INNOVATION: AN AID TO EDUCATIONAL EMPOWERMENT

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Innovation is a device, contrivance, or process originated after study and experiment. It pertains to something which has not previously been in an existence. It also pertains to a change made to an existing product, idea, or field.

As for the field of education, innovation aids in reaching students who belong to poor families. There are innovations in the Philippines that made a great impact in accessing students who really want to study.

Innovations also aim to enhance the knowledge and the relationship of the school to the community by providing changes that will contribute to the betterment of the society.

Mañego (2011) cited some innovations that have been approved and fully implanted by the Department of Education. Here are the changes or program that play a vital role in the educational system.

A. The Improved Emphasis on Extension (Outreach, Community-Oriented Programs)

Providing knowledge for knowledge’s sake is a principle that had been abandoned by many educational philosophers. Without concrete and evident benefits to the society, schools would just be seen as impractical institutions.

Rendering support, assistance, and services to people in the community, especially the marginalized sector, has become part of many school’s co-curricular and extra-curricular programs. Today, college students in the Philippines have to take National Service Training Program (NSTP) subjects, in which two of the options are Literacy Training Service (LTS) and Civic Welfare Training Service (CWTS) which are both geared towards helping people in the community. Well established universities, especially the ‘elite’ ones, also have foundations for outreach projects and provide assistance to poor public schools in far-flung areas through ‘adopt-a-school’ programs.
Not only does this undertaking inculcate in the hearts and minds of the students the values of altruism, sympathy, compassion, and concern for others, it also conveys that academic institutions are essential part of the society which is there always ready and willing to extend a helping hand for the welfare of the people.

B. The shift to School-based management

School-based management, which is a form of ‘decentralization,’ improves the administration of school system. As many responsibilities and decision-making over school operations is transferred to principals, teachers, parents, some students, and other school community members, school problems are addressed more closely and thoroughly by people who have first-hand insight about the issues. Educational supervision also becomes ‘better-tuned’ as school systems and programs are better monitored and teacher performance and student learning are better evaluated. Furthermore, school-based managers are better motivated and get higher morale since they possess more independence to act and decide.

C) The Introduction of Alternative Learning Systems (ALS) and TESDA programs

The importance of the different forms of Alternative Learning Systems (ALS) and various TESDA programs cannot be overemphasized. In fact, a great way to convert a school to become ‘customer-driven’ is to offer these educational innovations. For instance, since many want to become call center agent, courses specifically for such a profession could be offered through TESDA programs.

‘Ladderized’ education, Diploma courses, and the like cater to students whose economic capacity cannot allow them to finish 4-year or 5-year courses. On the other hand, ETAP and on-line education (distant learning) provide educational opportunity to those who are already working.

Indeed, through various ALS and TESDA programs, a) people can earn their diplomas more quickly; b) students can repeat failed courses without the embarrassment of being in a class with younger students; c) educational opportunities can be provided to people with physical disabilities, those who have jobs during normal school hours, and those living in remote regions; d) education can be offered despite shortage of classrooms, qualified teachers, and instructional materials (especially through e-learning); and e) students can have access to variety of enrichment courses, and can participate in internships, sports, or work and still graduate with their class.
Department of Education must accept more ideas and opinion that leads to innovation. The government with the educational sectors must work hand in hand in addressing ways that will help the learners to meet their full potential.

Reference: www.OurHappySchool.com