SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PLAN: AN AVENUE TO PROVIDE MEANINGFUL LEARNING EXPERIENCES FOR THE 21ST CENTURY LEARNERS

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An African proverb once said “It takes a Village to educate a child” signifies that each member of the community plays a vital role in developing the totality of an individual. They are the key players for the holistic and lifelong learning of the 21st century learners. These expectations for the present generations are anchored in the Mission and Vision of the Department of Education. Hence, to facilitate effective and efficient delivery of quality education to produce quality graduates, an enhance school improvement plan should be carefully crafted to provide basic and universal education for all.

Providing meaningful learning experiences is what every institution should offer to their clienteles and it’s not an easy task, it does not happen overnight. Unlike the stereotype schools where the learners are not engaged in the attainment of the intended learning outcomes, every school in our present time needs is the collaboration, integration and cooperation between and among its key stakeholders which include the school personnel, learners, parents/guardians and the community who will work together to facilitate and capacitate everyone for the attainment of meaningful learning experiences.

David Ausubel (2003) presented meaningful learning as active, constructive, and lost-lasting, but most importantly, it allows learners to be fully engaged in the learning process. Learners achieve meaningful learning when retention and transfer are both fulfilled. Retention is the ability to remember the material at a later time. It is the mastery where the learners recall previous knowledge, skills and behavior and transfer
these to new situations or to solve new problems. When the idea of retention and transfer are both acquired and put into practice by the learners, they are engaging themselves to meaningful learning experiences.

Likewise, Curran & Takata, (2003) cited the characteristics of meaningful learning:

- Non-arbitrary, non-verbatim, substantive incorporation of new knowledge into cognitive structure.
- Deliberate effort to link new knowledge with higher order concepts in cognitive structure
- Learning related to experiences with events or objects.
- Affective commitment to relate new knowledge to prior learning.

As mentioned, this theory implies that meaningful learning experiences revitalized when there is the connection and integration between the new experiences and prior knowledge that will lead to understand and appreciate new information and to acquire new skills.

A school improvement plan is a roadmap that sets out the changes of school needs to make to improve the level of student achievement, and shows how and when these changes will be made (Education Improvement Commission, 2000). It is a collaboration and partnership between and among the school and the community members where the evaluation of the school’s previous performance will be the basis for the development of a school plan.

Since SIP shall provide meaningful learning experiences to its clienteles, it should follow the recommended developmental phase of the school improvement plan:
• Focus on the characteristics of the learners in terms of their achievements, strength and weaknesses.

• Look into the school environment for this influence learner’s success.

• Organize a mechanism that can measure leaners success and failure.

• Capacitate and empower school personnel, parents and community members to gather and analyze relevant information so they can determine what needs to be improved in their school.

• Listen to the voice of the learners, by doing to, SIP can be an avenue to provide and plan set of opportunities and activities for the learners to incorporate their previous knowledge to new experiences.

• Monitor, analyze and interpret the result of implementation of the school improvement plan.

• Revisit and Improve SIP as needed.

• Establish a reward system and recognize the key stakeholders who worked together in the attainment of meaningful learning experiences.

As a whole, providing meaningful learning experiences through School Improvement Plan is an endeavor that will intensify the relationship of the school to its community. It is a byproduct of continuous improvement where the key stakeholders are encourage and inspired to take an active role in planning, managing, and improving the school.
References:


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