

DLSU-COLLEGE OF ST. BENILDE  
School of Deaf Education and Applied Studies

A REPORT ON SDEAS' CURRENT PRACTICES AND CONCERNS  
REGARDING CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT

A. ABOUT THE COURSES

1. Certificate Course in Bookkeeping/Accounting for the Deaf. Proposal to open a certificate course for the Deaf was sponsored by an external consultant who takes charge of a Statistical Research Center with hired Deaf employees. There is a recognized need based from exposure to Deaf population. But there was no input from industry about employment or company needs. No other consultants were tapped to discuss needs of the industry and identify and collaborate with target industry clients in order to solicit support for the program and its graduates.

Three core competencies were included in the certificate course: entrepreneurship, computer software application, and accounting. Curriculum was in operation from 1991-1998. Graduates were not confident with their competence. Very few had jobs in office environment. Often, graduates extend their stay due to failures in core subjects such as accounting and proposal writing for business. Those who graduate did not pursue entrepreneurship.

Apart from having no extensive linkage program for raising awareness, placement, etc., students were also not prepared to have the needed competencies. Feedback of internal and external consultants (professionals and academic curriculum experts in the management field) indicated that the curriculum was too focused on general education subjects and did not have the necessary core subjects to develop the necessary skills needed for the mentioned core tracks.

The program also did not have clear direction on the specific skills and sub skills to develop, thus faculty of each subject is also not guided on the necessary direction to follow. As a consequence, students are subjected to varying expectations and standards of the different teachers leading to the development of varying levels of skills.

2. Bachelor In Applied Deaf Studies. Program was conceptualized out of the need to produce Deaf teachers who can effectively teach Deaf

students. Survey research was conducted on Deaf needs and readiness of target market (schools, NGOs, etc). Data indicated the preference of both groups to offer such a course. However, in-depth research on the implications and other needs were not explored.

Unlike the certificate course, curriculum design took time to be developed and involved the participation of all faculties of the Deaf program and the Deaf representatives in putting up the curriculum. Initial assistance was asked from the College of Education of another De La Salle University system to design the Education core track. However, this was not made possible because their experts did not have understanding of the Deaf needs.

The BAPDST aimed to develop 3 core competencies: professional field of specialization (any of the 7 areas e.g., visual arts, entrepreneurship, theater arts, sign language teaching, teaching math, counseling, sports) teaching competency, and leadership.

However extensive the education core, students' readiness and interest for teaching career were not encouraging. On the other hand, their interest and readiness for particular fields were more positive. But the problem was that the curriculum did not provide an extensive track for building competence in the particular field since there were only 6 units of electives provided. The diversity of specialized tracks also limited the department from tapping experts to handle the courses since student enrollees per track were very small to create a regular class.

The BAPDST program had a clearer direction of skills to develop as compared with the certificate course. However, the skills and necessary processes were not fully ingrained in each of the subjects. This prevented important connection of sub-skills and general skills from being developed, plus of course the important connections of subjects were also not fully figured out. This was a limitation of the core experts who worked on the curriculum. We had too many academicians who worked on a highly specialized field that subjects created ended up as compartmentalized courses placed one after the other (or in a mix up) with no clear-cut track of core competencies being developed.

There was no bridging or connection from one subject to the other, leaving the faculty teaching the course to actually dictate the direction.

Student services, which are rich resource for competence building outside the classroom, were also not maximized.

## B. ABOUT THE STRATEGIES USED TO DEVELOP A CURRICULUM

The faculty core tasked to design the above curriculum had all the best intentions. However, limitations are evident in the areas of in-depth understanding of the field targeted and the competence to translate the necessary skills in the context of a curriculum. The curriculum does not only entail the subject topics that match particular skills in the profession, but also entail the holistic formation of the skills and orientation across academic and non-academic venues, as well as strategies.

Another limitation here is the absence of extensive inputs from the end users of our graduates. The industry in general and specific corporations/companies that need particular graduates with identified competence; need to have a stake in the curriculum. There are no inputs brought about collaborations. However, this strategy is in itself a different arena that would entail planning and personnel to figure out and push for an extensive collaboration with the target industry.

I for one, recognize this need. But I do not have the slightest idea on how to go about this enormous task of seeking their assistance for a population that they hardly even know exists. So even before industry is to be consulted for curriculum development, program and strategies has to be drawn up to educate them about the Deaf population. And that in itself is another enormous task that I could not figure out where and how to begin.

## C. STRATEGIES USED TO BUILD NEEDED COMPETENCIES AND ORIENTATION FOR SUCCESSFUL EMPLOYMENT

Due to constraints existing as a result of government regulations (the degree program is still waiting for its final government permit that will allow changes in the curriculum), the professional core competency was expanded within allowable limits. This is to provide students who were enrolled in the current curriculum a more extensive option for training that will give greater access to opportunities for successful employment.

Two core tracks (Multimedia Arts and Entrepreneurship) were further developed and experts in the field and involved in the industry were tapped to develop the curriculum. . An additional 30 units were added and faculty tapped to teach these specialized subjects are practitioners partnered with

SDEAS faculty-interpreter/consultant. These adjustments are targeted to beef up students' competence, confidence and orientation for successful employment.

There is cohesion of subjects that build core competencies. However, there is still a great need to study and figure out processes that are vital to address the identified skills. And although these general skills have been identified, sub skills still need to be clarified and understood.

Faculty orientation and competence in the learner-centered approaches are also very, very important in the implementation of the curriculum. Not only will they complement the general and sub areas of skills building, deepening of orientation and developing confidence, but that the uniqueness and expertise of each faculty will not be counter productive to the target goals.

#### D. LADDERIZED PROGRAM

There are 3 levels that students enrolled must go through. These are the following: Pre-college, the certificate course and the degree course. The 1<sup>st</sup> two areas are required levels to assess students' readiness to pursue the degree program.

The pre-college requires students to build their thinking skills using their primary language (FSL) as a pre-requisite to building their reading and writing skills as they use a foreign language (English). Math competency is also targeted, but not as intensive as the language core track, which begins from the pre-college to the certificate level (or for those who qualifies, it continues until they graduate from the degree program).

The self-esteem track is another track of the pre-college. This is generally focused on self-awareness and understanding of psycho-emotional and psychosocial needs of the Deaf in the context of identity, family and culture. General education courses such as General Psychology, Art Appreciation, religion, Communication and Empowerment, PE, Orientation courses, among others, are some of the courses under this track. The student services program (counseling, sports, dance, spiritual devt., etc) are also part of this track but offered as an extra-curricular option.

There is also the Computer Operations Track that builds basic competencies in the application of computer software for academic use.

The certificate course level offers 2 fields. One, Administrative Support for Business Operations; and two, Computer Graphics. The first aims to produce graduates competent to take charge of office related tasks (clerical tasks involving office software applications, bookkeeping and office management). The second certificate aims to produce graduates competent to be graphic artists in various industry setting.

Experts in the field of profession identified designed the 2 fields of certificate courses. However, these are in the context of subject areas. Discussions have identified the core competencies or skill sets that need to be developed.

However, again, these are in the context of subject areas. Specific sub-skills (that give basis to competence, confidence and orientation) have not yet been fully verbalized and clarified but should be clarified and identified so that these will be reflected and followed through in and across the curricular and extra-curricular opportunities that should be connected with each other to be called a curriculum.

The students who are deemed qualified to pursue a degree track will be offered 2 choices. Their certificate courses should complement the degree specialization. The Administrative Support for Business Operations is a complement and support to the Entrepreneur specialization. The Computer Graphics certificate course should complement and support the Multimedia Arts specialization.

Again, though experts more effectively designed the competency track, the many issues raised above should still be addressed to be able to produce a more competitive graduate.

Attached are the sample curriculum for the 2 certificate courses.

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