katakana options. The possibility that katakana was influencing item functioning led to the second-round administration of the VST.



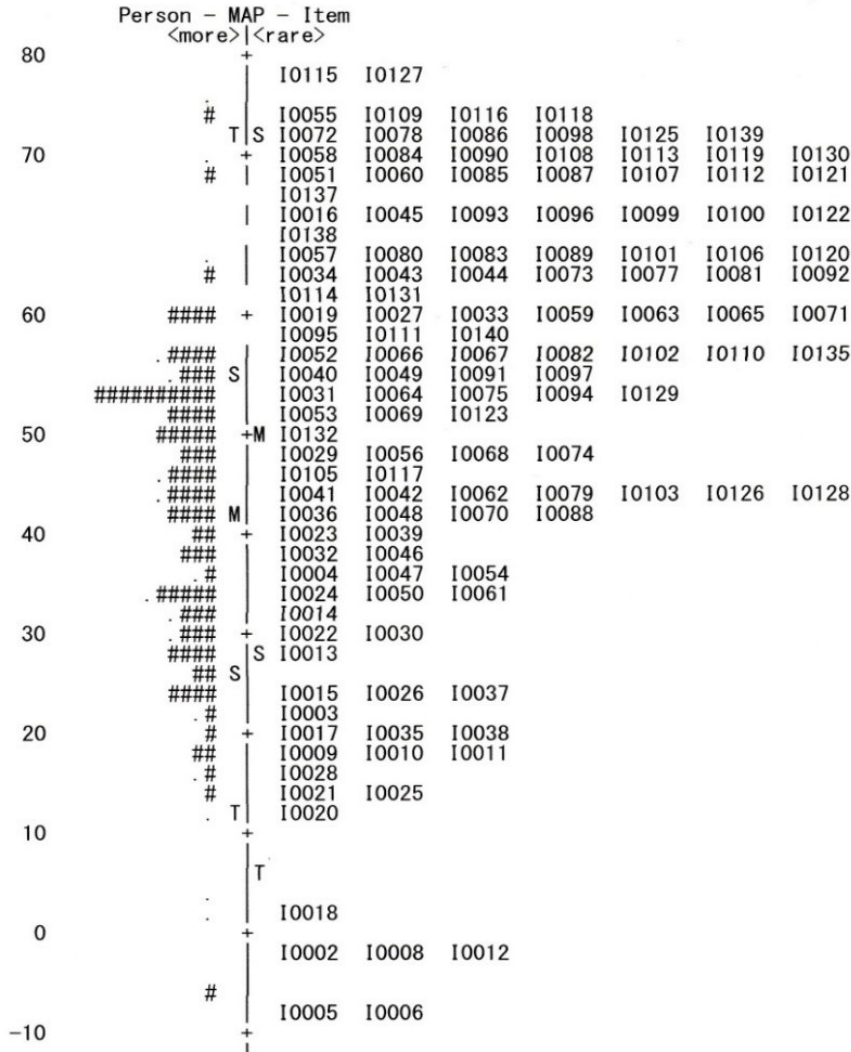


Figure 1: Item map first round administration. On the left side of the map, “#” represents two students and “.” represents one student. The “M” is the mean student ability, the “S” is one standard deviation, and the “T” is two standard deviations. On the right side each number is the item number on the test. The “M, S, and T” have the same meanings but represent item difficulty rather than student ability.

Second Round Results

For the second-round administration, the mean item difficulty was again higher than the mean student ability for both tests A and B. This is displayed graphically in Figure 1 (Test A) and Figure 2 (Test B) below. The distribution of questions is on the right side and the distribution of students is on the left side.



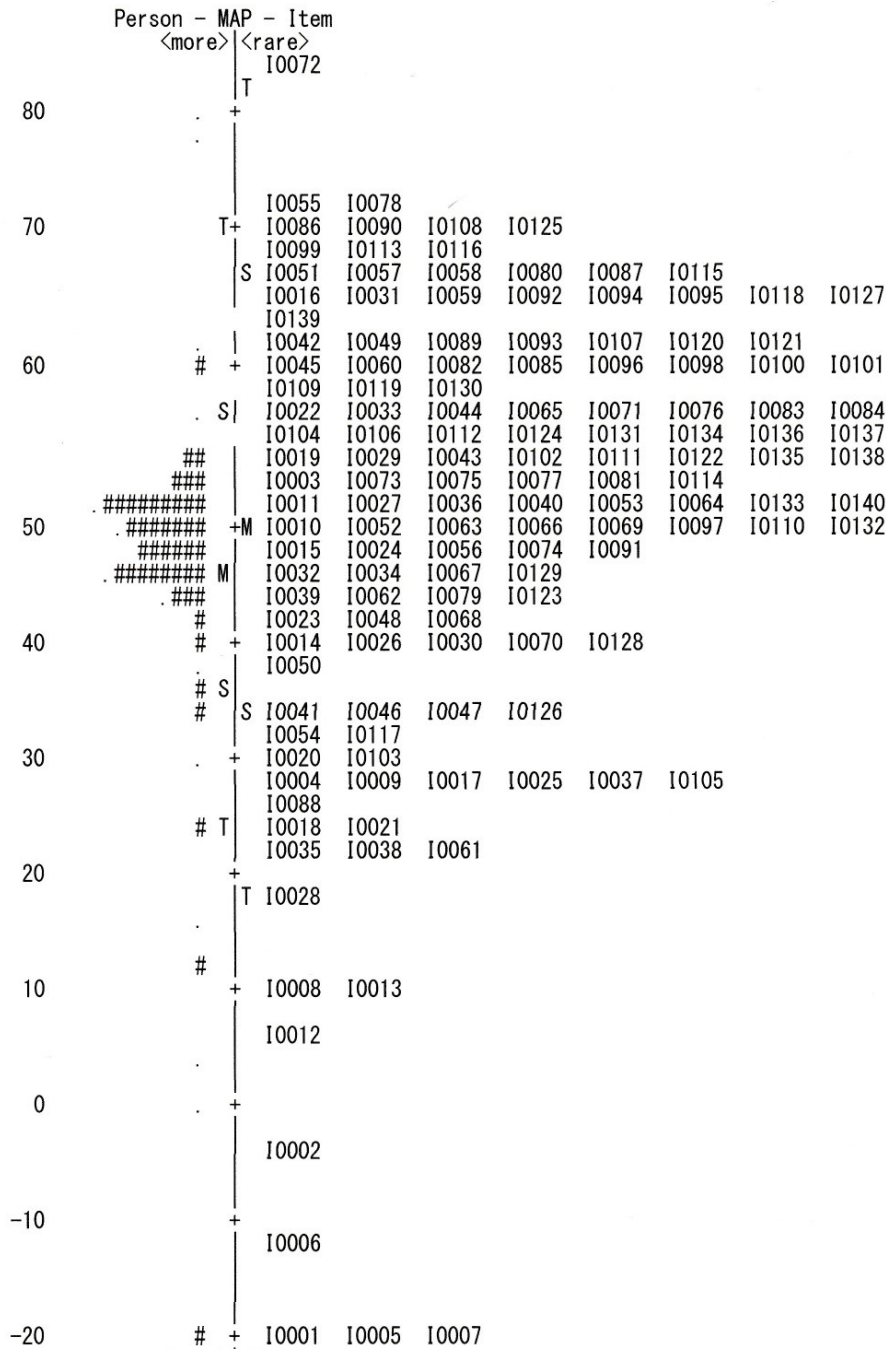


Figure 2: Item map second round administration Test A. On the left side of the map, “#” represents two students and “.” represents one student. The “M” is the mean student ability, the “S” is one standard deviation, and the “T” is two standard deviations. On the right side each number is the item number on the test. The “M, S, and T” have the same meanings but represent item difficulty rather than student ability.



Rasch analysis was used to determine item difficulty for both Test A and Test B. In both tests the same five loanwords found to be below the mean logit of difficulty for the test were still below the mean item difficulty. Three of the loanwords increased in difficulty while two decreased in difficulty. The five words are shown below in Table 1 along with the logits of difficulty for Test A and Test B.

Table 1: Low frequency loanwords below the mean test difficulty.

Item Number	Vocabulary Word	Word Level	Logit of Difficulty (Test A)	Logit of Difficulty (Test B)
103	Yoga	11,000	29.56	25.54
105	Puma	11,000	28.71	38.23
117	Caffeine	12,000	32.63	41.95
126	Plankton	13,000	33.32	29.55
128	Beagle	13,000	39.27	41.23

Note. For both Test A and Test B the mean logit of difficulty for items is 50.0.

All 49 items containing katakana options in Test A were correlated with the logits of difficulty of the same 49 items rewritten in hiragana in Test B. The correlation showed little difference between the difficulty of questions ($r = .95, p < .01$). The correlation was significant meaning the result is better than random chance at the .01 level. There is thus very little difference between the test containing katakana and the test without katakana. While the correlation of item difficulty was significant, it should be noted that these items should have been quite difficult items based on their frequency, but they had logits of difficulty below the test mean of 50.

Analysis of item response patterns showed the average ability of students answering the items containing loanwords correctly was higher than that of the students who incorrectly answered the question except for two cases. Students who answered item # 8 shoe and item # 128 beagle correctly had a lower average ability than the students who incorrectly answered those items. In both cases, the incorrect answers chosen by each group with the higher average ability were incorrect katakana options. This would seem to indicate that katakana can have an influence on item response; however, the overall results of this study refute this hypothesis.

CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

Discussion

As previous studies have shown, the bilingual version of the VST has a beneficial influence on test takers. The Japanese bilingual version, however, includes three types of scripts



(kanji, hiragana, and katakana) which according to the literature may have an influence on item functioning. Loanwords, in particular, decrease item difficulty for some items. Since there are 10 words for each 1,000 word frequency band on the VST, high level frequency items performing below the difficulty of other words at the same frequency level may artificially inflate the ability of test takers. The results of this study clearly showed loanwords which should be in the top third of difficulty were below the average difficulty of all of the items on the VST. This could create a false result higher than the actual vocabulary level of the test taker.

Despite literature seeming to indicate the possible influence of katakana in item functioning the results of this study showed very little influence. The average difficulty of items containing katakana on Test A and the rewritten items on Test B showed a very high correlation. In other words, there was very little difference, and the difference observed did not act in a standard fashion. Some of the 49 items compared between Test A and Test B increased in difficulty while others decreased. The decrease in difficulty can be accounted for possibility that loanwords are better remembered than non-loan words and thus items from lower frequency levels may be known because they are easier to learn. The literature review and the two items (shoe and beagle) whose distracters attracted higher ability students seem to indicate an influence from katakana. Perhaps items containing katakana need to be examined further by developing a category of items containing katakana or examining the interaction between katakana options and other answers.

For research question one, the results indicated that items which included katakana were easier than would be indicated by their frequency level. This suggests that test makers should avoid the use of katakana loanwords in bilingual testing for Japanese learners of English. Concerning question two, the elimination of katakana in Test B did not show an increase in difficulty indicating that it is not the use of katakana, but rather that Japanese learners of English may have familiarity with these words within the Japanese educational context to an extent not reflected in the frequency levels indicated from corpus studies. Future studies on this topic would benefit from an analysis of misfitting items, distractor analysis, and qualitative interviews with test takers. These suggestions are also limitations of this study.

CONCLUSIONS

The Vocabulary Size Test is an important tool for teachers, administrators, and researchers. The bilingual Japanese version of the VST can be even more beneficial; however, some adjustments could increase its effectiveness. The results of this study suggest the elimination of loanwords (katakana words based upon an original English word) since these items are not functioning in a similar manner to words within the same frequency level.



Effectively these items may be measuring a subset of vocabulary. It is unknown if the test taker would recognize the English word if they were not provided with the katakana loanword in Japanese. Future research could call for a rewritten (without loanwords) bilingual Japanese version of the VST to check for improved item functioning.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The author wishes to thank Paul Nation for his advice on an earlier version of this paper.

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IMPLEMENTING REFLECTIVE LEARNING AND ASSESSMENT ACTIVITIES – A SELF-REFLECTIVE CASE STUDY

MARIANO CARRERA

King Mongkut University of Technology North Bangkok, Thailand

mariano.c@ic.kmutnb.ac.th

ABSTRACT

This paper is a journey through the discovery process while using reflective learning practices at universities in Thailand from pre-class understanding, post-class comparison, and creative assessments to gauge individuals and manage the use of AI. Using more reflective practices and guided questioning encourages students to learn through the art of discovery. This awakening aligns with the purpose of schools in an age where information is a click away and students have problems evaluating material.

A phenomenological case study approach is used, as reflection best expresses the idea of a lived experience. Reflection, the most personalized form of learning, has been taught in various forms throughout history. In the 2020s, an evolving approach to learning and assessment that focuses on individual needs, varied abilities, mixed levels of maturity, along with preparing for a rapidly changing environment is needed. By exploring the individual experiences, an understanding of the impact of self-reflection on learning can be gained at individual to class level.

Reading students' writing shows the building blocks they need to function as responsible adults are absent. Students are distracted and cannot balance their lives. Social media and AI give the appearance of an easy life, so when faced with learning obstacles, students have problems thinking of ways to solve the problem.

Addressing individual needs in a group setting requires using tools that distribute the workload while guiding students to learn about their possibilities. Encouraging students to reflect on their words and experience is a great tool to encourage personalized learning and discovery.

Keywords: Reflective Learning, Self-Reflective Case Study, Educational Assessment, Phenomenological Approach, Guided Questioning



INTRODUCTION

In the 2020s, despite significant changes in student demographics and learning environments, the focus remains predominantly on teachers (age, ability, motivation, compensation, and the like) and tools (technology, facilities, and other physical resources). An evolving approach to both learning and assessment is needed that focuses more on the individual. Reflection, as one of the most personalized forms of learning, has been integral to education throughout history. Unfortunately, the approach is still not widely used.

On entering the teaching profession in 2016, after almost 20 years in the petroleum industry, I sorted out ways to deliver quality to my students as I had done before. Through experience, observing other lecturers, and reading, I have developed an approach rooted in classic teaching pedagogy that delivers results in a time where innovation occurs in shorter time periods (Roser, 2023), quickening the rate of change. This reflective practice applies in various situations, from the classroom to the office, self or group and more. Thus, I am comfortable that I am teaching my students for life.

The personal journey and practices presented are to encourage others to use similar practices to make teaching more relevant where information is ubiquitous and options for learning abound. By focusing on the individuals, learning becomes more relevant yet can be contextualized within a group. Empathy and example are there, too, as the teacher is learning along with the students. Creating a learning environment impression that go beyond the classroom.

This paper contains a report on my use of reflective practices that is ongoing, that is, the practices are being implemented, revised and improved. Thus, the tenses used combined with the personal nature of the paper, at times, may appear to not align with traditional academic writing. Attempting to stay with traditional guides and following Stewart (2020) recommendations for weaving personal experiences into academic writing as much as possible, I have tried to present an informative, useful and interesting piece of reading.

A SHORT SUMMARY STORY

Setting

The main context of this study is a business and logistics program at a Thai university, where courses are taught in English. This setting is typical in many Thai universities, where programs are offered in English as the medium of instruction. Students enter these programs based on family and friends' instructions, hoping their income and job prospects will be greater later. Language abilities are mixed with few programs having clear requirements levels such as TOEFL or IELTS.



MAIN CHARACTERS

The Students: Primarily aged 18-23, often in programs chosen by their parents. Students are pretty similar in age, behaviour, nationality and so on. The students' interests and abilities vary widely, with most not interested in the program as they follow their parents' instructions. In classes there might be students with IELTS 8.5 and those with 4.0 along with those graduating in high school with a GPA of 3.8/4.0 and those with 2.3/4.0.

ICEF Monitor (2024) mentioned there were about 30,000 international students in Thailand in 2022, with about 20,000 being Chinese; Myanmar and Cambodia are next with less than 5000 students each. A typical classroom of thirty will have less than two foreign students.

The Lecturer: A foreigner with limited Thai language skills because there is a tendency for students to want explanations in Thai rather than pushing themselves to understand in English. Thus, a limited ability helps with honesty and managing expectations. Having taught at three Thai universities, students' experience is similar. I teach mostly business communication-related courses and have written extensively in local and international media about my experience and thinking.

Others Thai lecturers whose first language is Thai but competent in English. Most appear to have little professional experience before teaching, though some have their private business. Establishing the exact extent of the industry to teaching experience is difficult. Foreign lecturers make up less than a quarter of faculties and are a combination of full-time professors and part-time professionals.

Parents who strongly influence their children's decisions and, in many cases, make the study decision for their offspring.

Problem

How do I teach students so they learn how to use what is taught, and how can I deliver a better experience to the students so they can build on what is given to them?

Thai students are generally not taught how to learn in primary or secondary school and have not been encouraged to express their opinions or ask questions. The result is students who are unable to discover their own learning approach.

With a lack of examples to follow, pursuing a degree that they are not interested in, distractions literally at their fingertips, and few restrictions, students are in a place of learning but not learning.

Solution

Use reflective learning approaches. Some approaches are discussed in this paper based on my students' experiences and mine. Many other tools are available and can be easily created.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

While the theory and practice are not new, the widespread application of reflection in academia has not been. Hopefully, by adding to the list of papers that show the application of reflective learning and assessment, other researchers and lecturers may be encouraged to apply it in their settings. Outside academia, reflection is encouraged mostly in spiritual practices. Hunt (2015) discussed the relationship between reflection and spirituality from the perspective of a way of learning by experiential knowing. This knowing translates easily into classrooms where the teacher is the guide and material canonical. Thus, reflection has been used in one form or another for many years across various disciplines.

Reflective learning has been recognized for its value in handling complex, uncertain situations. Veine et al. (2020) noted that reflective approaches are essential for navigating unclear and unstable scenarios. Alt and Raichel (2020) found that reflective journaling effectively nurtures students' self-regulation of cognition. Colomer et al. (2020) emphasized that reflection is a key transferable competence in lifelong learning and is essential for continuous personal and professional development. Educating students when major social and technological changes are occurring in years rather than decades means using a tool that can handle the uncertainty.

The Importance of Reflective Learning and Assessment

Reflective learning in the classroom is not a new concept; it has roots in educational philosophies dating back to the works of John Dewey, who emphasized the importance of reflection in experiential learning. Dewey (1933) argued that reflective thought is essential for learning from experience, enabling individuals to make sense of their experiences and apply their learning to new situations. The journal *Sustainability*, among others, has had special issues dedicated to the practice in 2020. Almost a century of use showing the longevity of the idea.

Schön (1983) introduced the "reflective practitioner" concept, highlighting the importance of reflection in professional practice. According to Schön (1983), reflective practitioners engage in a continuous cycle of reflection-in-action and reflection-on-action, which helps them improve their practice and adapt to changing circumstances. This leads to the teachers being able to look at themselves and learn from their actions and environments.



Reflective learning is part of other learning approaches most noted experiential learning, where the learner's experience from doing is looked at, reflected, thought upon and action takes place in a cycle of learning. Experiential learning is less teacher centric, and the lecturer is more of a facilitator to the learning (Northern Illinois University, 2012).

Evans (2016) wrote:

Reflective assessment provides time for students to absorb what they learned and to engage with thinking about how they have learned. It does this by forcing the students to slow down their process by either writing or verbalizing what they have learned.

Thus, in a world of social media, AI, other distractions and seemingly instant gratifications, having students' slowdown, think, consider what is being offered to them and come up with their own discoveries is essential.

Current Applications of Reflective Learning

In today's educational landscape (with increased online educational offerings), reflective learning is increasingly recognized as a vital component of effective teaching and learning. For instance, Kolb's (2014) experiential learning cycle, which includes reflective observation as a critical stage, is widely used in various educational settings to promote deep learning and critical thinking. The conceptual tools exist but the use is still limited as the focus is on the physical tools in the 2020s.

Research has shown that reflective practices can enhance students' cognitive and metacognitive skills. For example, a study by Veine et al. (2020) found that students who engaged in reflective learning activities could better navigate complex and uncertain situations. Similarly, Alt and Raichel (2020) demonstrated that reflective journaling can help students develop self-regulation skills, which are essential for independent learning. That awareness of self is crucial in professional life where making decisions that affect oneself and others is required.

Chang (2019) found that using reflection in learning helps students by "increasing the depth of knowledge, identifying the areas which are missing or deficient, personalizing and contextualizing knowledge, providing comparative references in learning, and helping learners build structural connections in knowledge and social connections among learners" (p. 95). Personalization and contextualization were found in this study, along with a deeper understanding of the material and connections to others through the students' own voice.



Overall, academic literature supports the idea of reflective learning as useful and one of the central pedagogical approaches used in learning. To what extent this practice is applied varies. I argue that in an age where information is just a click away, greater use of reflection helps steer students into learning and building awareness of themselves, which complements other forms of teaching.

Challenges in Implementing Reflective Learning

Despite its benefits, implementing reflective learning in educational settings can be challenging. One major obstacle is the lack of training and uneven application by teachers. Many educators are unfamiliar with reflective practices and may need guidance on incorporating them into their teaching, particularly in Thailand, where there is limited teacher training once one is employed. Nasri (2019) found that some Malaysian university lecturers found it difficult to abandon their authority figure form to a more facilitator's role, which is moving from the traditional knowledge-expert to be learning with their students. I am the only lecturer in my faculty who uses reflective practices; thus, my classes are seen as different and challenging.

Another challenge is the resistance from students, who may be unaccustomed to reflective learning and prefer more traditional forms of instruction. As Brookfield (1995) noted, students often find reflection difficult and uncomfortable, mainly if they are not used to critically examining their learning experiences. More so in an age of social media where instant gratification is promoted, and reflection needs time to build results.

Providing teachers with professional training opportunities that focus on reflective and other practices is essential. Additionally, creating a supportive learning environment where students feel safe to express their thoughts and feelings can help foster a culture of reflection.

Assessing students' reflection is difficult for many reasons. Time of writing (immediately after class or a week), expressions used (maturity) and language ability may result in different views by the same student. Shaw et al. (2018) pointed out a reflective paper is to evaluate students' experiences and there will be difficulties assessing reflection. Fig 6 shows, despite a rubric, what a lecturer might see.

Theory of Approach

Willis (1999) demonstrated that reflective practices align well with two forms of phenomenological inquiry: empathetic and intuiting. Empathetic inquiry involves understanding the experiences of others by putting oneself in their shoes. At the same time, intuiting involves gaining insights through introspection and self-reflection. Both approaches are used in this study to explore the reflective practices of students and teachers.



Gilmore et al. (2019) looked at academic writing and the different ways academics write. In the special issue of *Management Learning* (Gilmore et al., 2019) edited, several authors highlighted the need for a different approach to writing, especially in reflective and narrative pieces. Hence, while the writing may not meet the traditional norm of academic writing, the narrative personal approach best reflects the writer's and students' experiences.

Rawson (2023) used a similar approach to examine teacher-learners' experiences and their practice application. Rawson's (2023) study found that reflective practices can help teachers better understand their teaching practices and improve their ability to support student learning. One of the aims of this study was to understand how teachers and students benefited from reflective practices used in various classes.

METHOD

Participants and Context

The study employs a phenomenological approach to explore the reflective practices of students and teachers in the business and logistics program taught in English to mostly Thai students. Less than 5% of students are non-Thais. The participants include the lecturer (myself), a foreigner with limited Thai language skills, and students primarily aged 18-23, often in programs their parents chose. Though mainly referring to my present university the practices and situation are similar at the other two Thai universities where I taught. Other faculty members are mostly Thai that teach mainly in English but converse with students in Thai outside of the classroom. There are a few other foreign lecturers whose Thai language skills are at a professional level and who explain ideas in Thai outside of the classroom.

Procedures

Reflective practices were implemented through various stages, though not all were implemented simultaneously to avoid overwhelming the students. These were new practices for students and are not implemented by other teachers. However, by teaching students at least one class each year, students became accustomed to my approach to learning and thus better understood my intentions and expectations. A class diary was the only component used continuously. For example, pre-class profiles and post-class reviews were combined with a class diary along with traditional exams for first-year students. External exposure, reflective exams and a class diary were used for my third-year students. By year three, I could see the changes in my students, and they were more comfortable talking about their experiences. The main limitation in applying these tools is the time to give feedback to each student and classes that I co-teach.



Pre-Class Assessment

Before the start of the course, students (first year students) were asked to complete a pre-class assessment to gauge their initial understanding of the subject matter, their purpose and to learn about the students (Fig. 1). A way of seeing how students see themselves. This assessment included reflective questions encouraging students to think about their prior knowledge, learning goals, and expectations for the course and show their English language level. Choi and Lee (2019) found that pre-assessment helped in understanding students' motivation and eventual performance in a flipped learning class. Though not a flipped classroom per se, my classes used many active learning strategies to encourage student participation.

Name :**Student number :****Preferred name :****Contact email :**

Answer each with between 50 to 150 words.

1. What are your aims in the class?
2. What are your aims for doing the degree? (vision and goals for the future)
3. What academic achievement are you most proud of? (came first in class)
4. Tell me about how you prefer to learn? (visual, oral, textual)
5. What special abilities do you have? (play piano, represented Thailand, etc.)
6. Tell me about your previous work experience (summer jobs)

Other notes (e.g. what do you want me to know about you)

Figure 1: An example of a pre-class student profile questionnaire

Class Diary

Students were required to maintain a class diary (also called a class journal), where they recorded their reflections on their experience in the class. The diary entries were guided by prompts that encouraged students to critically examine their learning experiences, identify what they learnt and thought about, and assess the materials' usability (Fig. 2). Also, as classes are mostly communication classes, journals gave students extra writing practice without having



to worry about being graded on formal language structures. Stevens and Cooper (2023) wrote extensively on this practice and the benefits to students and teachers. Journaling practices has been used in many disciplines with benefits ranging from learning to better mental health, which is important for students addicted to social media.

Assignment

Over the semester (at least 12 weeks) keep a class diary

Write 150-250 words about your class

Create a format that suits you

Include

What you like, dislike, thought, questions, discussion, and things that you would include and why, leave out and why, and so on.

Look at <https://study.com/academy/lesson/journal-writing-topics-prompts-tips.html> for an example

Or <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n2XVmc7qTg0>

And for those that want to take journalling further

<https://journey.cloud/reflective-journal/>

Figure 2: Example of class journal instructions

External Exposure

Students were exposed to real-world scenarios to enhance the reflective learning experience and overall learning. This included guest lectures from industry professionals and ambassadors and being required to talk with professionals in fields the students were interested in (Fig. 3). More than half of Thai university students enter programs based on parents' and teachers' directions, not on their interests (Carrera, 2022). By interacting with industry professionals, students better understand how to position their program for their interest. For example, the faculty focuses on business and logistics, yet some students are interested in marketing or customizing cars.

Professionals could give advice and make links that the lecturer cannot. Claiborne et al. (2020) discussed and showed the many benefits of learning outside of the classroom and its role in experiential learning. Field based learning takes many forms; however, having the students choose their own trip and people to speak with complements the old-style guest lecturer or field trip exercises.

20% - Talking with professionals in English

Attend an international exhibition or professional association talk

Speak with an exhibitors/presenters for at least 10 minutes in English (individually)

You can ask about **how** to get a job outside Thailand? **What** should a university student focus on for the future? **Why** did they choose their profession? And so on.

Record your conversation

Write about the experience

How did you feel –before/after. Who did you speak to. What was easy or difficult? What did you learn?

Venues and events include

<https://www.bitec.co.th/th/visitor/coming-events> (hint Logistics Expo in August)

<http://www.impact.co.th/index.php/visitor/event/en>

<https://www.meetup.com/th-TH/find/th--bangkok/>

<https://www.eventbrite.com/d/thailand--bangkok/networking/>

Figure 3: Example of assignment with some instructions

Final Exams

Some (writing) of my classes' final exams were reflective. Students were asked to reflect on their learning journey, identify key takeaways from the course, and discuss how they planned to apply their knowledge and skills (Fig. 4). Also, students were asked what they found useful and not useful. This approach helps identify students who paid attention in class, their engagement with the material and the impact the class had on them. Another benefit was that the exam showed what I need to adjust to teach the course again. There would be classes, topics, and approaches that students' reflections would converge on, and these points are what I used to identify what worked and what did not.



Instructions

Write an 800 – 1000 - word essay (3-4 pages) on how your communication skills have changed over the semester.

Include comments on

- What you learnt
- What was useful and not
- What made the biggest/least impact
- How do you plan to improve

Also

- How the material impacted other class
- Give examples using the class material
- Your reading

Marking Rubric

- 10 - References (class and non-class reading)
- 40 - Language (sub-verb-obj., tenses, alignment, terms, etc.)
- 10 - Layout (use of formatting and other tools.)
- 40 - Show that you engaged with the class and the material

Figure 4: Example of end of semester examination

Some (for example, research or human resources) exams were more rote learning based to give dimensions to examination, aid those students that had problems switching to a more critical thinking approach and help in student memory development. Bloom (2011) pointed out the access to information on the internet were making people more forgetful, and this has gotten much worse for a generation that grew up on the internet, social media and smartphones. The literature on memory and social media use is growing but not relevant in this paper.

Post-Class Review

After some courses, a post-class review was conducted to evaluate the effectiveness of the class. Students shared their reflections on the learning process, the challenges they encountered, and the outcomes they achieved (Fig. 5). This review form mirrored the pre-class form with similar questions. This review provided valuable insights into student learning, language development and informed future teaching strategies.

Objective

This review form aims to get more depth of the students' experience of the class so that future versions can be improved. All information is private and data confidential. Your student number may be used by researchers in the future **IF YOU** want to be tracked.

Student number (optional)**Guiding Questions** (with prompts if required)

1. Did you achieve your aims in the class?
 - a. My aim/s was/were
 - b. I was looking for
2. Do you think your language skills improved in class?
 - a. I used mostly Thai/English when
 - b. The improvement was (being able to express oneself/more comfortable with English, etc.)
3. Did the lecturer deliver what you were expecting?
 - a. The lecturing was
 - b. I was expecting.....
4. Do you think you are comfortable and equipped to tell business stories after the class?
 - a. I feel (ready, still unsure, on the way)
 - b. I think I would need
5. How did you prepare for and participated in, class?
 - a. I prepared by
 - b. I participated by

Figure 5: Example of post class review

Analysis of writings

An evolving content analysis approach was used to understand the students' writings. Codes and themes did emerge through the readings and noted over time. The framework most closely followed Evans and Maloney's (1998) and more or less followed the instructions given, which is - report, review and refocus, analyse and reconceptualise. Hence, what the student reported, their views on the topic how they analyse the situation and learnings. More elaborate approaches exist such as Alt et al. (2022), but the simpler approach was more relevant.

As Hatton and Smith (1995) stated, "For a start definitions of reflection, especially of the critical form, are often inappropriate or inadequate..." (p. 38). At the end of each semester, changes were made in how the instructions were given and class discussion on the topic, but the approach to the various writings remained.

RESULTS

The implementation of reflective practices yielded several notable results. First, the lecturer experienced personal growth by sharing and showcasing their work. For example, by referring to their seniors' writings, showing what others wrote and explaining the use in class,



students felt comfortable that their writings were possibly going to be used. This transparency helped build trust with students and created a more open and supportive learning environment.

Students displayed a broader learning spectrum, becoming more aware of their abilities, efforts, and outcomes. Reflective practices shifted the focus to student-generated content, leading to more questions and expanding the learning boundary beyond the classroom. During classes, I would sit with students individually and discuss their writings, thoughts and feelings. This personalized time and attention helped students rethink what they are doing and explain themselves further. This guided self-discovery process helps develop a greater awareness of the learning taking place in the classroom.

Students also demonstrated increased self-awareness and a deeper understanding of their learning processes. They became more proactive in identifying areas for improvement and setting goals for future learning. This self-directed approach to learning helped students develop critical thinking and problem-solving skills.

Direct Findings

Pre-class profiles were helpful for the teacher in understanding the students and the level at which to pitch the class material. The range of language skills and abilities reflected intakes focused on growing programs. Thai universities are competing with each other and decline demographics (PRD, 2024) hence starting new programs and being flexible with requirements.

8 February 2024

It was a great day. In this class, I answer a lot of questions and learn a new technique for writing proposals. It was the second time that I learned to write a proposal. The professor mentioned and reviewed the details of the last class that I learned the week before. After that, the professor asked a question: What is the Gini coefficient? It was a measurement of income across the population. In the class, before practicing to write a proposal, you have to answer the question before it starts. After that, Dr. Mariano asked everyone in the class, How many international airports are there in Thailand? With these questions, no one can answer, so the professor teaches us that it is very important to know them because we are studying logistics. In the second half of class, I have been practicing writing proposals, and I know there are still some mistakes that I have to fix and change to make the proposal more professional.

Figure 6: Example of a class diary entry



Class diaries showed a range of abilities and learning. The students' writing showed improvements. There appears a direct relationship between diaries and grades, with students who showed involvement in the class receiving better grades. Fig 6, for example, shows a student's writing and understanding, resulting in a good mark (9/10). There may still be grammatical, spelling or writing errors in writing, but these do not affect the final mark. The student captured most of what happened in the class, understandably expressed themselves and showed they were learning. Thus, achieving most of the aims of the exercise.

All in all, my first shot at a legit interview left a mark. Navigating this new territory showed me the ropes: get set in advance, manage your time, and don't underestimate the power of a solid conversation. Ms. Phu-on was the perfect example of how to do it right – knowledgeable and chill. This experience is a highlight of my school journey, giving me more than just book smarts – a real taste of the professional world out there.

Aftermaths results for future benefits

- **Stronger mentality**
 - **More courage for future similar activities:** This first-ever interview went pretty well with good preparation beforehand. This led to having positive perspectives towards any interviewing or socializing activities for me. I now had a great feeling to do any kind of interviewing others or being interviewed. I overcame fear. Moreover, I am pretty sure that for the next interview, there will be a lot of great improvement.
 - **Flexible and Confident to speak up:** In every interview, not everything would go completely as planned. I was able to control the situation to keep on going without being awkward with my flexibility. Plus, I was able to speak up about what I wondered or was curious about in the middle of a conversation with good communication skills and polite manners.
- **For my year-4 internship:**
 - **First-hand job interview experience:** This interview allowed me to experience a real-world interview even if this was not the formal one. Nonetheless, I could feel and get a clear picture of what kinds of an interview looked like and how it was going. This experience provided a positive similarity to an interviewing situation, therefore when I encounter this kind of similar situation again; my mind and body would partially automatically get used to it. This would result in lowering nervousness and allow my mind and body to perform more efficiently and effectively.
 - **Received handful and practical information from professionals:** The interview with Ms. Angkhana Phu-on cleared up all of my curiosity related to an internship. I got clear pictures of what would be going on before, during, and after an internship as well as the job in logistics itself. I was recommended with a lot of wonderful advice and suggestions as well as secret personal tips.
- **For my future career**
 - **Commenced to build connections and networking:** Even if going to TILOG LOGISTIX 2023 and interviewing professionals seemed to be a small beautiful beginning in building connections and networking, it was started beautifully. I

Figure 7: Example of the results of talking with professionals.



Having an *external activity* has proven to be a good reality check for the students. Guest lecturers in the form of working professionals and internships to help students become more aware of the working world. Fig 7 shows how that student expresses their realization of their learning through the process. However, going out for themselves and speaking to people helped them develop the confidence to do it again. There is no protective shield. Being able to introduce oneself, have a conversation, and learn that it was not challenging but doable. The activity helps take students out of their comfort zone. Students reported that overcoming their fear was one of the significant benefits of the exercise.

Also, the external activity forces students to think about and decide on their careers. Having the freedom to explore allows them to take responsibility for their lives, which is becoming increasingly rare for university students. Exploring possibilities led to some interesting findings, with some students learning how to use their International Business and Logistics degree in beauty product marketing or a computer engineering student learning to integrate his degree into airflow and air-conditioning, so he could design his gym to be unique. These nuanced findings in the third year helped those interested in learning to focus better on their remaining classes.

International programs can be tough for non international students. Plenty of them are even inexperienced with writing essays or speaking. I first started to study in an international program with no experience in English speaking society. With no serious presenting experience either in English or Thai. Throughout the start of the academic year I lost on presentation a lot. There's a bunch of presenting mistakes in my experience such as blank mind, anxiety or even nervous body language. Time passes without even noticing it's come to a final presentation day. I felt really confident with a lot of presenting plans in my head. After I finished presenting I knew I just did my all time best presentation I ever did. I am analyzing my strategy that I use. It is mostly the technique from the English for presentation class that I learn throughout the semester.

Figure 8: Example of reflective essay in Exams

A *reflective exam essay* has proven to be a great way of learning from the students based on what they have experienced. Students reported being challenged to think in class and that the class was vastly different from others they had. This difference was generally positive (Fig. 8). Many students mentioned being called out to speak or answer questions in class as

stressful; mentioning not having to speak up in other classes, being afraid of giving the wrong answer and being uncomfortable with their language. Interestingly, there is a realization that being called in class to speak was needed to improve their language skills.

Students also wrote about their reading and gaming habits, recognizing that they spent more time on games and did not read as required. This lack of reading hits home during the examination when students cannot express themselves. Most of the essays usually end with the promise to improve by reading, writing, speaking and doing what was suggested at the start of the class.

Post-class forms are another helpful idea. However, as these are voluntary and do not affect grades, the number is much less than the pre-class form when the students are unsure (despite the notice on the form). This can be interpreted as students feeling comfortable in choosing what to do. The feedback, when given, is generally favourable, with practical suggestions given such as having the better English-speaking students work in groups more.

Reflection is a form of personalized learning and with thirty plus students in a class, it can be difficult to address individual's needs. By putting the onus on the students, there is learning and development of the maturity required at a tertiary level. Students are required to look at their writings, actions and growth themselves. There is no one to blame or fewer possible excuses, thus responsibility is given to the students for their own learning; by being given responsibility, students grow.

The Lecturer

Reading the feedback takes time, thus the time management component of teaching improves. I have been more disciplined in setting time for reading and giving feedback. By getting individual information dealing with variability an issue, students that need more attention can be given the attention needed and those not interested or needing attention can be addressed quicker.

Due to the personalised nature of the reflective learning using artificial intelligence (AI) difficult in the exercises, it is clear the students use the class slides as prompts to generate a class summary because there are little personal components in the writing. Nuances, conversations and so on are not recorded. Using AI to write the class journal and essay is difficult. Students may use some softwares to correct their language use, but the personal elements and specific class events remain. Thus, reflective writing is a great way of minimising the use of AI in the classroom.

More time is spent explaining the usefulness of what is presented in the class. Principles matter more than specific scenarios. Business communication and research methods lends itself to the flexibility required perhaps more than sciences.



Other Possibilities

Reflective learning is also applied in professional environments, where managers share experiences and learn from each other. This approach can benefit postgraduates and other undergraduate classes, highlighting its versatility.

In professional settings, reflective practices can enhance learning and development by promoting continuous improvement and fostering a learning culture. For example, managers who engage in reflective practices are better equipped to identify areas for improvement in their teams, develop effective strategies for addressing challenges, and support their employees' professional growth. Companies such as Asian Identity (www.asian-identity.com) are using experiential learning in their management training programs. Several other human resources and training firms in Thailand appear to be offering more personalized training programs including critical self-assessment.

In postgraduate programs, reflective learning can help students develop advanced critical thinking and research skills. By reflecting on their learning experiences, postgraduate students can identify gaps in their knowledge, develop research questions, and design studies that contribute to their field of study.

In other undergraduate classes, reflective practices can enhance student engagement and learning outcomes. For example, reflective journaling can help students better understand course content, connect their learning to real-world contexts, and develop skills essential for lifelong learning. Fewer disparities in class instruction would help students get more comfortable with themselves and expressing their thoughts.

In my Personal Leadership classes, I had students mark their own essays using the rubric given. The exercise helps students understand what was needed; how to use instructions given, and reflect on how they met the brief. Feedback shows that the students understood and appreciated the class. Marking their own paper with a rubric helps in understanding their grades in other classes and what questions to ask.

CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

Reflective learning is a vital component of a comprehensive educational toolkit. Like Chang's (2019), reflective learning operates uniquely for each individual, requiring flexibility and adaptability in assessment rubrics. Educators must lead by giving examples, involving others and remaining open to unexpected outcomes. I am practising what I teach by reflecting on my experiences and writing about them.

This reflection highlights the importance of creating a supportive learning environment where students feel safe to express their thoughts and feelings. Tian and Louw



(2020) also found that using reflective tools helped in cultivating a mindset that contributes to professional growth. This environment is made more prominent by having more teachers use elements of the practice. Educators can help students develop critical thinking, problem-solving, and self-regulation skills by incorporating reflective practices into the curriculum.

In the Thai university system, I have found very few lecturers using the practice or even aware of the concept. However, with a wide variety of abilities and aptitudes of intakes, the best way to address the individual's needs in a class setting is by having students look at themselves in a structured manner. There is thus a form of personalized learning in a group settings. By promoting the practice of using reflection as a means of learning and growth, lecturers can positively impact their students.

When given the opportunity, students have shown improved awareness, taken ownership, increased maturity, and, most importantly, improved overall learning. The practices shown in this paper are not exclusive, but they show the possibilities of using reflection in teaching.

LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

The study was conducted at one university by one lecturer. Future research should explore applying reflective practices in different educational contexts and with diverse lecturer and student populations.

Additionally, the study primarily focused on the perspectives of students and the lecturer. Future research could include the perspectives of other stakeholders, such as other teachers, administrators, and industry professionals, to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the impact of reflective practices.

Finally, longitudinal studies could track students' progress and examine how reflective practices influence their learning outcomes, career success, and lifelong learning habits. In Thailand, few longitudinal studies are done. More longitudinal studies would help universities promote the idea of continuous learners via their actions.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The insights from students' writing were fundamental to this study and contributed significantly to the lecturer's learning journey. I thank the students for their openness and willingness to engage in reflective practices and the faculty for allowing me to put research into practice.



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PROCEEDINGS



COLLEGIALITY IN THE ORGANIZATIONAL WORK OF STUDENTS AND THEIR REFLECTIVE EXPRESSIONS OF THE SCHOOL VALUES: AN ETHNOGRAPHIC STUDY

WILTER C. FRIALES

Notre Dame of Marbel University, Philippines
wcfriales@ndmu.edu.ph

ABSTRACT

Collegial model of leadership has become apparent as expressed by the student leaders working in the campus organizations in the university. It aims to explain how these understanding of the collegial model of leadership and supportive model relates to Marist culture/education such as in articulating the values of family spirit, presence, love of work which are seemingly related to collegiality. This study aims to describe collegiality in the organization work of students and their expressions of the school core values through a realist ethnographic approach to inquiry in order to generate a holistic portrait of that shared culture from the emic experiences of the student leaders in a Marist School in the Philippines. Several themes emerged to characterize collegiality in the organization work of students: Establishing and Nurturing the ties, School Identity and Values Influencing their Relationship, Collegial-Interactions as Reflective of the School Values and Instinctive Act of Sharing with the Work to Accomplish. The study provides a holistic portrait of the student leaders of a Marist school on how they manifest collegial-interaction in the organizational work, and how school core values are expressed on their interactions. It is affirming that student leaders in this university manifest collegiality in a unique and positive way by not only manifesting it on work-level relationship, but instead it develops into a more personalized level of relating and connecting with each other.

Keywords: Collegiality, Organizational work, School core values, Realist ethnography

INTRODUCTION

Collegiality is one of the most important factors in determining the quality of an organization. It is assumed that the task of developing collegiality may be integral to the task of improving schools. In this study, collegiality is seen from the lenses of students and student leaders working in the campus organizations as officers and leaders. Various studies and literature have already defined the concept of collegial leadership as manifested by leaders in



the organizations. Collegiality is commonly understood as a collaborative leadership expressed through behaviors, communication and set of beliefs of leaders that sustain collaborative processes and forces. Bush (2003) as cited by Shrifian (2011) explains in his model of collegial leadership that power and decision-making are shared with the members of the organization. The model further assumes that organizations determine policies and make decisions through a process of discussion leading to consensus. On the same article, Brundrett (1998) cited by Shrifian (2011) further explained that collegial models assume a common set of values held by members of the organization which guide the managerial activities of the organization and are thought to lead to shared educational objectives and the importance of “shared vision” as a basis for collegial decision- making. In this study, the intention is to relate how this collegial model of leadership has become apparent as expressed by the student leaders working in the campus organizations in the university. It aims to explain how this understanding of the collegial model of leadership and supportive model relates to Marist culture/education such as in articulating the values of family spirit, presence, love of work which are seemingly related to collegiality. The student leaders of the university may have understood the Marist ideals or traditions because they have probably been conditioned to understand and live the values through the different orientations and formation activities given to them. However, what really is the dynamics in the student organizations when it comes to supporting culture and collegial interactions? How do Marist student leaders experience collegial support in the actual work in the organization? How collegial support with each other as officers has manifested and/or lived? How do they support each other? What kind of support do they give and receive? How did they receive support from others? What kind of support? Martins and Terblanche (2003) explains that it is culture that is genuinely related with values and beliefs that are shared by individuals in an organization which includes the activity and behavioral set of standards. This research study intent to describe the collegial-interaction manifested and lived by the student leaders in one Marist School in the Philippines.

Statement of the Problem

This study aims to describe collegiality in the organization work of students and their expressions of the school core values through a realist ethnographic approach to inquiry in order to generate a holistic portrait of that shared culture from the emic experiences of the student leaders in a Marist School in the Philippines.



REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Collegiality

The collegial model of organizational behavior refers to a group of people sharing a common goal and is related to teamwork. The basis of the collegial model is teamwork in which everyone works as a peer or colleague. They are inspired towards performing better in their workplace (Kumar & Chauhan, 2024). Moreillon (2019) explained how collegiality and teamwork becomes essential in the context of work. To say that, there is collegiality; members of the organization see each other as companions or equals sharing and cooperating for their collective goals. In other words, there is the atmosphere of friendship, caring, and respect for one another (Mooney et al., 2012). Teamwork implies that colleagues work collectively in an effective and efficient way to accomplish a task. The members of the organizations contribute to the achievement of the goal and everyone will share on the 'credit' for the outcome. Mooney (2012) further defined collegial leadership as a process involved in leaders systematically, but informally relating to persons and groups of equivalent authority in a different area for the betterment of the organization to advance a mutual mission. It involves individuals who possess the skills, abilities to effectively interact with colleagues. Similarly, Singh (2013) also emphasized that collegiality forms the backbone of a shared leadership. As a social skill, leadership makes people respect and follow others. A collegial leader shares power and authority equally among a group of colleagues which creates an atmosphere where members work together as a team to solve problems. In terms of support, a leader who uses the collegial style shows characteristics that allows to build a supportive environment where there is encouragement, listening, discerning and respect for difference and divergence of viewpoints. With the stressful nature of organizational work, it is said that social support is one of the most effective means by which people can cope with. There's a question whether there are any cultural differences on how people utilize their social support networks. A review of studies on culture and social support presents evidence that Asians and Asian Americans are more hesitant to explicitly ask for support from others than European Americans because they are more concerned about the potentially negative relational consequences of such behaviors. Asians and Asian Americans are more likely to use and benefit from forms of support that do not involve explicit disclosure of personal stressful events and feelings of distress (Kim et al., 2008).

Organizations

Organizations are defined as a "process for social action" in which individuals voluntarily engage in the work of the organization to accomplish its purpose. Being a member of a work organization fulfills basic needs met earlier in the primary family social group.



Members consider the work organization a surrogate family, forming psychological attachments as well as value and ego links and they transfer needs, feelings and expectations developed in early childhood to their work. Work provides a place where individuals can belong, express themselves openly and receive honest feedback (Chapman, 1993). In an organization, stable and durable relationships represent several resource interdependencies that lead to an informal pattern of 'ties' that is called 'structure'. In the Weberian tradition, these social and informal relationships have long been considered by the bureaucratic model as particularistic obstacles to efficient collective action (Perrow, 1986 as cited by Lazega, 2005).

The Context of the Culture-Sharing Group

Marist School is a Catholic educational community established by the Marist Brothers inspired by the Blessed Virgin Mary and St. Marcellin Champagnat's love for Jesus and his Gospel. The Marist Brothers of the Schools (FMS), commonly known as the Marist Brothers, is a congregation of men who devoted their lives to Christian education throughout the world, running Catholic schools or otherwise for the training and guidance of youth. It was founded in France in 1817 by Saint Marcellin Champagnat, who realized the values of Catholic Education in schools wherein God, the Blessed Virgin, Catholic Doctrine, and morality are part of the daily program.

Who are the Marist Youth/Student Leaders?

A Marist Youth is any young person connected, influenced or living with the charism of St. Marcellin Champagnat and the love of Mary who shares a common set of traits or characteristics under the Marist Values. These young people may come from the academe (currently studying or alumni), community extension (volunteers), formation or spiritual groups. It is considered to be a family of young disciples who usually introduce the way of Jesus through Mary and are guided by the teachings of St. Marcellin Champagnat. The Marist Youth can be adaptive and progressive in their respective environment which greatly influences how they perform, innovate and think. They are a proactive, creative and engaging young individual who immerse themselves in the different values instilled by the Marist family. They can also be composed of young vulnerable people who need guidance and facilitation but have an intention to follow and live by the Marist teachings, especially humility, modesty and simplicity. These youth are the primary recipient of development initiatives for the participation and empowerment of children and young people in all the realities of the Marist Youth Ministry Mission.



Marist Identity

The Marist identity was introduced as ideals to which all Marists, students and adults alike, should commit to. The Pillars are: Presence which refers to caring for each other, seeking relationships founded on love, being attentive and welcoming with a sense of openness. Simplicity is being straightforward and genuine, humble and modest, 'doing good quietly'. Family Spirit refers to relating to each other as members of a loving family, building community, offering the warmth of welcoming, acceptance and belonging, sharing our successes and failures, setting clear standards of honesty, mutual respect, and tolerance. Love of Work... is generous of heart, constant, and persevering in our daily work, confident, visionary, decisive in meeting the needs of our community and encouraging each other to discover the dignity of our work with young people and with each other and In the Way of Mary... seeing Mary as a perfect model of being Marist, tender, strong, constant in faith, open to God's calling us to our own journey of discipleship (The International Marist Education Commission, 1998).

The School in Context

Notre Dame of Marbel University as the setting of this study is a Marist anchors its faith and life on the following core values as foundational qualities with which the Marist Brothers, Mission Partners, and students approach the entire educational process and academic atmosphere of the University. Family Spirit refers to a relationship premised on love and expressed in a style which Marcellin called "family spirit." Akin to the characteristic of a good family are a warmth of welcome, acceptance, belongingness and authentic concern which should prevail where everyone has a sense of being valued and believed in, regardless of their role or their social standing. Marian is attributed to Mary as the perfect model of the Marist Educator, as she was for Marcellin. As a woman, a layperson and Jesus' first follower, she is the inspiration in living out personal faith and virtue of simplicity. Love of work implies a cheerful and careful preparation of all the things one does. It values the dignity of work as a powerful means of self-fulfillment, of giving purpose and meaning to life, and of contributing to the general economic, social and cultural well-being. Preference for the least favored is to be with those who are excluded from the mainstream of society, and those whose material poverty leads to deprivation in relation to health, family life, schooling, and educational values. Quality education is characterized as holistic where students are progressively initiated into their life-long challenge of harmonizing faith, culture and life. Integrity of Creation speaks about "Respect for the value of life" and "care for the mother earth" are two major themes in valuing the integrity of creation. It upholds life-giving values and promotes stewardship of the earth. Culture sensitivity means openness and respect to the different cultures of peoples.



It promotes dialogue as a way of enhancing unity in diversity. On the individual level, it is a communication between two persons with different views, different values and traditions, to learn from each other in order for them to change and grow (ndmu.edu.ph, n.d.).

METHOD

This study utilizes a realist ethnographic approach in describing shared collegiality culture from the emic experiences of the student leaders in a Marist School in the Philippines. In this study, the researcher is interested in describing the shared patterns of actions, behaviors and some expressions of the student leaders in a Marist school on their involvement and participation in the campus organizational work and how they naturally express the core values of the institution on their interaction with each other.

Participants in context

In this study, the Marist student leaders are the participants who belong to the culture-sharing group. These members of the group are officers of the supreme student government and collegiate student councils. They have consistently been involved in student leadership since their first year in the college. The participants were eight (8) student leaders of the university who have been officers of the supreme student government and student council for the two consecutive school years (2020-2021 and 2021-2022). They were identified participants because of their active involvement as leaders in every activity, program and meeting being held by the student organizations.

They were identified to be the active officers of the student organizations in the university. They have been visible in every organizational and institutional programs and activities. They take part in the planning, organizing, implementing, facilitating and evaluating the programs of the organizations of the university. They have been facilitators of various formation programs for their fellow students and have also been taking part or even initiated various community extension services in the community. They all have participated in the Marist formation leadership program of the university. This is a uniquely Marist way of forming and honing the leadership of the students in a way of a Marist.

What makes it realist ethnography? In this research, it reflects a particular stance taken by the researcher toward the group being studied. It is an objective presentation of the situation written in a third person point of view. The study narrates what has been heard and learned from sharing of the experiences and from the researcher's personal observations through his engagements and immersion with the day to day activities and interactions of the participants. The researcher ensures to be in the background as an omniscient reporter of the



shared narratives and common patterns of behaviors and actions to be able to interpret how such a culture of collegiality in the organizational work among student leaders in a Marist School is being lived. In this research, the culture-sharing group are Student leaders of NDMU and the phenomenon of interest is the collegiality and their reflective expression of the school values.

Data Collection

This research employed participant-observation and interview as data collection techniques. The researcher being the ethnographer in this study served as participant-observer being the in-charge of the Student Affairs and Development of the university whose role is to supervise all the undertakings of the students in the organizations. As declared in this research method, the research took one (1) school year to do observation, participate actively in the meetings and activities of the students and mingle with them before the conduct of the actual data gathering to be able to capture the spontaneity of the setting and context of the phenomenon being studied. In doing the participant-observation, the researcher kept notes documenting any actions among student leader-participants that are contributory to the phenomenon. The in-depth interviews with the participants were conducted in an unstructured approach. While interview guide questions were prepared by the researcher as guide, in the course of the interview, the researcher- interviewer dynamics appear to be spontaneous and in a conversational manner.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Collegiality in the campus organizational work of student leaders is expressed through the themes that emerged from the experiences, reflections and narratives shared by student leaders who have willingly participated in this study. The study intended to describe collegiality in the organizational work as expressed by the student leaders in a Marist school in the Philippines. What makes this intention significant? Collegiality as a construct, in the case of most organizations be it for students, professional, politics, etc., has been a basic norm which is expected for every member to manifest. While it is true that collegial interaction must be a norm for every organization, the interest of this study is to look into how this concept of collegiality is being characterized as lived or expressed by the student leaders of a Marist school considering that a Marist institution is also guided with its core values where family spirit, love of work, presence among others are highly emphasized to be instilled for every student and for the student leaders in the campus organizations.



The *'being Marist'* of the interactions of the student leaders while they are actively engaging with student organization is the interest of this research but with concentration on the aspect of their collegial-interactions and how they reflectively express the school core values. The following are the emerging themes that describe collegiality among student leaders in the campus organization in a Marist School and how these become reflective of the core values of the university.

Establishing and Nurturing the ties

The students were asked to share their impressions, experiences and meaning of their interactions within the organizations while working for their specific goals or tasks. They were also asked to describe what collegiality means for them and how such becomes apparent or translated on their work relationship. Collegiality in the organizational work as shared by the students has emphasis on unfolding the kind of relationship they intentionally developed by exerting deliberate efforts on dealing and connecting with each other as officers of the Supreme Student Government and Collegiate Student Council of the university. *Why is it described to be intentional and/or deliberate efforts on establishing this good relationship among them?* As observed, student officers from the start are aware of the importance of rapport and good relationships in any organization to succeed in attaining the goal. In most of the organizations in the campus, initiating team building and community building activities have become part of the culture of the organizations as included in their annual and semestral plans. Aside from this, the series of meetings, constant interaction staying in their respective offices, usual conversation be it relevant to organizational work or personal matters contribute in building that rapport among them.

This *'relationship'* that they intend to establish is more than just work-level or professional level of relationship as described by most of the participants. As observed, they have profoundly developed that connections deeply like family where they care and show affective ties or connections with each other.

Strongly personalized 'affective' ties describe the interpersonal relationship that is experienced and shared by the student leaders from their intentional or explicit strategies on establishing this kind of relationship to nurturing phase. Affective is psychologically understood to have connections to feelings, emotions and attitudes and moods of a person. As relates to the domains of teaching, it is always referred to the emotional aspect of the learners that pedagogical process should have to enrich in order to enhance learning. The theme *'affective ties'* deals with their personalized level of *'relating'* and *'connecting'* with each other that satisfies their emotional needs.



Emotionally connected...like ang comfort with one another from beginning to end and also nga maka-share sa ila sang mga concerns mo...maka-open up... Comfortable ka with that... (p. 2).

We are emotionally connected. It shows through the way we comfort each other. We openly share out concerns comfortably (p. 2).

Gina-cherish ko gid tanan nga support...Mabatyagan ko gid ang concern sang mga upod ko sa SSG. Kis-a ayawn ko ka-balance sang academics and obligations as officer, daw nabudlayan na ako mag comply, ara lang sila para mag ulikid kag magpafeel nga di kanag iisa sa amo nan ga struggle.... (p. 5).

I cherish the support of each one. I feel the concern of my fellow SSG. Sometimes, I have difficulty balancing my academics and my work in the SSG, but they are always there telling me that I am not alone in this struggle.

They are showing me that it's normal to experience hardship and it's helping me a lot (p. 5).

'Friendship' ties: When this group of participants asked to share their experiences of collaboration, teamwork, support and collegiality the way they have understood the concepts, essentially, they all mentioned that their treatment with each other has gradually developed into more than just being colleagues or co-officers.

In their respective organizations, they said that they become 'true-friends'. As observed being in the Student Affairs for quite long, this is something the researcher may affirm. Relationships of student leaders develop through time from being simply part of the organization to a deeper level of friendship through their constant engagement and company doing organizational work in school.

Daw sa amo bi sir, daw wala gid namon naemphasize kung ano ang position sa council or what, we treat each other nga daw equal lang kami regardless of position. At the end of the day we are true friends (p. 1).

We do not emphasize our positions in the council. We treat each other equally regardless of positions.... (p. 1).

As discussed, the 'establishing' usually happens at the beginning of every school year. This is always true since every school year, transition is happening in the leadership roles of the student leaders. The set of officers changes year by year. As part of the dynamics of



every student organization, be it in the Marist school or non-Marist, some officers remain as officers for the next two or three terms, some stay for only a term, and others have been officers of the student council their whole life in the university. In other words, the composition of leaders changes every term. Thus, the kind of relationship among these officers every term may also vary depending on the compositions of the leaders with consideration to their attitudes, personalities, perspective and their intentions. Anyhow, the nature of relationships in every organization can be unpredictable considering these factors influencing their interactions. What is common among the student leaders who were interviewed was their experience of emotional support with their co-officers. The engagement usually starts with just being officers and colleagues in the organization. Their constant encounter working every day for organizational matters has nurtured the relationship.

At first, abi ko di ko dri magfit kay iba iba ko inga college, iba iba amon nga mga orientations. Tapos daw naintimidiate pko sa mga upod ko kay known na gid sila sa campus, but then, later own, nagnami na gid ang amon interaction. Mas naging bonded kmi kay tungod sina ate kag kuya ginapafeel gid nila ang company (p. 4).

At first I thought, I will not fit with the group since I do not know them all. I felt intimidated. But then, eventually, I felt the belongingness because they really made me feel the company (p. 4).

The work relationship evolves into being 'friends' and the work or tasks to do in the organization becomes bonding time. Organizational work has become interesting and exciting every time they are with the group.

Daw life blood...Daw life blood sa akon...Daw life blood ko gid ang maging officer. kung baga kung wala siguro yong mga support ng mga kasama ko dito, ang mental state ko siguro sir kay indi nami...Gusto ko gid ang akon experience with the group. We treat each other as more than just officers. We are friends, we are family (p. 2).

Organization is life blood for me. Had it not been because of their support, I might have had a problem with my mental health already. I really like my experience here. We are friends, we are family (p. 2).



Work becomes easy because of the trust and friendship that we have developed. Lain gid abi ang bonding sa council. After work sa council, my time gid na kami para lang magtambay- tambay kag mag sige istorya kag kinadlaw. Nadevelop gid namon sa council ang good relationship (p. 5).The bonding is different. After work in the council, we spend time bonding somewhere, sharing our stories and laughter... I think we have really developed a relationship (p. 5).

As observed in the dynamics of the group of leaders in student welfare board meetings, the officers seem not to feel any feeling of discomfort with the presence of any other officers coming from other departments. In interview participants was asked to describe the dynamics of their meetings;

Kami abi sa board meeting we feel nga daw barkadahanay kami. Sige lang kami kinadlaw kay damo kami mga upod nga mga wakalan (p. 8).

We feel that we are just friends even during meetings. We keep laughing on everytime which makes the meeting lighter even if we discuss a more serious issue (p. 8).

Collegiality in the organizational work among student leaders is shaped by the shared mindset and attitude of student leaders. What emerged as the common expression of collegiality in the way they work in the student organization is their conscious and intentional effort on building relationships. These relationships extend beyond office or organizational work. These support the documents of Marist describing Marist Youth Leadership. It says that the Marist Youth considers its peers as family and are not, cannot and will not disregard its importance. This is a character which each of the youth possess naturally and may even trigger unconsciously. There is a natural set of shared characteristics which makes it common for them to share, interact and sympathize with each other because of the foundation that the Marist values initiated within them. In these shared patterns of actions, interactions or even behavior of student leaders in the context of this research, it was evident that relating to others as friends more than work-mates in the organization manifests in their day-to-day interactions and dealing with each other.



School Core Values Influencing their Relationship

The question is, is it always natural that officers working on the same organization in school would transcend work-level relationships into deep friendship? This is where this research takes off. Can it be because from the beginning, these student officers have already been aware of the values of family spirit and presence that the institution is trying to instill among them in whatever context be it at home, in school, school organizations, or non-school organization undertaking? It is quite interesting to examine how these relationships develop and how collegiality as an organizational norm is being expressed by the student officers from their day to day interaction while working in the organization.

When the participants of the study were asked to actually describe their personal experience dealing with their fellow officers in the organization, they described their relationship to be 'connected', 'supportive', 'smooth', 'open', and 'belonging'. These words are very much similar or related to Marist values on Family spirit and even presence. When they were asked why they actually have these kinds of interactions, most of them said that it is because, 'they are in the Marist School and these are the values that the school is trying to instill in them and that they are all aware.

Pagsiling mo nga Marist leader, magtatak gid dayun ang mga core values sang school. Example presence..so, ginatry gid ina natun i-emphasize sa atun interactions...Damo kmi mga activities like mga team bulifing, formation program and even sa mga meetings and dya to day itneractions. Daw conscious gid kami at first, but ;later on, daw naging way of life na lng gid (p. 5).

When you say Marist leader, it is outrightly associated with the core values of the school for example, presence. So, we are really trying to emphasize that in our interactions.. We have different initiatives for that such as team building, formation programs and even in our day to day engagement. At first, we are a bit conscious, but later on, it has become a way of life (p. 5).

Sabay kami gakaon, sa apartment ururupod man kami. Nadevelop gid na namon nag relationship umpisa tong nagkasabay kami as officers. So ang amon nga interaction gaextend asta sa amon gina-istaran. Kung kaisa, myh mga issues iban sa amon (p. 4).



We have meal time together, We stay at the same apartment. The relationship started when we became officers. The interaction in school is extended even at our apartment where we stay. We try to be sensitive to the situation of our colleagues. We talk about the problem when it's already time to talk about it. So, this kind of relationship that was developed from the organizational work extends even outside organization and we develop it (p. 4).

With these sharing of the student leaders, it can be inferred that their knowledge and appreciation of the school identity that is 'Marist' considering its values may have significantly been influencing student leaders' way of directing or leading the organization and that includes the way they shape the relationship or interaction between and among them. While it is understandable that officers may have actually been influenced by the school's identity and values in shaping the way they 'relate', connect' and 'deal', which usually is the goal of every institution, the effort on nurturing this kind of relationship is also evident on the actions of the leaders as shared by them. After they establish at the beginning of the school year as the term of office commences, they do much effort as well on trying to strengthen and consistently maintain the family spirit and belongingness not only as influenced by the school values but it has eventually become their values learned from being part of the organization.

Collegial-Interactions as Reflective of the School Values

'Presence' is one of the core values of the university that is reflective of the relationship manifested by the student leaders in working for student organizations. Presence emerged as a shared expression of common emotional support given by each one of them. When asked what kind of emotional support they usually receive and share with others, what emerged is their explicit expression of giving comfort through their words, actions, and just by being there.

*Like ako ang naka assign dire pero always sila ga-inquire sa akun kung may iban kapa nga need..Basi need mo sang tao dira or just by asking question like okay ka pa ba dira nakakaon ka na or ng mga concern nila... (p. 1).
They always consult and ask me about my needs. They ask for my situation whether am fine or not, have I eaten or not..they show concern... (p. 1).*

Kung mamangkot na sila if hago ba dira ako nalang mag sagot sina. Amo sina biskan sila may ara man sila sarili kag gina respect nila ang schedule ko sir subong sa SSG kag if academics, academics man. If mahambal ka



nga di ka free, kay may amo ka sini nga event, sal-on sang isa so ma feel ko gid nga amu to support... (p. 2).

They would ask whether I am tired or not as they are willing to take over for the task. They respect my schedule for my time in the SSG and for my time for my academics. If I am not available, one will volunteer to do the task for me. I feel the support (p. 2).

As experienced by the participants, they have shared that what they considered to be Marist in terms of their interaction with the group is 'feeling' the atmosphere of being really part of the organization. Common example is the intentional way of giving comfort when a colleague feels down because of overwhelming tasks to do in the organization. Comfort is felt when one opens up/shares similar experience with the other; listens to the stories of frustrations/disappointment for not feeling good about the outcome of the tasks; feels the company of a colleague and when one feels that task becomes easy and attainable because of the presence of the other. For them, this is an example of emotional support. The participants shared about their experiences being open to one another to share their concerns and listen too for the others. They also shared that being open manifests being comfortable with each one. To give comfort has become part of their conscious and deliberate response to make a colleague feel better in time of so much stress. As shared by one participant, in times of stress, one initiates laughter to ease the situation. For them, presence, be it in a form of giving comfort, is a concrete meaning of collegiality. Support is given through accompanying the members/colleagues and making others feel at ease by one's presence/ character/personality.

Attentiveness is similar to presence. They sensitively recognize the situation when a co-officer feels down, feels bad, feels uncomfortable, and not in an active mood in the same way that their colleagues also try to be attentive to their situation when they feel the same. For them, being attentive to the condition and their co-officers and being able to find ways to facilitate their needs is an expression of collegiality. They do not demand for an output once they know that the colleague is trying to cope with some personal issues/concerns by extending/offering help in completing the task if they feel that a colleague is having difficulty or issues. Here, it can be noted the sensitivity of the student leaders to recognize what is going on with their colleagues. Common example is that they tend to initiate in giving the necessary help to a colleague because they feel the need to give help for others in accomplishing the tasks. They too have experienced how others have been attentive and sensitive to their conditions. For them, that's the Marist way of relating to each other while working for the goals. They would ask and be observant to the changes and dynamics of the mood by being sensitive to the



emotions of their colleagues. They value how one feels, and how the others respond emotionally to feedback and criticism. They all agree that everyone seems to listen to each other's concerns, making colleagues feel better when they feel down/ uplifting their emotions.

Support is manifested through understanding one's situation/condition too. When stressed with school work, demands, requirements, colleagues in the student council expressed their concern to the person by doing the following: assume one's tasks be it at home / student council-related tasks. Tolerance on the shown undesirable behavior (like being easily irritated). They adjust the tone of conversation from the usual/natural manner of conversation (from asserting to submitting to the person) by observing the mood of the other officers. Consoling is also evident on their interactions with the person who is experiencing problems/challenges. It is also observed how student leaders manifest being careful (tact) in giving feedback so as not to inflict hurt to the colleague. In times that a colleague missed classes or requirements, academic support is provided by giving/sharing with some notes and information for some missed classes. lectures, reviewers, etc. There are instances, that colleagues also tend to filter some disturbances that may hinder the work of a colleague being performed. They willingly take over/ assume obligations of others when necessary in order to help lessen/ improve the work. How they care for the health condition of others has also been observed and shared by the participants.

My one time gid sir nga grabe gid hebe ko nag hebe ko sina tapos sila ara lang gid sila da sa gilid sir ga pamati lang sila tapos pagka aga tanan nga mga orobrahon kay naka hati man na sa amon sir.....Didto na feel ko gid an fila company and presence. Naintindihan gid nila akon ginabatyang that time... (p. 1).

There was a time that I really cried and felt down because of the several engagements that I have attended to both extra-curricular and academics. I was not in the mood that time because I was so occupied. My colleagues were just there listening to me. They understood my situation and in order to help me, they share with the task that I usually do at home and in school.... (p. 1).

Tapos kis-a if my eh assign sa amon halimbawa si....gadali sila tapos gina in- charge nila ko so wala ko ma tap nga tao ones nga mag chat ko sa GC ara dayon sila ..Ara dayon na sila nga mag hambal nga sige updan ka namon ako nalang dira..Bal an gid nila ang akon nga needs... (p. 3).



In case they would assign me to do something and I need some support from the other officers, I will just send a message through the group chat and they would respond immediately to help (p. 3).

Empowering and 'pushing'. Support is shown by ensuring that colleagues/fellow officers are guided in accomplishing their tasks; Affirming one's potential as a leader; Affirming colleagues' potential- to gain confidence; to believe on ones' abilities/potentials; Boosting the confidence of a colleague to believe that; Gaining confidence because of the affirmation of colleagues in the group; Gained confidence on what one has been doing due to the affirmation of colleagues; Sharing knowledge gained from experiences for other to also learn.

Budlay abi siya sir nga mgstart ka nga isipon mo bal-an mo na tanan kay kung di ka mag accept sang support daw sarili mo lang gihapon gina-hambal mo nga mali. Nga-a. Di mo kailangan tanggapon ang support nila kag ang support nila didto ka naka-build sang imo nga confidence... (p. 3).

It's difficult to presume that you know everything. I accept support because I know I need it to improve myself in building my confidence (p. 3).

Makita nga na budlayan ang isa ginabuligan so parehas sini nga as a student leader nga mag travel sometimes gina-check nila ko kung nahimo mo na imo nga task, kag kung naka ano nako sang deadlines ko man nga naka-fill in nga and also mga small things gid sir ngaa mga gaps ko man kis.a nga... (p. 4).

If others need help, there is no second thought of helping them. They check on the other officers from time to time. We guide each other in terms of the tasks that need to be accomplished. Here, you can feel that the other officers care about your progress. From my experience, I really felt that they are trying to push me to do what I can do to accomplish the task assigned to me. It's very empowering for me (p. 4).

Instant Act of Sharing with the Work to Accomplish (Volunteerism at its finest)

They also show presence by making themselves available when their colleagues need some help from them. For instance, they ask colleagues what can be done to help on the tasks. They voluntarily offer help when felt that a colleague is having a hard time completing the



assignment. They ask how colleagues feel about doing or performing a task. The second theme that emerges in describing student leaders' experience of collegiality in the organizational work in a Marist School is their instinctive actions to willingly share with the work or tasks. The act of helping is a common thing among people in any context. However, the word 'instinctive' gives more meaning to the concept of 'helping' and/or sharing in the context of the Marist student leaders. What they were saying was that, helping and sharing with the work is very spontaneous, natural, automatic, and it becomes a habit. When they were asked to describe the experience of sharing with the work, they commonly said, it's just but part of the 'being' leaders more so of the 'being' Marist. When asked to elaborate a little more about that 'being' leader and Marist, they said, it's unexplainable. Some said, they do not know, they just love the idea that helping and extending help with co-officers becomes so natural for them without thinking of anything as returns.

Practically, they are all conscious of the fact that extending is necessary to be able to make the work done efficiently. They are all aware how each one of them affects the others. When one member is not able to fulfill his/her tasks, it will consequently affect the entire organization. As a participant observer, this is evident in their meetings, discussions, how they follow up with the other's work, asking each committee to report on the progress of their work and agree how they can collaborate with others. It can be noted from the interactions and sharing of experiences of the student officers that collegiality in the organization work is reflective of the kind of relationship and support that they share. Support is manifested through the initiative to help without being asked to give help or render service. For them, to give support is voluntarily given. One cannot give genuine support unless it is out of volunteerism. Support is manifested in terms of initiating acts to guide other officers who encounter challenges to accomplish the task assigned to them. Support is also manifested by showing understanding with the situation of a colleague who is experiencing personal issues in academics, peers, family, and relationship with others. They show willingness to assume roles in order to implement the goals of the organization.

There are also other forms of acts to share in accomplishing the tasks of the organization. They shared about the support they experienced in terms of the decision making for the organization. This usually happens during ordinary meal time, organizational meal, spontaneous moment to have conversation during free time. For them, the conversation with co-officers on organizational matters helps a lot in affirming their ideas and some decisions. That for them is sharing not only their physical strength for the work but ideas that are helpful for the organization.



As observed by them, the group usually is open for deliberation of issues and concerns. They like the idea that they discuss and negotiate. As experienced by the participants, they understand that discussion is always part of the process of making discussions and they're open to negotiate. When asked why they believe it that way, their common response was that because it is one thing that has also been instilled in them by the school. To have dialogue is part of being 'belong' and that everyone is given value. As mentioned by one officer, it has always been instilled in them the beauty of openness and negotiation to uphold the value of respect to differences.

Kis-a sa kung mga edits nga dali lang siya himoon daw agawon pa parehas sini ni ... Agawon nya pa sa akon ang himoon basta mahimo ko lang ang mga major part nga pag-edit pero ng mga content na eh build up amo ina na makita ko gid ang support nga from her or from sa iban man nga mga ka upod ko... (p. 4).

Others are willing to share with me the work that I do, especially the minor task because they know that I have to do the major ones (p. 4).

Siguro ang support for me is volunteerism na sya, may ara sang volunteerism nga word kanang nga connect sa support kay hindi ka maka give, or hindi ka maka accept sang support kung hindi mo sya volunteer gina hatag sa mga tao... (p. 1).

Support is volunteerism. You cannot give support if you do not volunteer (p. 1).

INSIGHTS AND IMPLICATIONS

The study provides a holistic portrait of the student leaders of a Marist school on how they manifest collegial-interaction in the organizational work and how school core values are expressed on their interactions. It is affirming that student leaders in this university manifest collegiality in a unique and positive way by not only manifesting it on work-level relationship but instead it develops into a more personalized level of relating and connecting with each other. This affirms the initiatives and efforts of the school on instilling the core values to the students especially to the student leaders who are considered to be models of the values. With this result, it means that the school may continue to implement its good practices that nurture the relationship of the student leaders in the organization as they also contribute to their productivity and growth. As reflected in the themes, they feel good, they are happy, and



they feel motivated and positive because of the comforting presence and affective connections that they have with their co-officers whom they considered friends and family in school. Though, the school may also consider engaging more students into other dynamics that may also strengthen their expressions of other core values not only limiting family spirit, presence and love for work but to manifest as well other values while working in the organizations.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Acknowledging the valuable support of Notre Dame of Marbel University in the completion of this research study.

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MATURING INTO LEADERSHIP ROLE: AUTOETHNOGRAPHY OF YOUNG SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS

WILTER C. FRIALES¹, LEANN JESTER D. ROSALI²
Notre Dame of Marbel University, Philippines^{1,2}
wcfriales@ndmu.edu.ph¹

ABSTRACT

Growth in leading is the central phenomenon in this research study. In context, this is about the growing in leading experiences of newly-appointed, beginners, novices, neophytes or new administrators who happen to be young in terms of age. In this autoethnographic research study, we explored how we, as researcher-participants experienced growth in leading as young school administrators in a Marist school in the Philippines. We narrate the various dimensions of our experiences growing in school leadership including our becoming school administrators, experiences of growth and significant insights from our encounters with people with whom we work and situations we have dealt with. Through our self-revealing narratives which may not always be flattering, readers may be able to relate to the subject and develop appreciation on the journey we have taken that is reflection. The themes revealed that growth in leading can be a rich yet complex journey of self-discovery, interconnectedness, and appreciating enabling encounters of growth.

Keywords: Growth in leading, Young Administrator, Autoethnography

INTRODUCTION

“Our capacity to grow determines our capacity to lead. It is simple. But simple does not mean easy. The power is in the application”- Blanchard and Miller (2012).

Growth is an important aspect of everyone’s life. It is something inevitable. It happens to people at any point in their lives. We grow physically, mentally, emotionally, spiritually, socially and the other dimensions of our lives. To grow as a person is important as it helps one make better decisions and reach potential. When we are happy with who we are, it is easier to feel content with where we are in present life and to recognize what is truly important to us. By making progress towards goals that matter to us and devoting time to pursuing them, we create a path for our future that leads us towards greater success. In an article by Sobande (2023), he pointed out that the best way to measure developmental progress is to watch for signs of maturity.



As an educational leader, we have noted many likely signs of change in our being particularly when it comes to our behavior. It can be noted that maturity can be measured by developing some traits. A mature leader doesn't have to be an expert in every functional area; he is willing to admit that others know more than he does and is willing to learn from them (Sobande, 2023).

This autoethnographic research is an attempt to explore an emerging tradition in research which gives value and highlights the emic experiences of the researchers themselves on finding meaning on their own experiences in order to shed light on the phenomenon of interest. Growth in leading is the central phenomenon in this research study. In context, this is about the growing in leading experiences of newly-appointed, beginners, novice, neophytes or new administrators who happen to be young in terms of age. If we look at the profile of the school administrators of many academic institutions in the Philippines today, it is observed that the majority are young at age. Others may have perceived them as inexperienced but they qualify for the position because of academic and degree qualifications. What is the big deal with being young and being a school leader at a young age? Age may not really matter when it comes to leadership. Any individual regardless of age may lead an organization for as long as they possess the necessary characteristics and qualifications to be called school leaders. Being young (by age) as school leader or administrator posits challenges in various dimensions such as judgment and perspectives. Wisdom may be questioned, making it difficult for them to build relationships with others. Gaining the trust and respect of the members may not be easy. Young administrators may have to strive to manage generational differences, adapting communication styles according to the needs of different people.

The path to increase influence, impact and effectiveness in leadership is personal growth. Yes, there's certainly more to leadership than growth, but we are all convinced that growth is the core of what creates and sustains great leaders. Growth is the leaders' fountain of youth (Blanchard & Miller, 2012).

The transition from being a classroom teacher to leading an office can be a difficult one as accountability measures demand increasingly more from school leaders (Brown, 2006 cited by Beam et al., 2016). Young school leaders have no other choice but to thrive and learn the rope in school leadership and such a learning process has to commence somewhere, somehow and somewhat. The premise why this study was conceptualized stemmed from the question "How did we learn to be administrators?", "How did we grow in school leadership?" My co-author and I in this research study are of the same age bracket and both had experience of holding administrative positions at relatively young age for an administrator. In one of our several sharing of experiences, we try to recollect every encounter of our becoming and being



administrators along with other individuals whom we have worked and journeyed with since the moment we have started until the present. We look into our personal journey of reflection, listening to our voices, recollecting the humble years when we had to discover so many things about dealing with various administrative concerns and dealing with people around us. Relative to this, I cannot help but to relate to the Marist document 'Marist Voices', the part where it described how living authority as a service of leadership brings with it moments of great joy and satisfaction and at the same time, difficult situations that can easily impact a leader like us. It highlights that the journey of interiority and spirituality is important for a leader to identify what he or she perceives in terms of feelings and emotions, to welcome it within the silence, without judgment, processing and seeking to integrate it. There are times that we leaders can feel that something is directed towards us personally, but actually it is more on the roles we play. As part of the journey to interiority, it is worthwhile having someone who helps to re-examine what is happening. In this way, we seek not to walk alone but to enlist the support of others for our continued growth in leading (Barba, 2022).

In this autoethnographic research study, we explored how we, as researcher participants experienced growth in leading as young school administrators in a Marist school in the Philippines. In this study, I placed myself in the position as one of the two participants with Leann as the second one that made this work an autoethnographic approach or self-ethnography. Thus, you will hear two different voices. The first one is my voice who narrates in the first person perspective restorying tidbits of my personal journey and encounters of growth in leadership having been an administrator of my present school where I started becoming an administrator at 23. The second voice is my study partner's voice, Lean. Lean's narratives are presented in direct statements where readers can directly hear her sharing her own narratives on growth in leading, being one among the youngest principles of the basic education in the region. Guided by Chang's 'chronicling the past strategy' through personal memory in the form of self-reflection, we aim to examine the various dimensions of our experiences growing in school leadership including our becoming as school administrators, experiences of growth and significant insights from our encounters with people with whom we work and situations we have dealt with.

RELATED STUDIES AND LITERATURE

In this study, we have identified essential constructs where we believe the research findings would be of relevance. In school leadership or management, we consider transition, succession and growth, development and mentoring, and other challenges.



AGING AND LEADERSHIP

Population aging is a global phenomenon that will continue to affect all regions of the world. By 2050, there will be the same number of old as young in the world, with 2 billion people aged 60 or over and another 2 billion under age 15, each group accounting for 21% of the world's population (Harper, 2014). One implication of an aging world in the context of leadership is that positions are mostly held by older people (Johnston et al., 2021). According to psychology, older leaders have some distinctive qualities to lead as compared to the younger ones as mentioned in the article of Johnston et al., (2021). Furthermore, it was mentioned in the same literature review that the age of a leader or subordinate can significantly impact how they view and interact with one another. These suggest associations between age and leadership, with older leaders taken as a source of inspiration by the teams. However, research has also shown that there may be important drawbacks to having older individuals leading team members who are significantly younger than them. Wasira (2012) as mentioned by Johnston et al., (2021), reported that age dissimilarity may lead to decreased job satisfaction through poor communication channels between older leaders and younger followers. In an attempt to reconcile these contradictory perspectives, Harrison et al., (2002) discussed that while age differences between leaders and their followers has some natural frictions at the beginning of the relationship, this strain is reduced over time, and often eliminated as they come to know and understand one another. While it is notable that the reviews were explaining that being old or being young may have some positive and negative association to effective leadership, this study doesn't dwell on comparing being old and being young as leaders. Maturity in this context is about aging too as age goes with maturity. Maturity in age has to do with leadership. In today's context the emergence of young leaders holding significant positions in the organizations has become quite apparent.

Leadership transition is viewed as an event in the life of an institution that is greater than the choice of its next leader' (Martin & Samels, 2004). Without careful planning, the transition may adversely affect the organization, put unnecessary financial strain on the organization and increase demands on existing personnel (Kane and Barbaro, 2016; Potts, 2016; Rivera-McCutchen, 2014 as cited by Ritchi (2019). If the transition period is well-organized and well-managed, then the community can stay united and vibrant throughout the process. Transition can be a time for reflection and assessment that allows for growth and preparation for new leadership. Martin and Samels (2004) advised that as an educational institution 'manages the uncertainties of its leadership transition more effectively, it becomes an institution more intentional in its systems, administration, and mission'. Weary (2004) wrote that transition offers the board an opportunity to strengthen the entire organization. He stressed the importance of



setting up a structure during the transition period that names a person of authority so that all communication goes through that person until the new principal is named.

Leadership succession and the associated changes that new leaders make, can have profound impacts on organizations. There has been limited research examining succession from the point of view of employees and considers how their interpretations of organizational identity and proposed change shape their responses to leadership transitions (Balsler & Carmin, 2009). Leader succession affects school performance. Organizational socialization provides evidence that leaders are shaped in their organizations. Socialization illuminates processes through which the outcomes of succession can be improved by successors and their superiors (Hart, 1991).

Leader Growth Model. Regardless of an individual's stage of development, the Leader Growth Model depicts how leader growth can be fostered. This model is defined as the deliberate, guided, and structured thinking about choices that allows individuals to make sense of their experience. Individual development experiences strengthen an individual's knowledge, strength, and abilities (KSAs) in ways that increase the leader's capabilities and expertise. These refer to tasks that demonstrate how the individual develops competence and performs at higher levels in the tasks. However, individual development is only one dimension of developing leaders of character. While individual development focuses on building leader skills in individuals, leadership development focuses on building competence for the act of leading by requiring leaders to practice leading others. The act of leadership occurs in a social and cultural context that impacts how they engage with each other to reach a common goal. This requires leaders to engage with followers. Thus, to develop leadership requires practice in following and practice in leading.

Learning to Lead: A Pedagogy of Practice. Leadership can be taught and learned through practice. Leadership is a learned experience combining the heart, heads and heart that is similar to the West Point formula- 'Being', 'Knowing' and 'Doing'. The West point formulation describes the development of values that shape who one wants to be, the concept that enables individuals to understand where they want to go and the necessary skills needed to get there (Ganz & Lin, 2011). Following the Key Concepts of Development and Learning of the West point Leader Development System WPLDS, it is informed by three interdependent areas of research namely individual leadership development, adult learning, and adult development. Individual leadership development focuses on building leader skills (human capital), whereas leadership development focuses more on building competence in social and cultural contexts (social capital). Second is Adult Learning. Learning is built upon prior experience and maturation. Further, adult learning involves both informational learning, or



what one knows, and transformative learning, or how one thinks. Adult learning happens through interaction and is not solely cognitive. Relatedly, WPLDS integrates several schools of thought from the field of adult learning: experiential, self-directed, and transformative learning. Third is Adult Development where it incorporates the most relevant theories and practices of adult development. Applying these theories helps in the understanding of individuals developmental needs, provide appropriate challenges and support that promote growth and measure progression.

There are core practices identified in the paper of Ganz and Lin (2011) that interact with each other in the exercise of leadership. These practices include Building relationships committed to a shared purpose, translating values into sources of motivation through narratives, turning resources into a capacity to achieve purpose by strategizing, mobilizing and deploying resources as clear, measurable, visible actions and structuring authority so as to facilitate the effective distribution of leadership. These practices are either experientially learned by leaders or can also be through coaching or mentoring. Coaching and mentoring are essential in terms of enabling leaders to deal with uncertainty. Learning to mentor or to coach is vital and central to learning to lead (Omrod, 2008, cited by Ganz & Lin, 2004).

Similarly, Developmental Systems Theory provides evidence that developmental outcomes depend on interactions between an individual, the context, and how they relate to one another. Research shows that individuals develop character when they have high-character role models, and organizations develop character when their leaders set and enforce high standards. What this means for school leaders is that a significant opportunity exists to facilitate character growth over an individual's career through targeted educational practices and integrated policies and programs that comprise a culture of character growth.

Mentoring Dimension. Mentoring is a developmental relationship. Developmental relationships are close connections through which young people discover who they are, cultivate abilities to shape their own lives, and learn to engage with and contribute to the world around them (Search Institute, 2017). Mentor-mentee relationship interactions require a longer period of time to flourish than other developmental relationships. In essence, although mentoring relationships involve mentoring episodes, individuals can engage in mentoring episodes without being in mentoring relationships. The concepts of mentoring episodes capture the dynamic and fluid nature of relationships (Boyatzis, 2007). From this perspective, it can be noted that some professional roles like school leaders in the school setting are more suitable to grow into mentoring relationships.

Challenges: To identify more specific challenges faced by novice school leaders, various research studies have been reviewed by the researchers. Barnett et al. (2012)



noted that the most commonly named challenges were workload and task management, conflicts with adults and students, and curriculum and instruction issues. Hertting's (2008) study resulted in a quite different list of demanding issues- diversity, reform initiatives, accountability measures, scarce resources, and inadequate support from supervisors. Tredway (2003) found student discipline to be the primary challenge for new administrators. A Turkish study (Sincar, 2013) identified major challenges of new school heads as bureaucracy, insufficient resources, resistance to innovation, lack of in-service training, and issues related to student poverty. A similar study conducted in Namibia (Mushaandja, 2013) mentioned chronic stress, overloaded schedule, simultaneous assimilation both to a new school environment and to a new leadership position, adjustment from teachers being peers to being subordinates, and the sense of isolation from supervisors. The challenges current novice administrators face may be quite different from those faced by their predecessors who may have been novices several years or decades prior. Understanding challenges during school leaders' induction phase may serve to inform the structure and curriculum of school leader preparation programs (Beam, 2016). Challenges faced by new school leaders are not just task oriented. Northfield (2013) describes how new leaders must sometimes overcome leadership perceptions established by the previous administration. A new school leader might have to navigate the challenges of establishing credibility among individuals or groups that have obtained formal or informal power within the school. These sometimes negative perceptions of administration can add to the challenges faced by novice leaders. After combining similar terms, the following list of challenges was identified as Paperworks; Management and supervision of all special services; parent group and individual meetings, phone calls, electronic and paper communication, parent support organizations, after school parent activities, and conflict resolution; Day-to-day interaction with teachers, including classroom observations, formal evaluations, teacher meetings, e-mail and paper communication, professional development, and general supervision; proactive and reactive measures regarding student conduct, behavior management, teacher classroom support, assignment of consequences, and communication with parents and students; and Curriculum and instruction such scheduling, course management, textbook and material management, data analysis, and testing. These tasks and more may not always be particular because one is a young administrator or not but, because we are looking into the overwhelming workload of a school administrator in general. To fulfill all the tasks, you would probably agree that it doesn't only take to have the skill and knowledge. Some functions would have to necessitate a great deal of experience and wisdom in order to provide a high level of value judgment.



WHY AUTOETHNOGRAPHY

Autoethnography or personal ethnography is a qualitative research form, an approach to research and writing that aims to describe and systematically analyze (graphō in Ancient Greek, 'writing') personal experience (autós in Ancient Greek, 'self') to understand cultural experience (éthnos in Ancient Greek, 'nation' or 'culture'). Autoethnography fits into the tradition of confessional tales in ethnography in which the researcher, who is repositioned as an object of inquiry, writes detail-rich stories from an emotional perspective to depict a particular socio-cultural setting in terms of personal awareness and experience. Autoethnography consists of well-crafted writing that can be respected by critics of literature and social scientists alike and must be emotionally engaging as well as critically self-reflexive of one's sociopolitical interactivity. Bad autoethnography can be criticized for embodying the worst excesses of post-modernism, as the author creates a too self-indulgent, narcissistic, and individualized narrative. Good autoethnography shares voices that might not have been heard, and insights that might have been too subtle to elicit.

DOING AUTOETHNOGRAPHY

Using tenets of autobiography and ethnography, auto ethnographers use hindsight to retrospectively and selectively write about past experiences (i.e., autobiography) that stem from studying (or being part of) a particular culture (i.e., ethnography), and/or possessing a particular cultural identity. Social science publishing conventions require autoethnography to analyze these experiences or epiphanies (i.e., remembered moments that have significantly impacted a person's life) using theoretical or methodological tools, and research literature. Autoethnography produces aesthetic and evocative thick descriptions of personal and interpersonal experience by identifying patterns of cultural experience based on field notes, interviews and/or artifacts, thus making characteristics of a culture familiar for insiders (i.e., cultural members) and outsiders (i.e., cultural strangers). Auto Ethnographers use storytelling, showing and telling, and alterations of authorial voice to produce accessible texts that describe these patterns, with the aim to reach a more diverse mass audience than the traditional research readership. Usually written in first person, autoethnographies can sometimes be expressed as a conversation between the author and the reader with the aim to offer lessons for further dialogue.

THEORETICAL LENS

Growth is associated with changes. Mostly, these changes are positive and/or desirable changes. Bridges' Model highlights three stages of transition that people go through when they are faced with change. These are: Ending, Losing, and Letting Go. Transition starts



with an ending. This is paradoxical but true. This first phase of transition begins when people identify what they are losing and learn how to manage these losses. They determine what is over and being left behind, and what they will keep. These may include relationships, processes, team members or locations. Secondly, The Neutral Zone. The second step of transition comes after letting go: the neutral zone. People go through an in-between time when the old is gone but the new is not fully operational. It is when the critical psychological realignments and repatterning take place. It is the very core of the transition process. This is the time between the old reality and sense of identity and the new one. People are creating new processes and learning what their new roles will be. They are in flux and may feel confusion and distress. The neutral zone is the seedbed for new beginnings. Thirdly, The New Beginning. Beginnings involve new understandings, values and attitudes. Beginnings are marked by a release of energy in a new direction – they are an expression of a fresh identity. Well-managed transitions allow people to establish new roles with an understanding of their purpose, the part they play, and how to contribute and participate most effectively. As a result, they feel reoriented and renewed. Bridges says that people will go through each stage at their own pace. For example, those who are comfortable with the change will likely move ahead to stage three quickly, while others will linger at stages one or two. This framework is being used because the flow of transition is from being a classroom novice into being who have seen significant growth in their leadership. In the study, this theory is essential to draw the data and information from the participants' growth viz, transition experience.

RESEARCH PROBLEM

In this autoethnographic research study, we explored how we, as researcher-participants experienced growth in leading as young school administrators in a Marist school in the Philippines. We narrate the various dimensions of our experiences growing in school leadership including our becoming school administrators, experiences of growth and significant insights from our encounters with people with whom we work and situations we have dealt with.

METHODS

In this study, the researchers utilized a collaborative autoethnographic approach in exploring the experience of growth in leading as young school administrators. The key distinction in Collaborative Autoethnography is that the narrative co-mingles two or more autoethnographies which may include letter-writing correspondence, co-interviews, and parallel responses to common themes (Chang, 2021). In our study, we utilized co-interviews and parallel responses to common themes.



Data was gathered through constant and series of conversations between us guided by predetermined questions but allowed open sharing of narratives through personal memory in the form of self-reflections. These questions draw our narratives on how did we become school administrators; how did we experience the first few years (1 to 3 years) being young administrators; how did we experience learning the things we were supposed to learn; how did we experience that growth; how could we say that we have grown as administrators; how did we experience the challenges; and what do these challenges mean on my being administrator. Using Chang's "chronicling the past strategy", we prepared a data chart, which included information regarding the data source, its mode, time, venue and stories gleaned. This data chart is a self-generated document which facilitates us through the selection process of our personal memories in an organized way while writing the narratives. The next phase is the analytical phase in which we tried to establish a third narrative—one that created an amalgam of our stories and the context.

RESULTS

Phase 1: The experience of beginning in the new leadership role

Will is inherent and what enhances the will to accept the role is the explicit expression of trust

Leadership opportunities often arise unexpectedly, but they are essentially born out of necessity, for leadership is nothing else but a call to serve. This is definitely the experience of the researcher-participant, who found herself thrust into a role as a school administrator out of sheer need. She still recalls the moment she was summoned to meet with the university president. Unaware of the purpose behind the meeting, she could only speculate that it is related to the forthcoming implementation of the Senior High School curriculum under the K to 12 Basic Education Program. Having served as a classroom teacher in the Junior High School department for a few years, she presumed her involvement in the curriculum implementation would extend to its completion to the Senior High School level. Thus, the possibility of being reassigned to another department as a classroom teacher crossed her mind. However, the invitation proved to be more than a mere reassignment; it presented a challenge to depart from the comfort of the classroom and assume the role of a school administrator for a new department.

The prospect of reassignment to the SHS department was exciting for me, as I viewed it as a valuable opportunity to both contribute meaningfully to the school and grow professionally. But the new post being offered filled



me with apprehension. I felt uncertain and overwhelmed given my lack of prior school leadership experience, and this made me somewhat anxious.

The acceptance of the offer was not automatic. She requested the president to give her a day to reflect upon the offered position. Numerous thoughts flooded her mind upon receiving the offer. While grateful for being considered a candidate for the post, she could not ignore the knowledge that many had declined the offer due to the weight of the responsibility, including those senior to her in the workplace. However, her intuition tells her that this was an opportunity she cannot afford to let slip by, as she realizes that she has always been drawn to leadership. Throughout her academic years as a student, she had consistently assumed leadership responsibilities, a role she strongly identifies with. Moreover, she had a long-term plan of pursuing leadership roles at work. Yet, she had not anticipated that this future would arrive so soon, with such a magnitude of responsibility—being the coordinator of a newly established department devoid of shape or clear structure.

Two reasons made her solidify her decision to accept the leadership role. Firstly, the coming educational reform was a significant one. Becoming part of such a monumental change was something that she wanted, and assuming an administrative role meant she could make a substantial contribution. Secondly, the trust extended by the university president and the entire administration encouraged her. She wanted to value the trust and honor those who bestowed it upon her. Despite the doubts that made her ask questions like “Am I ready?” or “Do I have what it takes to execute this responsibility?”, she accepted the offer to become a school administrator even if she lacked experience or prior training.

The decision was not an easy one, but my inherent desire to be involved and contribute ultimately overcame my apprehension. The expressed trust and confidence from the administration significantly bolstered my personal expectancy value, providing the encouragement I needed to embrace the new opportunity.

Upon expressing her readiness to assume the role, the researcher-participant vividly remembers the university president’s visible relief. He expressed that he could finally find respite, knowing that the responsibility of leading the new department was in capable hands. Such an overwhelming display of trust left a lasting impression on the participant-researcher. And so, for the participant-researcher, though the call to serve is rooted in a need, it requires an open and welcoming trust to respond to such an invitation – trust in oneself and trust of the people.



On my end, I was hired by the university immediately as the activity coordinator of the basic education department. During the interview with the university president, I was informed to take over the position of a Marist Brother who was leaving for another assignment abroad. It was not a question whether I wanted the post or not. It was information that my entry to the university was through that office which I am going to handle. At first, I was quite hesitant and anxious about accepting the opportunity because I am new to the department and I am quite not familiar with the people and the school culture. To my mind, someone from among the current faculty members back then should have been given the opportunity to take the administrative post.

The president assured me that no one from among them was interested and was willing to accept the job. The next question I asked the president was ‘Why me?’. He assured me by affirming “*Why not? You are not new to this university. You were our student leader, you can lead. I trust you can perform the work*”. To me, that was reassuring me that he will support me the way he had trusted me from the beginning. It’s my job to keep that trust. And so I accepted it and I took over the office which had been handled by Marist Brothers for a long time.

I served the basic education department as the student activity coordinator for four academic years only. Towards the end of the second year of my supposed second term in the office as coordinator, I was called again by the president to take over an office in the college department. Similar to what he told me during my entry to the university, he asked me if I can handle the office of student affairs and development in the college department as the current administrator at that time was leaving the post. Again, it was a deciding moment for me to accept or not. I knew it back then. There was a need for some to take that position. It was out of necessity. But the question to my mind Why me again to fill in the necessity was somehow encouraging yet challenging too.

The college department has a new environment. It means new and bigger responsibilities, new people to work with, new culture and new challenges. Honestly, it has always been my intention to be a faculty member of the college department. I have always wanted to teach at the tertiary level. In fact, that was initially my plan and what I have specified as my career choice in my application to the university. It was fate that brought me to IBED. If I may recall how I felt when the president started to talk about expectations from the student programs the moment I took over, I felt the pressure and the burden to prove the worth of considering me for the office. What I told myself was the work was just basically the same as what I do in basic education. The challenge was more of the level of the students to deal with and the scope of the work can be much wider. I knew in myself that the new position can be more challenging but I recognize that there’s much more to learn from that. The support of



the president and other administrators are vital on my decision to accept it. I was convinced by the university president that I can do the job again in the college department as the director of the student affairs and development.

Trust as the driving force to perform the roles

I was immediately assigned as administrator on my entry in the basic education department. Everything was new to me. New people and new administrators to deal with. I'm all aware of that kind of experience when transitioning to a new environment. It was challenging at first, but I knew in myself that I could handle it and indeed, I survived the first few months. How did I survive the first few months? Incidentally, the school head was newly transferred to the department too. Though, it was not his first administrative function in the department. I was new and I was just in my early twenty when I took over the position. When it comes to leadership, I can only rely on the richness of my experiences as a student leader way back in college. Technically, it was my first administrative role in a new environment.

In one of the assemblies with the university president, I was asked by him to stand up in the middle of the staff and properly introduce me to them. It was because again I am new and he had to justify his decision of designating me as administrator on my probationary period. As I recall what he said during the assembly "*I assigned him to be in the position as Activity Coordinator because of his good track record and rich background as a student leader when he was in college. I trust he can perform the job and let us support him*".

As I recall that moment, the expression of trust in the president was my important tool for why I need to perform my job well and why I have to deliver what is expected from me because of his trust in my capacity.

Similar explicit expressions of trust were a source of confidence for the other researcher-participant, crucial in her embracing her leadership role.

The first few months on the job were incredibly challenging for me. In retrospect, I realize that my initial struggles were due to a narrow focus on the managerial aspects of the role, rather than the leadership dimension. I was engrossed in the day-to-day operations but failed to prioritize building relationships with my colleagues. This oversight caused me significant difficulties. Working predominantly with senior teachers, my lack of understanding of our school culture, compounded by my being young and being inexperienced as an administrator, hindered my



ability to perform effectively and make confident decisions. Reflecting on those experiences, I suspect that Br. Willy, the university president, recognized my struggles. His actions during that period were clearly aimed at supporting me in my role. I recall a particular instance when he asked me to convene a meeting with all the teachers. As the meeting was about to start, he instructed me to preside over it. I was taken aback, having assumed he would lead the meeting himself. Nonetheless, I took on the task, with Br. Willy observing from the sidelines. His presence was intimidating, yet it facilitated a smooth meeting. The attendees were likely influenced by his presence, leading to their agreement with my proposals and met almost no resistance. It dawned on me that this was Br. Willy's way of demonstrating his support for me, signaling to the school community that I had his trust. From that moment, my confidence in my work and decision-making grew. This experience marked a turning point in my development as a school leader, and it was instrumental in fostering my growth in the role.

Insights:

From these encounters, it can be noted that among the deciding factors for one to accept leadership position and becoming administrator in school is the trust explicitly expressed by the head of the school, the personal will to prove that worth of the trust and the humility to recognize that there can be more things to learn along the way- humility to recognize that we have the capability to do.

An important observation shared by both researchers is the necessity of a realistic appraisal of one's limitations and strengths prior to making any decision. To question is to engage in self-examination, which requires both courage and humility. It involves recognizing one's weaknesses and embracing the fortitude to proceed despite them.

Phase 2: Enabling encounters on growth

There was enthusiasm yet feeling of being naïve at the start

The scope of the work started to become bigger and broader. The mind needs to learn how to think bigger and broader too. When I became the director, it took time for me to digest that I am already leading an office. During the first few months, I kept questioning myself, 'Am I ready?', 'Am I fit for the job?', 'Will I be able to handle the pressure and expectations?', and many other uncertainties. When I think of these questions, I understand that these are usual questions of anyone being given with new responsibilities in any organization. However, the



element of being young when I was assigned by the directorship role play an important role on why in the first place I have accepted the position, and why I have also become naive after I have accepted it.

As a young administrator, it is commonly natural to become too ideal. Ideal in the sense that, we always think of how we can make a difference in every situation and how we can possibly improve the way things are. When I was assigned to become the director for student affairs of the college department, I was too excited for the new work environment, *too enthusiastic* to inject changes in the process and *too eager* to take the office. Ever since I was a college student, I already had such a fascination with becoming the director for student affairs due to the nature of the work in the office.

But to my surprise, when I already started taking the responsibility in the office as the new head, I suddenly felt that feeling of not being sufficient for the job for reasons I cannot explain. There are mixed feelings of *'not-knowing-what-to-do'* at first, the desire to accomplish the tasks but *not knowing what tasks are to be accomplished*. I suddenly realized that to accomplish a task depends on many factors that are beyond one's control and one doesn't have the full control of everything, and it taught me patience. The first few months of my being a director in the office certainly was *groping* not because I do not know the job, but the idea that I should have to do the job differently but not knowing how.

The feeling of not knowing what to do at times was also experienced by my co-participant when she started her post. Despite her lack of experience, the zeal she felt when she began her work as an administrator made her thrive in her day-to-day responsibilities.

I started with so much enthusiasm and dreams for the SHS department, and that passion still drives me today. However, I now approach my aspirations for the department with more realism. Looking back, I realize that as a newly appointed school administrator, I often focused solely on the positives without realistically assessing the department's limitations and my own. I had this urge to do things the way I saw fit, not necessarily how they are usually done. This occasionally led to moments of hesitation, confusion and even frustration. At times, I struggle with knowing how to proceed with my work and how to work with people. I frequently feel overwhelmed, and it seems I'm not making significant progress. Reflecting on it now, I see that my initial naivety contributed to these challenges.



Learning, relearning and unlearning with people and circumstances

Pressure is normally felt by anyone who is new to any particular leadership position. Incidentally, the school principal of the department where I have joined was also newly-appointed. Basically, we were both new in the department and both administrators.

I knew he was a bit worried about me aside from being a new administrator, I was also new in the department since I actually came from a different school who just came as an administrator right away. For many, they thought of it as a privilege. However, it was already made clear in the previous sharing that it was just by chance since no one had been interested to accept the position. While he was a bit worried about my being new for the job, I felt the support and the intention to guide me with my work. I remember his words “Wilter, medyo worried ako kay parehas baya kita nga bag-o. Tun-i gid ang imo trabaho dira sa office ha. Mag-refer ka gid kung may ara ka gusto indi bal-an”. My other interpretation of what the principal said was for me to be open and listen to others. That I actually did. I report everything I planned to propose, I report every progress, I refer when I am not certain on what to do, I ask when there’s something I would like to clarify. I find that process so necessary until I master the routines of my work. To me, it was the open conversation with the other administrators that I not only learned about the work, but also with open conversations that I was able to gain their trust and was able to connect with them easily. The work relationship had been smooth. In conversation, I did not just learn administrative work, but I also got to appreciate my value when being affirmed with the good work and get to measure my patience and optimism when the work is criticized.

Experience proved to be the most impactful teacher for her as she navigated her new role. Her transfer to the new department mere weeks before the opening of the school year left her with scant resources, relying primarily on a bound document utilized for the permit application process to understand the nature of the senior high school. Though the Department of Education has primers and DepEd Orders made available on its website, the complete understanding of the entire task came to her in a much later time. Surviving those initial weeks was largely attributed to the guidance of her superiors, keen observation of university procedures, and willingness to inquire and request for assistance.

When I started my job, I had to seek a lot of help from my superiors. I was a frequent visitor to the Office of the Executive Vice President. Lacking confidence in my abilities, I habitually consulted our EVP even for the most trivial things, but mostly if problems arise. I was worried that my reliance on his counsel might have become burdensome, as his response



to me was consistently “Unsa man imong suggestion?” (“What is your suggestion?”). This question challenged me to formulate solutions to the issues I present to him. His typical inquiry prompted me to proffer answers or suggestions alongside my concerns. In hindsight, I gradually recognized this as his method of nurturing my capacity for decisive leadership. Fortunately, my initial apprehension and self-doubt did not impede my receptivity to his guidance. I am glad I was open to learning, acknowledging that the recurrent solicitation of my input was instrumental in shaping my confidence as a leader.

Another significant source of learning emerged from my interactions with the Grant-In-Aid (GIA) student assigned to assist me in the office. Having previously served under another administrator, the student assistant had an experience in office management, better than my limited knowledge. It was through her guidance that I acquired practical knowledge of day-to-day administrative tasks, ranging from budget and supplies requisitions to procurement procedures, and transportation arrangements.

Engage in dialogue and conversation

It has become part of my consciousness that every time I propose an activity or program under my office, I talk with other administrators, ask opinions from the senior faculty or even proceed directly to the principal’s office. I truly appreciate the openness of everyone to conversations and listening.

I realized back then, that making decisions can be smooth when you know how to dialogue. During my first year as the student activity coordinator, I looked into the practices on the conduct of student activities and the various programs that are already in place. Some of them are considered to be templated activities. Every year, it has been repetitively done in exact the same patterns or methods. Because I’m very much aware of how these practices and programs have become so familiar with the community including the personnel, I knew I have to be careful on how to deal with the changes that I wanted to introduce in the department as it might not be acceptable for them or I may not be able to get their support.

Once, we needed to decide whether the groupings of the students for the intramurals would be either by team color as per practice or by year level which has been the old practice before the by color scheme. So, basically some of them wanted it back that way. It was a long discussion before we made the decisions. The faculty are divided between two options.



Each option with valid and acceptable contentions. Being in the middle, I have to ensure to facilitate the discussion well although, to me, my color scheme has more advantages. So, it was basically my own bias on the given options. While I lay down both options for the faculty to discuss, it was also quite a challenge for me to advance what I believe was more advantageous. It was a program under my supervision, so I thought I should also see it in a wider perspective and that I also need to have a stand on it. It went through a long discussion among the faculty and I thought of how I could be able to influence the others. I tried to talk to them outside the meeting and laid down my contentions. The informal conversations with them beyond formal meeting gradually helped to make the other faculty finally said to give it a chance with certain conditions and modification in the implementations. That's when I really appreciate the wonder of conversations for common understanding. From my experience as administrator, especially when I was just starting to lead, there's no complex issues in the school which cannot be resolved when everyone engages in a conversation. And since it's a two way-process, one has to initiate it. As a leader, we initiate. We engage in it. It's a way of leading. Now, why do I consider it as part of my growth experience in leading? As I reflect on this experience, I realized that conversation was not just a strategy or an approach in leadership, but a vehicle for learning the complexity and dynamics of leading. When I think of it, it is through conversation that I am able to develop negotiation which requires skills. In negotiation, you need to be selective with your language, you need to be convincing, you need to be present and most importantly you must be listening. When I think of it, the moment I started engaging myself and being open to dialogue, I developed confidence, improved my thinking, pay attention by listening, thus, improved my judgment in situations.

When I took over the office of Prefect of Discipline in the university, I was a bit scared at first. I have not imagined myself doing such a role mediating conflicts between and among learners and even among parents. Many times, I have been tested. My facilitating and mediating skill has been challenged by several circumstances or cases in school. When I look back to my journey, not a single case concerning students that I have not been able to facilitate properly. I knew my legal knowledge can be limited only to school policies and procedures. Thinking of it now, I realized how important the lesson on paying attention and conversation, dialogue on facilitating any conflicts no matter how complicated the situation can be.

Engaging in dialogue and conversation also enriched her leadership experiences by enhancing her communication skills and fostering relationships. More so, it proved invaluable in helping her manage conflicts and expand her perspectives.



When I started with the post, misunderstandings were quite common. I wasn't great at expressing myself clearly, given my limitations. Although I was leading a new department, the team I work with comprised members from an established one, making me essentially a newcomer. I was working with colleagues who were mostly much more senior than I was, and some were even my former teachers. Filled with enthusiasm and idealism but also insecurities, I found myself in a perfect setup for being misunderstood. I recall an incident when some colleagues confronted me in the office about a decision that allegedly undermined their work. I was very scared, as I had never been comfortable with confrontations. Fortunately, we were able to clarify the situation, which made me appreciate the importance of conversations. Despite the discomfort, clarifying misunderstandings through conversations can be truly liberating. This encounter left a lasting impression on me and taught me a valuable lesson about humility, the importance of listening and being clear in expressing one's intentions.

Insights:

In the dynamic of interacting and learning from people and circumstances, we have realized how our listening skill has facilitated our process of learning the rope of leading. We learned to listen and we have listened without hesitations and place our trust in the expertise of these people we come across with- be it superiors or subordinates recognizing their superior familiarity with office operations or their knowledge having been there in the operations before us. Having transitioned from the classroom to an administrative role, devoid prior experiences has instilled that sense of humility within. Looking back, we could say that we are deeply appreciative of the help provided by them for us to learn, relearn and unlearn the rope of leading.

Phase 3: The experience of growth

Blending

Trust and support of the heads are not enough for one to be able to do what is expected to be delivered. One has to learn the job and learning the job was a challenge for a young administrator like me. Back then before entering the department, there was already an established culture among personnel. In some instances, this culture informs the way things are to be done. It's not necessarily a negative culture. The challenge lies in when new patterns of work are being introduced, varying reactions need to be dealt carefully. Not only because I am new to the department, but because I'm quite young at that time to actually absorb their



reactions without getting affected emotionally. To me, it was not easy to manage that but, I have learned eventually. I realized that to learn the job well in the department is to learn the culture of the people and rest follows.

And one to be able to successfully learn the culture is to be open. From my experience, I openly talk with the heads, ask if I am not certain with the decision, refer with my co-administrators, engage with the faculty members especially the old ones, consult with the advisers about existing practices. I learned the culture of the department by connecting to my colleagues.

From this experience, I was able to reflect on the importance of embracing the culture of the school and blend especially if you are new. These are basically simple initiatives like learning about the tasks as a new administrator through making connections with other administrators even outside the university; attendance to every meeting and gathering be it formal or not-so-formal, refer to some administrators for them to feel that they are relevant to your work; studying available documents and learning the steps and processes. I also came to realize that there was no formal/explicit mentoring, there was no formal orientations to how to do or even how to learn things but by just simply embracing their culture and the rest follows. For her, when she thought about the time when she first stepped into her role as a SHS Coordinator, one of the biggest challenges she faced was her lack of general awareness. She remembers assuming that since the department was new, even though it was part of an established higher education unit with existing manpower, she could shape it into a distinct basic education unit. That's where she thought she made her mistake.

I struggled because I was trying to impose a vision of a basic education system onto a department fundamentally rooted in higher education. I didn't take the time to study and respect the existing culture of the team I was working with. This oversight led to a lot of frustration for me and presented a steep learning curve in my leadership journey.

Breaking through

To lead a school is an immense job as it involves the future of the school and the growth of the students and the future of people involved or part of the school community. When I became the director of student affairs and development and prefect of discipline, there are hindering factors that made me sometimes insufficient about the job. Such a feeling of *insufficiency* rooted from the idea that I am still in my late twenties when I became the director of one department of the university. Being young has always been a variable especially when it comes to decision making.



Decision making is one among the important skills that every administrator should possess. We make decisions when confronted with circumstances. Our decisions most of the time are guided or informed by the schools manual, though there are times that our decisions are challenged by our own value judgment. That is where the skill of an administrator comes into play. During the first few years being new to administrative positions, to make decisions under my office was quite a tough and complex task for a variety of reasons. Because I started as a mid-level administrator, every decision should be approved by my direct head. There are circumstances when my view on the matters differ from how older colleagues or other administrators view them. Despite the strong contentions and being persistent, in most instances I prefer to concede not because my ideas are wrong, but maybe because these people are the ones I look forward to in terms of leadership and management and I have faith in their words. So, many times, I just obey and work even harder to prove my worth in leading specifically when it comes to decision making. That time, I felt the desire to be given authority and autonomy when it comes to decision making. I learned the techniques, I learned the process, I engaged more in conversations, I asked a lot of questions and learned from others' thoughts. In my conversation with my co-participant, our experience seems similar.

Reflecting on the beginning of my leadership journey, there was nothing more fulfilling than surviving the “storming” stage and overcoming the struggles I faced. Initially, I found it difficult to be taken seriously by more experienced colleagues. My youth felt like a disadvantage, and some members of the school community lacked support for departmental programs and questioned processes or instructions from my office. As a young leader, this made me feel bad, prompting me to impose my authority and prove myself. Now, I see that this pressure was self-imposed, and my judgment was clouded by poor emotional intelligence. My feelings of inadequacy and unworthiness drove me to overwork and strive to prove my capability. The real challenge was understanding myself, my purpose, and my leadership philosophy. I realized I had to work on myself and my insecurities so that I could better relate to the community I work with and serve.

Insights:

The researcher-participants came to realize that developing general awareness is just as important as self-awareness. Even though we had a vision for the department/office, it was crucial to ensure that our colleagues shared this vision. But we needed to understand and



acknowledge their existing culture first. It was through this struggle to blend in and respect the established ways that we experienced significant personal and professional growth. It took time, but we eventually learned to thrive by accepting and even embracing some aspects of the existing school culture. We did this by observing, trying to connect, and establishing relationships with people.

As we continue being administrators, we have reached a better understanding of ourselves as leaders and no longer feel the same pressure. We realized that we don't need to prove ourselves to others or punish ourselves for perceived shortcomings. We have learned to acknowledge our weaknesses and appreciate our strengths. We no longer measure success solely by others' approval or acceptance. Instead, we have embraced our purpose in leadership, that is to serve- this too is learning.

CONCLUSIONS

In this journey of writing this autoethnography on the growth in leading experiences, we appreciate the value of reflection on experiences in order to make sense of our being and becoming young school leaders. The use of autoethnography as an approach in this study allows us to be reflective in the process of revisiting our experiences and making sense and meaning on them. In ensuring authenticity, we have described in details of encounters the retrospective accounts, reflections-in-action, and dialogues between us, researcher-participants. Unlike the usual intention of most qualitative studies to provide a new frame of thinking and understanding of phenomenon, here, we hope that through our self-revealing narratives which may not always be flattering, readers may be able to relate to the subject and develop appreciation on the journey we have taken that is reflection. The themes revealed that growth in leading can be a rich yet complex journey of self-discovery, interconnectedness, and appreciating enabling encounters of growth.

IMPLICATIONS

With school leadership, the insights drawn from our experiences may have implications to the school's strategies on succession, training, capacitating and preparing new and future administrators. From the shared experiences, it is noted essentially that maturity results from learning from success and mistakes; in other words, learning from experience. Huge factors of maturing are the implicit and explicit expressions of mentoring, coaching, and feedback. These processes are necessary for developing leaders. Leadership preparation can be an institutional endeavor in helping prospective individuals become fully functional whenever they transition to new roles. Given that many relatively new, high-performing people are



being promoted to positions or new and higher roles; however, the challenge is that this maturity is not always fully developed. In effect, it becomes an issue on other aspects of leading--if not on technical dimensions but on the relational and emotional aspect of dealing with difficult situations.

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FACTORS AFFECTING ON BASIC KNOWLEDGE IN MATHEMATICS AND LAO LANGUAGE FOR FIRST-YEAR PRIMARY SCHOOL TEACHER TRAINEES

SOMMAY SILIVANH¹, TOULAKONE SOULIYA²
Souphanouvong University, Laos^{1,2}
s.silivanh@su.edu.la¹

ABSTRACT

The purposes of this research were to study the factors affecting on basic knowledge in Mathematics and Lao Language for First-Year Primary School Teacher Trainees at Luangprabang Teacher Training College, Year 2022-2024. The factors were divided into 3 dimensions, First of them was personal factors: learning personality and studying habits, Second of them was family factor: guardians' learning attend and Third of them was school environmental factors: interpersonal relationship between students, interpersonal between students and their teacher and teacher behavior toward students.

The 27 Samples were the First-Year Primary School Teacher Trainees at Luangprabang Teacher Training College, Year 2022 - 2023 The instrument was questionnaires of factors affecting on basic knowledge in Mathematics and Lao Language of the 1st year, Primary Section of Luangprabang Teacher Training College. The data was analyzed by the Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient and Stepwise Multiple Regression Analysis.

The results were as follows: there were significantly positive correlation among the factors affecting on basic knowledge in Mathematics and Lao Language for First-Year Primary School Teacher Trainees at Luangprabang Teacher Training College and 1 factor: Teacher behavior toward students (X7) at 0,01. There were significantly 1 factor affecting the factors affecting on basic knowledge in Mathematics and Lao Language for First-Year Primary School Teacher Trainees at Luangprabang Teacher Training College was Teacher behavior toward students (X7) at 0,01 level. The significantly predicted equation of the factors affecting on basic knowledge in Mathematics and Lao Language for First-Year Primary School Teacher Trainees at Luangprabang Teacher Training College at 0,01 level were as follow: Interm of raw scores were $y = 15,850 + 1,053x_7$, and Interm of standard scores were $Z = -0,261x_7$

Keywords: Factors affecting, Basic knowledge, Primary Section



A MODEL OF CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT THROUGH THE ENGAGEMENT OF EMPLOYERS AND ALUMNI

THAVONE PANMANIVONG¹, SANGKHOM INTHAPANYA²,
SOMCHAY MAKESAVANH³, SISOURY PHOMMASENG⁴
ANOUSITH VANNAPHON⁴
Souphanouvong University, Laos^{1,2,3,4}
thavone9@gmail.com1

ABSTRACT

A curriculum development model that actively involves employers and alumni is crucial for ensuring that educational programs remain relevant, effective, and responsive to the needs of both students and the industries they serve. This research aims to achieve multiple objectives: identifying an appropriate and effective curriculum development model that promotes engagement with employers and alumni, gathering suggestions and recommendations for updating and aligning curriculum development with employer and industry needs, and enhancing the quality and attractiveness of the curriculum and teaching methods to better prepare students for employment, positioning Souphanouvong University as a preferred learning destination. The study, employing a mixed-methods approach with questionnaires and structured interviews among 160 participants (89 males and 71 females, including employers, alumni, and faculty members), revealed various aspects of curriculum development through employer and alumni engagement. Positive impacts were noted in human and ICT skills, though areas needing improvement included problem-solving, adaptability, English language proficiency, and literacy skills, identified as crucial for addressing challenges and progressing effectively. To overcome these challenges, the study recommends a heightened focus on improving English proficiency and emphasizes the pivotal role of academic faculty in institutions, highlighting their contribution in designing courses that meet societal demands by closely collaborating with employers.

Keywords: Model, Curriculum development, Engagement, Employer, Alumni



HOPELESSNESS AND LOTTERY BUSINESS: THE 1997 ECONOMIC CRISIS AND THE RISE OF “LOTTERY ENTREPRENEUR” IN WANG SAPHUNG DISTRICT, LOEI PROVINCE, THAILAND

NOPPHON KAENGJAMPA
Chiang Mai University, Thailand
nopphon_k@cmu.ac.th

ABSTRACT

This study examines the relationship between the 1997 economic crisis and the proliferation of lottery entrepreneurs within Thai society. Employing qualitative research methods, and data were collected through in-depth interviews. Focusing on Wang Saphung District, Loei Province, an area designated as the “Lottery Capital,” this research demonstrates that lottery entrepreneurship has evolved into a widely practiced profession, establishing itself as an economic hallmark of the district and province. The study utilizes purposive and snowball sampling techniques, supplemented by document analysis, and presents the findings through historical criticism in a descriptive analytical framework. The findings reveal that the 1997 economic crisis exposed significant deficiencies in the developmental strategies implemented by the Thai government over several decades, thereby affecting the aspirations for social mobility among Thais. Consequently, some individuals began placing their hopes in gambling activities, particularly lotteries. Simultaneously, the crisis precipitated an increase in informal sector as people transitioned away from agriculture and industrial employment. Under these circumstances, selling lottery tickets emerged as a profession that addressed the economic needs and unfulfilled aspirations for social mobility of certain groups, who identified an opportunity within the state-run lottery system and redefined themselves as “lottery entrepreneurs” to meet societal demands. Constrained by the structural limitations of the state-run lottery, these “lottery entrepreneurs” ingeniously developed a “hybrid” business model that integrates both traditional and modern elements. This approach enabled them to attain stable socio-economic status while contributing to the economic transformation of their hometowns. However, their entrepreneurial nature remains dynamic, encompassing both economic and cultural dimensions. When confronted with new risks and uncertainties of the era, some entrepreneurs may persevere and achieve success, whereas others may encounter failure and financial ruin.

Keywords: The 1997 economic crisis, Hopelessness, Lottery entrepreneur, Risk, Informal sector



INFLUENCING OF POLICEMAN COMPETENCIES AFFECT TO CONFLICT MANAGEMENT

POL. COL. WATCHARAPONG PANITTUMRONG
Police Education Bureau, Thailand
visionwpg@hotmail.com

ABSTRACT

The aims of this study were 1) to study conflict management of policeman in Royal Thai Police. 2) to study policeman competencies of policeman in Royal Thai Police. 3) to study policeman competencies influencing conflict management of policeman in Royal Thai Police. The samples are policeman in Royal Thai Police. The classification questionnaire of 480 police officers the statistics used were descriptive and multiple regression statistics.

The research finding.

The compromise and avoidance method of conflict management were high. But the collaboration method was middle. In addition to the Police competencies in knowledge and attitude were high level. The skill was middle level. The policeman competencies influencing conflict management of policeman in Royal Thai Police were knowledge, skill and attitude at the statistically significant level of .05.

Keyword: Policeman Competencies, Conflict Management, Royal Thai Police



TRANSLATING HERITAGE: A COMPREHENSIVE ANALYSIS OF TRANSLATION STRATEGIES FOR EXHIBITS IN VIRTUAL NATIONAL MUSEUM BANGKOK

CHAMNAN PARA
Maharakham University, Thailand
chamnan.p@msu.ac.th

ABSTRACT

Museums globally play a pivotal role in conserving and disseminating cultural heritage. The Virtual National Museum Bangkok, which features diverse exhibits, requires tailored translation strategies to bridge cultural and linguistic divides, offering a unique perspective on cultural heritage interpretation. Translating cultural heritage poses challenges in accurately conveying context-specific meanings. This study explores various translation strategies across eight main museum areas, focusing on their effectiveness and cultural sensitivity. It employs qualitative content analysis to examine bilingual descriptions of artifacts, placing special emphasis on strategies applied to items such as statues, documents, and other artifacts to extract underlying methods. Regarding results, a plurality of strategies is observed, from dynamic approaches like cultural substitution and adaptation, enhancing accessibility for international visitors. Within these eight museum areas, various translation strategies are consistently utilized, while others, including Calque, Deverbalization, and Eclectic Translation, are distinctively applied in certain areas, reflecting specialized cultural or historical nuances. Predominantly, adaptation techniques are employed for statues in the Issaret Rachanuson Residence to effectively convey traditional Thai cultural elements, while the Siwamokkaphiman Hall frequently uses literal translation to maintain historical accuracy in descriptions of royal artifacts. The extensive use of Adaptation and Cultural substitution in areas like the Issaret Rachanuson Residence enhances comprehension of cultural nuances among English-speaking visitors, while strategic employment of Foreignization in the Mahasurasinghanat Building aims to preserve the authenticity of ancient Thai manuscripts. This virtual museum exemplifies a sophisticated mix of translation strategies that strike a balance of cultural accuracy with accessibility, enhancing visitor engagements. This current study offers insights for translators and English language educators. Translators benefit from understanding real-world applications of complex in culturally rich contexts. For English teachers, the study provides a framework for incorporating cultural competence into their curricula, enriching language learning and equipping students to appreciate global cultural diversity.

Keywords: Exhibits, Translation strategies, Thai-English translation, Virtual National Museum Bangkok



USING THAI TV SERIES AS SUPPORT TO TEACH THAI AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE AT BEGINNER LEVEL, AT INALCO (FRANCE)

NICOLAS BARCIKOWSKY
INALCO, France
nicolas.barcikowsky@inalco.fr

ABSTRACT

Thai as a Foreign Language (TFL) is becoming more and more popular as Thai soft power is growing further. The increasing number of students in Thai studies program at INALCO, France, invites us to reconsider the students' needs and to offer them an appropriate teaching material. This study will focus on BA students, and especially the design of the course "Initiation to Siamese", which is a two-semester course, addressed to beginners.

The objective of this contribution is to suggest teaching content, based on a need analysis. According to questionnaires and institutional document's review, it appears that the needs of the students are to acquire general basic communication skills, and they have interests in Thai food, tourism, but also movies and TV series. The latter can be used as teaching material, but the teacher must be careful about how to use them carefully. Some segments are relevant for beginners, and help practice lexical, syntactical, communicative and sociocultural skills, and are an interesting material for listening comprehension even at the A1 and A1/A2 levels.

Keywords: Thai as a Foreign Language (TFL), TV series, Teaching material, France, Need analysis



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