THE CHALLENGES OF IMPLEMENTING WORK IMMERSION IN SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL

by:

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Global competitiveness of Filipino graduates is an issue that the Department of Education had been dealing with face to face. In several education reports, surveys and achievement test results, it was found out that our graduates, be it high school or college perform below par in terms of competence both in skills and mastery of theories. Another issue was the statistics showing the number of underemployed and unemployed which according to experts was due to mismatch between the labor market demands and the education outcomes or the quality of graduates.

To address this, the government adopted the Kto12 Curriculum which one year added kindergarten and 2 years as Senior High School. These education reform was done through RA10533 or the Enhanced Basic Education. Section 2 of the RA10533 or ACT ENHANCING THE PHILIPPINE BASIC EDUCATION SYSTEM BY STRENGTHENING ITS CURRICULUM AND INCREASING THE NUMBER OF YEARS FOR BASIC EDUCATION, APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES states

“For this purpose, the State shall create a functional basic education system that will develop productive and responsible citizens equipped with the essential competencies, skills and values for both life-long learning and employment. In order to achieve this, the State shall:
(b) Broaden the goals of high school education for college preparation, vocational and technical career opportunities as well as creative arts, sports and entrepreneurial employment in a rapidly changing and increasingly globalized environment; and

Thus, additional two years was added to the old 10-year education curriculum. The additional two years is known as the Senior High School which is quite unique because of its inclusion of Work Immersion as one of the requirement for graduation. In this phase, senior high school students experience exposure to real world of employment.

This approach allows the student to practically apply the theories, skills and attitudes learned from the classroom. The minimum 80 hours they must spend with the work immersion partner is a significant source of learning and insights that could further enhance their competence as they become familiar with the nature of employment, perform duties and responsibilities of a worker and realize the need to develop desirable work attitude.

How is Work Immersion conducted? Based on DepEd order 30, s 2017, it can be conducted in different ways depending on the purposes and needs of learners. Work Immersion teachers must perform several activities to ensure that students are well-prepared for the practicum or work immersion during the re-immersion period. In the Immersion period, teachers supervise and monitor students as they apply their learnings in the immersion site or area of business. Post-Immersion requires evaluation of work immersion experiences thru submission of reflection diaries or narrative reports.

This entire cycle entails a lot of challenges and hardwork as it requires team work among teachers, administrators, students, parents and work immersion partners. Several concerns have to be addressed to successfully pull though this phase.

On the part of the management and administrators, finding sufficient and relevant work immersion partners that can accommodate all SHS students of various tracks and strands is the first major challenge. Aside from this, MOA or Memorandum of
Agreements must be secured, be fully understood by all concerned parties so as to protect the students while undergoing immersion. Schedule of operation of the work immersion partner must also be checked prior to deployment of students. Safety insurance must also be secured for the students. Administrators should also check on the location, building, proximity of the business establishment partners to minimize students’ expenditure on transportation and allowance, travel time and ensure their safety and security.

On the part of the teachers, they must make sure that students are well oriented on the expected behavior and performance that they must demonstrate. Pre-immersion activities include discussion of expected behavior, Work ethics, Safety in the workplace, Workplace rights and responsibilities, Confidentiality in the workplace, Effective conflict resolution and teamwork skills, Work immersion rules and regulations, Terms and conditions of the Memorandum of Agreement. During the actual Work Immersion days, teachers are required to monitor and supervise their students as they observe and apply the skills that they have learned from school. Post Immersion requires teachers to effectively lead the students in making reflections of their learning experiences.

On the part of the parents, deployment of their children to business places would entail additional expenses especially when the location is quite far from their residence or school. In this case, parents have to be informed ahead of time so they can save some resources for the immersion activities. Communication among parent, teacher and work immersion partners must also be active so that everyone gets informed on time especially when the matter pertains to safety and performance of the students and behavior affecting the interest of the immersion partner.

References: