



Contextualized Development Programs Essential to a Holistic Student Life

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Abstract- Learners are the most important entity in the teaching-learning process. The way learning opportunities are packaged affect the holistic development of learners. Programs for student development are crafted to address students' needs. The needs assessment for student development was used to identify areas essential to student life. The needs assessment revealed the over-all experience on campus; draw from students' suggestions/recommendations that will further strengthen the school's programs for a holistic student life; and establish a data-based of information that served as guide in formulating programs and/or policies to support the curricular and extra-curricular offerings of the school. Descriptive research method was used in this study. The needs analysis questionnaire was employed. Open-ended questions were asked. There were 2559 participants starting from basic to higher education students. The demographic profile of the participants revealed that most of the participants aged 13 – 16 years old; more females than males; majority Roman Catholics and Filipinos; most are enrolled in secondary levels, and 27.97% were in their second year in the school. Participants expected the academic programs to be learner-centered; administrators, faculty and staff to be supportive to student growth and development; extra-curricular activities enhance learning; outreach opportunities promote respect for those in need; formation programs promote respect for others; teaching method is the most essential to address; recollection/retreat is the most important holistic experience; guidance and counseling is the most essential student service; and library is the most important facility. In conclusion, students expressed varied intellectual, emotional, and social needs for their holistic development. It is recommended that the proposed framework for student development be considered.

Keywords- Framework, Student, Development, Needs Assessment, Descriptive, Philippines

I. INTRODUCTION

Student development refers to the development of the student as a person, the development of certain cognitive skills deemed necessary for successful student (Curry and Young, 2006). The notion of holistic student development encompasses not only learning academic knowledge and skills, such as problem-solving and analysis, but also other aspects of

students as people who are growing and maturing affectively (emotionally) and morally. Educational activities help students to develop their values, sense of self, identity and purpose. Exposing students to new experiences and perspectives – whether in the classroom, community, halls of residence, field trips, study abroad – and providing opportunities to reflect on those in dialogue with others offer powerful learning experiences that shape people's development (Quinlan, 2011). Student development practices must respond to challenges facing community challenges and focus on ensuring student success (Doucette and Dayton, 1989).

The third and sixteenth Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) goals on good health and well-being; and peace, justice, and strong institutions support student development. The socio-emotional learning objective in ESD goal 3 emphasized that the learner be able to create a holistic understanding of a life of health and well-being, and to clarify related values, beliefs and attitudes. ESD goal 16 emphasized that the learner is able to connect with others who can help them in facilitating peace, justice, inclusion and strong institutions in the country (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Education, 2017). These objectives support to the claim of Quinlan (2011) that educational activities develop student's values which can be strengthened through inputs on philosophical and ethical conceptions of life quality, well-being and happiness. Dialogues, inquiry-based projects about justice and equality can be offered to students (UNESCO, 2017).

Cross (2007) said that envisioning results in insight, the capacity to gain a clear, deep, and sometimes sudden understanding of a complicated problem or situation. Insight is to informal learning as study is to formal learning. It is how one achieve his/her learning goal. Student development programs allow the learners to gain insights in the activities they participate. The insights learners get help them to make meaning or make sense of their lives (Kegan in Sweitzer and King, 2009).

“Life-long learning as an experience” is a Student Development Framework for the Lasallian Schools Supervision Office (LASSO) Schools, Philippines. Life-long learning is a process of becoming, whereby everyone going through it, is given the chance to not just learn to know but also to grow through experience. Following the commitment of

Lasallian Schools Services Association, Inc. (LASSAI), Philippines “to the effective administration and supervision of academic institutions in order to be a transformative agent in “giving human and Christian education to the young, especially the poor”., this framework is envisioned to serve as the network’s common thread in giving students from different schools the opportunities to learn and grow holistically.

The LASSO student development framework is a way of creating a balanced student life anchored on the principle of life-long learning geared towards preparing students to a life based on how each network school expresses such intent in its vision-mission:

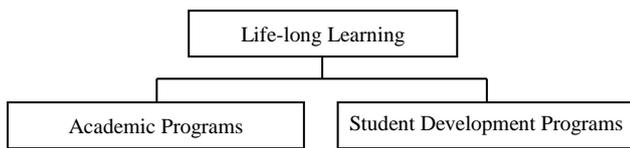


Figure 1. LASSO Student Development Framework

As life-long learning is a process, it is also a way of responding to students’ various needs; and, a response that should address specific context that flows from a common set of standards, cutting across all supervised schools. Thus, as shown below, the way response is being carried out through student development programs should proceed from the following:

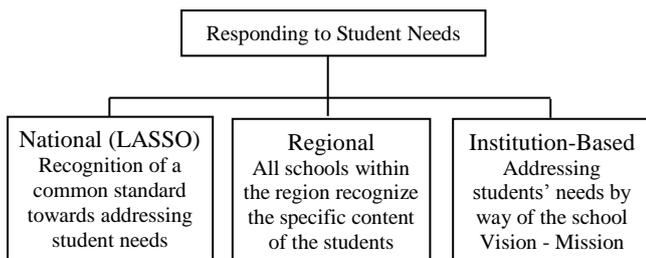


Figure 2. Process in Responding to Student Needs

At the heart of the student development programs of each school should be anchored - through its vision-mission – in the ideals that LASSAI (as part of its core values) is trying to communicate that includes the following core values: a. faith and values formation; b. participation in becoming change agents and prime movers in community service directed towards empowering the poor.

Thus, translating these values into opportunities for a balanced and holistic educational experience calls for initiatives that are proactive, service-oriented but at the same time learner Life-long Learning Academic Programs, Student Development Programs Responding to Student Needs National: (LASSO) Recognition of a common standard towards addressing student needs Regional: All schools within the region recognize the specific context of the students Institution-based: Addressing students’ needs by way of the school’s vision-mission centered. Mindful therefore of the context of each school in the network, the following are deemed necessary in bringing about these desired opportunities:

1. Formation: Are our formation initiatives geared towards bringing students to be responsive to the realities around them?
2. Outreach Opportunities: If your academic programs were to be experiential, what realities are there to respond to?

With these in mind and recognizing the school’s immediate context, it is thus important that in the area for example of Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation (JPIC) – an important area embraced by LASSAI – that there are deliberate efforts to establish or strengthen initiatives and must well be communicated to and embraced by the academic community:

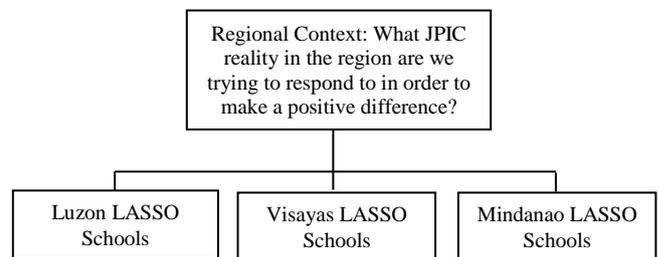


Figure 3. Regional Contexts

Being able to respond to these challenges does not only give the school the chance to live out its own mission as a school but at the same it also allows the school to specifically address the need for students to be actively in realities that are meaningful and contributory to life-long learning.

II. THEORY OF CHANGE

Over-all, Student Development Programs as part of the process of life-long learning reflect the following areas:

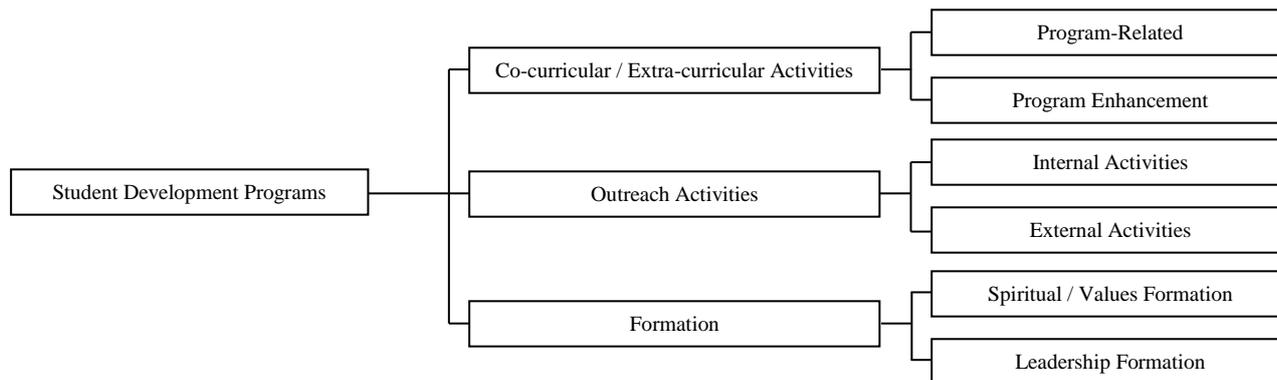


Figure 4. Dimensions in Student Development Programs

III. THE PROBLEM

The needs assessment for student development has been undertaken to identify areas that are essential to student life. The needs assessment identified the needs of students that are contributory to the over-all experience on campus; draw from students' suggestions/recommendations that further strengthen the school's programs for a holistic student life; and establish a data-based of information that served as guide in formulating programs and/or policies vital to the curricular and extra-curricular offerings of the school.

IV. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEMS

This study hoped to answer the following problems:

1. What is the profile of the students in terms of:
 - 1.1 Demographic profile
 - 1.2 Students' expectations
 - 1.3 Program-related / curricular needs
 - 1.4 Extra-curricular needs
 - 1.5 Student services
 - 1.6 Campus facilities

What framework for a holistic student life maybe proposed based on the findings of the study?

V. METHOD

The study used mixed-methods of research. The participants answered the needs analysis questionnaire. They answered open-ended questions to substantiate the quantitative data derived from the questionnaire. There were 2559 participants from Luzon, Visayas, Mindanao LASSO schools in the Philippines. Questionnaire was used as research instrument. The data were obtained by the LASSO supervisors/consultants. The LASSO office consolidated the quantitative and qualitative data obtained from the questionnaire.

VI. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The demographic profile of the student-participants was described as to their age, gender, religion, citizenship, and years in school. Other aspects in their student life like their expectations, program-related / curricular needs, extra-curricular needs, student services and campus facilities were also revealed.

In terms of age, most (50.87%) of the students who participated in this study are in the age bracket of 13 to 16 years old, followed by 6 to 12 (31.92%) and 17 to 20 (14.19%) years old, respectively. Few percentage (3.02%) of the respondents aged in the extreme (5 or 21 and up years old). The data show that there are more students in the secondary level followed by the elementary and higher education levels.

There are 52.83% female students in all LASSO school. Female students dominate more than 50% of the total enrollment compared to male students.

There are 83.60% of the total student population who are Roman Catholics. The 16.4% of the students are into other religions like Born-Again Christian, Iglesia ni Cristo, Islam, Seventh Day Advent, Protestant, LDS, Jehovah's Witness, MGCI and other religion such as Baptists, Methodists, Mormons, Believer in Christ, and Church of Christ. Almost all (99.88%) of the students are Filipinos.

As to grade level, the data show that 71.22% (1574) of the students are enrolled in the secondary level. While, there are 21% (464) of the students enrolled in the elementary level and 7.78% (172) are in tertiary level. Among the college students, 68.02% (117) are enrolled in the first and second years. The data reveal that majority of the participants are in the secondary level.

The data on grade levels show that there are more Grade 8 students. The data support the higher number of students who are in their second year in school. The students who stayed in the school for the last 4 years comprise 58.90% (1238). While, there are 41.10% (864) of the students who are scattered from 5 to 13 years in school. These students had started their elementary years up to college in the same school.

When students are asked regarding their expectations for having chosen to enroll in school in terms of the following:

A. Academic Programs

Most of the students expected that the academic programs be learner-centered (43.48%), fun (30.18%), and experiential (26.34%). Students preferred activities where they interact and at the same time have fun. Experiential learning allows the students to perform hands-on activities.

B. Administrators, Faculty and Staff

The students expected that the administrators, faculty and staff be supportive to student growth and development (30.36%), responsive (28.97%), visible in school (21.49%) and has rapport with students (19.18%). The qualitative comments of the students stressed that the administrators, faculty and staff be friendly and accommodating, encouraged the students to use critical thinking, be innovative, creative, engaging and not bookish, understood the feelings of the students and showed appreciation to the students' efforts.

C. Extra-curricular Activities

The students expected that the extra-curricular activities enhance learning (41.63%), build camaraderie (30.35%) and wholesome (28.02%). Performing the extra-curricular activities allow the students explore and use their creative thinking. Along the way of their performance in the various activities, they have greater chances of working with their classmates. This interaction allows them to know each other better and build a closer relationship. For students, activities are wholesome when they find meaning in them.

D. Outreach Opportunities

The students expected that outreach opportunities promote respect for those in need (38.50%), encourage generosity (30.82%) and encourage volunteerism (30.68%). The students qualitatively emphasized that the outreach opportunities be consistent and a way to walk the talk, include catechism, and help students to develop initiative to do things by themselves.

E. Formation

The students expected that the formation promotes respect for others (39.06%), holistic (25.55%), gender-sensitive (18.24%), and inclusive (17.15%). The students qualitatively expressed that the formation programs emphasize one's important role in the society, build discipline and character.

The students were also asked on how essentials are program-related/curricular needs to be addressed. To meet the expectations expressed by the students, the following areas are essential to address like teaching method (18.72%), learning motivation (18.57%), relationship with students (17.62%), classroom management (16.20%), subject mastery (15.34%), and personality attributes (13.55%). The data further show that the areas are of almost equal importance as shown in the small

difference in their percentage. The teacher's teaching method could motivate the students to learn. Harmonious relationship with students ensures good classroom management as well.

Moreover, students find the importance of extra-curricular programs for their holistic experience as enhanced through recollection/retreat (15.59%), campus parties like acquaintance, prom, seasonal parties (14.95%), mass (14.93%), outreach activities (14.60%), sports fest (14.38%), leadership camp (13.94%), and cultural events (11.61%). The percentage distribution shows the closeness of the importance of area for the holistic experience of the students with recollection/retreat as the most important.

As an educational institution, services for the students are essential to address various needs including those geared towards holistic development and growth. The student services essential to address the various needs, holistic development and growth of the students are guidance and counseling, student activities and development, registrar's office, accounting office, campus ministry, testing and admission, campus security, and school clinic, respectively. The data reveal that schools strengthen the guidance and counseling program as the most essential student service.

Related to services are facilities that will complement the school's programs and services. The campus facilities that complement the school's programs and services include the library, science laboratories, school clinic, cafeteria/canteen, campus in general, IT laboratories, chapel, campus garden and gymnasium. The library is the most necessary and helpful to complement the school's programs and services.

The qualitative comments of the students regarding campus facilities mention about the air-conditioning and well-ventilation of the library including updated books, and it should be aesthetically conducive for learning. Other suggestions point on clean and functional comfort rooms, auditorium/gymnasium/multi-purpose hall/conference room. Facilities like football field/outdoor sports area, elevator, swimming pool, covered court, soccer field, band room, badminton court, home economics laboratories, culinary room, and school bus were also recommended to complement the school's programs and services.

The description of the students' perception of their development was the basis in coming up with a framework for a holistic student life.

VII. FRAMEWORK FOR A HOLISTIC STUDENT LIFE

The student life is strengthened through the curricular and extra-curricular programs of the school. The social dimensions of the school including administrators, faculty and staff also enhance the student life.

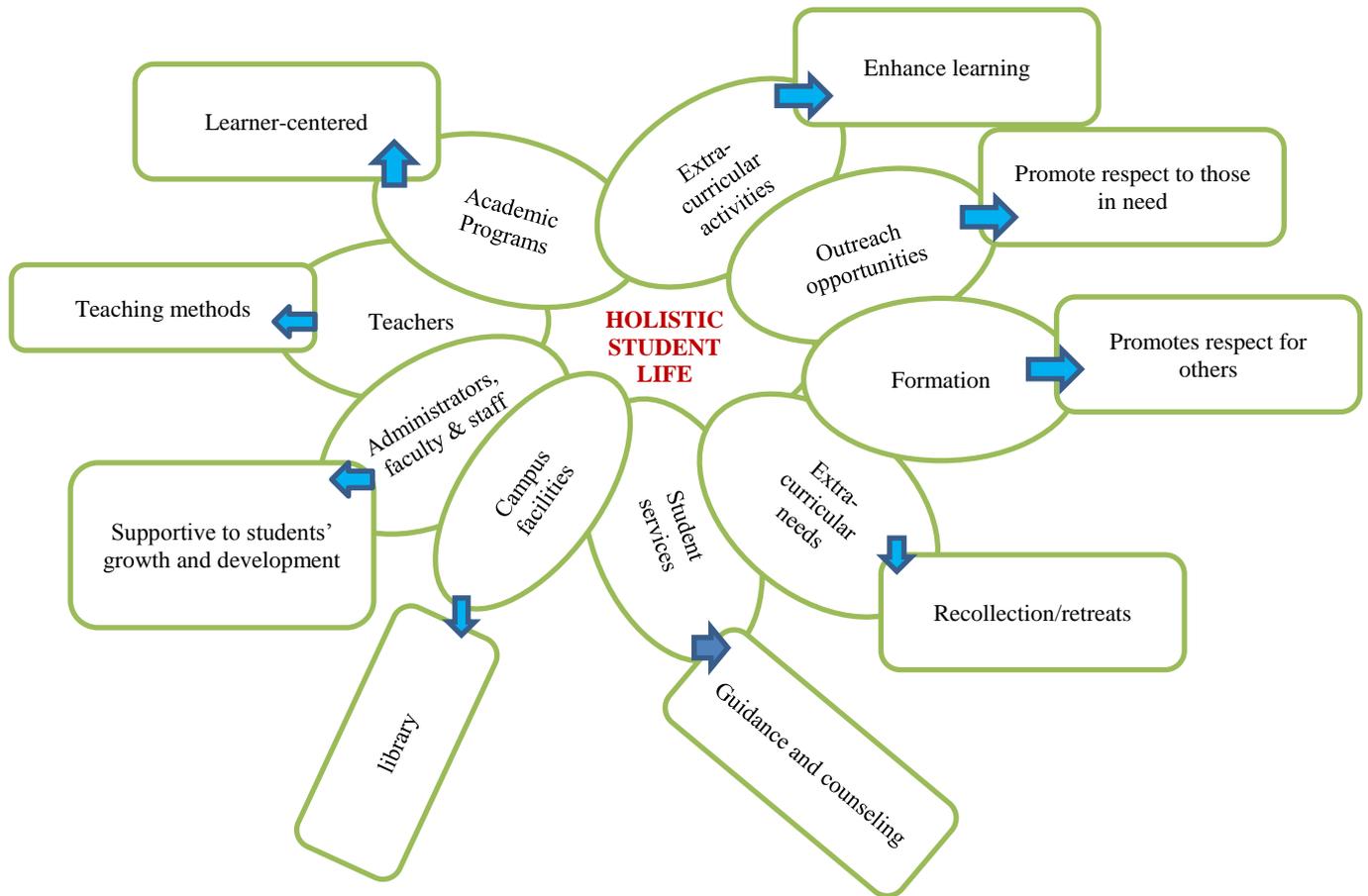


Figure 5. Dimensions of Holistic Student Life

The framework shows the holistic student life is influenced by the following dimensions: academic programs, extra-curricular activities, outreach opportunities, formation, extra-curricular needs, student services, campus facilities, administrators, teachers and staff.

The qualitative descriptions of the students in each of the dimensions and key areas are lifted from their qualitative comments.

When planning for the activities for the holistic development of the students, it is recommended that these comments will also be considered. The students' perception of a holistic life in school is enhanced by their experiences with descriptions they mentioned.

VIII. FINDINGS, CONCLUSION, RECOMMENDATIONS

The demographic profile of the participants revealed that there were 50.87% aged 13 – 16 years old; 52.83% females;

83.61% Roman Catholics; 99.88% Filipinos; 71.22% enrolled in secondary levels, and 27.97% were in their second year in the school. In terms of expectations, 43.48% of the participants expected the academic programs to be learner-centered; administrators, faculty and staff to be supportive to student growth and development (30.36%); extra-curricular activities enhance learning (41.63%); outreach opportunities promote respect for those in need (38.50%); formation programs promote respect for others (39.06); teaching method is the most essential to address (18.72%); recollection/retreat (15.59%) is the most important holistic experience; guidance and counseling is the most essential student service; and library is the most important facility. In conclusion, students expressed varied intellectual, emotional, and social needs for their holistic development. It is further recommended that the proposed framework for student development be integrated in the school, regional, and national levels.

TABLE I. HOLISTIC STUDENT LIFE

DIMENSIONS	KEY AREA	DESCRIPTORS
Academic Programs	Learner – centered	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Give appropriate/related projects that will be done in school by the students, to enhance their knowledge and skills - Group study - Educational tour every once a year - Outdoor program to have fun - Seminars - Social activities - More programs and activities to motivate students - More activities to enhance learning like field trip or going somewhere - Bonding moments so the kids will have more friends - That lessons taught be done, i.e., learning by doing
Extra-curricular activities	Enhance learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - School activities every week to make other students socialize with each other - More activities in every club - Educational and sportive activities that will help enhance the confidence of the students in joining programs - More activities that the students can seek or enhance their talents and for being good in academics, have an exchange students to enhance friendship to have more students to talk - Leadership Training
Outreach opportunities	Promote respect to those in needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - An orphan donation box be put up
Formation	Promotes respect for others	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - We should not compromise in any way our faith specially our young children. - Students will become more discipline and practice their religious affiliation much better - Students respect their co-students and avoid bullying - Promote respect for everyone - More discipline and inspire students to study
Extra-curricular needs	Recollection/ retreats	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - More recollections
Student services	Guidance and counseling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Encourage the students to study - Be aware with the attitudes of every students to be more curious about the feeling of all people around him/her and also the behavior of each and everyone - Need to meet with the students so that they can help the students to achieve what they want - A student can be a helping child by helping their needs - Weekly Guidance Counseling Meeting
Campus facilities	Library	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Provide pupils complete books in every subject. - More inspirational and educational books - Audio Visual equipment - Enhance a student’s life by way of helping them to read at the library - Provide more accessible computers that can accommodate more students in researching at the library - More books in the library so that the students will enhance their reading skills - More library books for reference
Administrators, teachers and staff	Supportive to students’ growth and development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Commitment of faculty and staff to help the students - Enhance school management - All teachers must help and inspire students - Having safe places for children to play - Teach the students well with heart - Hire teachers who have qualities of a good teacher - Teachers should be visible if the pupil is in need of help/guide
Teachers	Teaching methods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Use multimedia presentations - Teachers would be more hands-on to students and their lessons - Have different forms of teaching like having a movie that relates to the topic - Classroom management - Teacher must treat their students equally - More activities for faculty and departmental officers to enhance every students’ learning - Open communication between students and instructors - Classroom teachings should relate or connect to the real world situations so that it can be fully understood and be applied in the real life setting - Teachers must inject humor in their lessons to make learning fun

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