

# Developing Community-based Materials for Alternative Learning System Using Mother Tongue Language in the Philippines

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## 1 . Introduction

In 1990, the Philippines designed and implemented the 10-year Education for All Plan of Action covering 1991-2000 in response to the World Declaration on Education for All (EFA) in Jomtien, Thailand. This commitment was reaffirmed in the EFA 2015 in Dakar through the Philippine EFA 2015 National Action Plan also called Functionally Literate Filipinos: An Educated Filipino. One of the primary goals of the Philippine government is to have universal access to quality education. In line with this, one of its thrusts is the alternative learning system which aims to eradicate illiteracy in selected areas, promote continuing education and develop and implement integrated programs (Phil EFA 2015, 2000).

In spite of several projects and programs of the Philippines' Department of Education's Bureau of Alternative Learning Delivery Systems, there is still a need to develop other modalities to provide access to quality education outside the formal subsystem of education. Philippine Education for All 2015 (2000) suggested enabling tasks in the creation of a network of community-based groups for local attainment of EFA. This is in recognition of the effectiveness of community-based activities in addressing the local educational needs through the most appropriate means.

### 1.1 Statement of the Problem

This study aimed to design and develop community-based learning materials using appropriate technology that can be used as part of the alternative learning system.

Specifically, it aimed to answer the following questions:

1. What are the factors to be considered in designing and developing community-based learning materials?
2. What is the effectiveness of the community-based learning materials that used the mother tongue?

### 1.2 Significance of the Study and Scope and Delimitation

This study would hopefully contribute to the development of the current alternative learning system of the Philippines for universalization of education. Moreover, it can be used as a prototype in

the development of other community-based materials and be used as bases for the revision of the development process.

The study covered the design and development of alternative learning systems using mother tongue. The mother tongue in this case pertains to Filipino. The target users of these materials were learners from selected communities. Believing in the principle of using the mother tongue language, the materials made use of the prevailing mother tongue of the communities.

## 2 . Review of Related Literature

### 2.1 History and Development of *Kominkan* in Japan

In Japan, the specific and more common term used for community-based non-formal education is *Kominkan*. *Kominkan* are similar to community learning center (CLC's), which have a certain place to gather for activities, but they are mostly established and managed by municipalities such as cities, towns, or villages (NIER, 2011). NIER (2011) also added that the majority of the approximately 16,000 *Kominkan* provide not only space for classes and meetings, reading rooms, kitchens, Japanese-style rooms with tatami mats or tea ceremony rooms, day-care facilities, audio-visual rooms, and sports facilities, but also programs for life skills, hobbies, and culture. *Kominkan* plays a central role in delivering social education to all people in Japan (ACCU, 2008). In Japan, "social education" covers the areas of adult education, community education, and education for children and youth that takes place outside of school. These *Kominkans* are social education facilities as required by the law. Other social education facilities include libraries, museums (including science museums, art museums, zoological gardens, aquariums, etc.), and centers for children and youth, women's education centers, social physical education and sports facilities etc. (MEXT, 2010). Since 2001, the number of *Kominkan* users has been slowly and consistently increasing.

The number of *Kominkan* has been declining annually in recent years yet its number of users is increasing. In 2004, the state of usage of *Kominkan* was described as being used twice by each Japanese citizen (MEXT, 2010). The decreasing number of *Kominkan* that began in 2002. This data was also based on the same report. The continuously decreasing number of *Kominkan* is one of the current problems being faced by this branch of social education.

The beginning of *Kominkan* started in 1946 brought about by a notification from the then Ministry of Education for the establishment of *Kominkan*. The passing of the Social Education Act of 1949 later enforced its presence. During that time, social education facilities were literally translated as "citizen's halls" with the concept of mutual teaching and leaning, and support for voluntary learning by local residents after World War II. Its purpose is to conduct various projects for the cause of education, science and culture, meeting the daily needs of the residents in municipalities and specific

areas to develop their attainments, improve their health, cultivate their sentiment, elevate their cultural life, and increase the social welfare of the community especially after the war has generated extreme poverty in Japan.

*Kominkan* were to promote the development and richness of people's active participation, and they quickly spread across the nation (MEXT, 2004). It was likewise regarded as the symbol of the new age for those who wanted to find a direction of their lives. At present, *Kominkan* has three main functions leading towards the goal of developing people and communities. The functions are: Gathering, Learning, and Connecting. *Kominkan* is a place where people can gather comfortably during their daily lives. *Kominkan* also serves as a place for people to gain knowledge and skills based on their own personal interests. Thirdly, *Kominkan* form networks with a variety of local institutions and organizations.

The management of *Kominkan* is entrusted to the community and opened to everyone. However, profit-making, religious, and political activities are prohibited. A steering committee that includes residents to analyze and decide on various activities at the *Kominkan*, with the guidance of the *Kominkan* director, is generally established. Each *Kominkan* must evaluate its management and devise necessary measures to improve the management situation (NIE, 2011). The employees of the *Kominkan* are basically social education coordinators whose tasks are but not limited to a) providing of specialized and skilled advice and guidance in social education; b) family educational assistance for parents; c) promotion of opportunities for children to take part in after-school activities; d) planning of activities that enable residents to help local school. In order to be a social education coordinator, they must have university training course or through workshops. Each *Kominkan* has a chief coordinator who then reports to the *Kominkan* director. These are then being advised and guided by local government units (LGUs).

## 2.2 Trends in the *Kominkan*

A new *Kominkan* trend is that they have become more active in connection with school children to respond to the needs of the society and their own reorientation. For example, to support school education in this period of child population decline, *Kominkan* creates safe and comfortable places for children to come after school and on the weekends. Activities are being organized by the national government; one of its programs is "Program to Promote After-School Classes for Children [Houkago Kodomo Kyoshitsu]" which ran on pilot from 2004 to 2006, and later as permanent program. Other existing collaboration between *Kominkan* and schools are also already in place.

The presence of *Kominkans* will remain to be a part of the community especially since Japan has re-emphasized lifelong learning through the Fundamental Law of Education in 2006 and even emphasized by UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning in 2009. It reiterated the importance of the continuum of learning among the categories of formal, non-formal, and informal forms of learning, as well as to imply that it may be high time to integrate more social education and school education into

lifelong learning for Japan's future.

### 2.3 Alternative Learning Systems (ALS) in the Philippines

In the Philippines, one of its non-formal education programs is the alternative learning system (ALS). This program is ladderized and modular which is very ideal and implemented for dropouts from the elementary and secondary levels, out-of-school youths, non-readers, working Filipinos and even senior citizens (DepEd). This program has two different schemes: school-based and community-based. The school-based program are conducted in school campuses while in the community-based program, formal instruction are conducted in community halls or on private places.

The ALS program follows a uniform lesson modules for all academic subjects covering the sciences, mathematics, English, Filipino, social studies, current events among others. The delivery of instruction is provided by government-paid instructors or by private non-government organization.

### 2.4 Instructional Design Models

The ADDIE instructional design model is the generic process traditionally used by instructional designers and training developers. Although there are various adaptations of the ADDIE model, it generally consists of five cyclical phases — Analysis, Design, Development, Implementation, and Evaluation. These processes represent a dynamic, flexible guideline for building effective training and performance support tools. In the ADDIE, the evaluation of media focuses on the criteria for selection of media for appropriate purpose. Although there are variations in criteria, the common ones include effectiveness, efficiency, cost-benefit, learner's appropriate, and objective appropriate.

Dick & Reiser Instructional Design (ID) model developed by Walter Dick and Robert A. Reiser in 1996. The former was in the field of educational psychology while the latter was engaged in educational technology. The main premise behind the model was the idea that students differ in terms of backgrounds, experience, attitudes, abilities, needs, knowledge and other factors hence an easy determination of the audience and other relevant prerequisites will be a huge help in developing the necessary instruction needed.

## 3 . Methodology

In the design and development of these materials, the Japan experience in its community-based lifelong learning programs was surveyed and used as basis for the conceptualization of the materials notwithstanding the nature of Filipino learners. The study only focused on a few *Kominkan* and a community center in the Philippines.

In detail, initial observation of *Kominkan* was done. There was a *Kominkan* that caters mainly to

international residents. There was another one that caters to a community in a somewhat rural part of Japan. And there is also another one in a suburb part of Japan. In some cases, interviews with the staff and some users of the facilities were done. Particular attention on the media being used in its classes and activities was done. Thereafter, choosing the community center in the Philippines was done. The community center chosen was a suburb outside of the country capital. The learners in this case are children aged 6 - 9 who are participating in an after school program. Following the Dick & Reiser Model, the goal of the instruction was identified i.e. for the learners to be able to learn the Japanese art of paper folding, *origami*. Specifically, the learners would be able to learn how to paper fold a star, a frog, and a crane. These patterns were chosen based on their commonality and ease in instruction for beginners. To meet these objectives, activities that involve the procedure on how to do these were done. The star was presented by simply allowing the children to follow the instructor. The frog was done using PowerPoint. Finally, the crane was done using simultaneous demonstration and PowerPoint images. The equipment was provided by the community center. In assessing the learners, observation of how they were following the steps were done and in the end. The instruction was finally done. Lastly, some items had to be revised.

#### 4 . Results and Discussion

Developing community-based materials using the mother tongue were developed based on *Kominkan* concept and patterning the procedure after the Dick & Reiser ID Model. The factors that were to be considered were derived from the interview and survey of the existing *Kominkan* stakeholders such as the persons-in-charge and the end users themselves. A checklist of existing materials in the *Kominkan* was also used.

It was done as part of their after school activity. The activity was able to meet its objective of the students being able to learn how to do origami. All of the materials had instructions and text in the mother tongue, Filipino. Specifically, all of the objectives were met. At the end of the session, each student was able to have their own stars, frog, and cranes. As the activities seemed to get more challenging, it was quite noticeable that the students were becoming less “noisy” and more focused and quiet on the tasks at hand.

After the entire activity, comments were elicited from the pupils. Most of them said they enjoyed the activity as it was being demonstrated. When the PowerPoint was used (as in the frog activity) they also were able easily follow since everyone can look and see the steps. They find the crane (as expected) the most difficult activity. It took them shorter time (than expected) in accomplishing the star. They find it very helpful that Filipino was used in the instructions and text. All in all, everyone who participated said that they liked the activity and hopes there will be more in the future. The

community center person-in-charge also gave her own comments.

## 5 . Conclusion

A study on the development of community-based materials using the mother tongue was conducted. In particular, it dealt with the various steps in coming up with community-based materials using the mother tongue for use in a community center. The study was significant because it developed a tool to determine the effectiveness of the technologies and strategies used from the learner's perspective.

The study pursued the following objectives: to find out the factors to be considered in designing and developing community-based learning materials; and to find out the effectiveness of the community-based learning materials that used the mother tongue. It made use of observation, interview schedule, and survey questionnaires as instruments for its data gathering. The respondents were stakeholders from *Kominkan* and community centers in the Philippines.

1. In designing and developing community-based materials, it is highly suggested to make a pre-requisite study of the learners before adapting the Dick & Reiser ID Model.
2. The goal should always be supported by its objectives, media, and corresponding activities.
3. Consequently, the assessment must make sure that it will answer the objectives and goal/s presented.
4. In choosing media, practicality, student-appropriateness, and instruction-appropriateness must be given consideration.
5. The use of the mother tongue especially to young learners may serve a significant factor in the instruction.

## 6 . References

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## My Journey in Japan

Like any new experience, it didn't come easy. Overall though, my entire stay in Japan of almost two years has made me a different individual emotionally, culturally, and academically.

Prior to coming to Japan, many people were saying that it will not be lonely; after all, Manila is only about four hours away by plane and there are various ways I can communicate with my family. Be that as it may, it was still an emotional struggle for me made easy by kind people around me. Any hint of melancholy soon dissipated.

Every time I travel, I try as much as possible to be immersed in the culture. Philippines and Japan are both in Asia but they are different in various ways. Japanese culture has always impressed me. I was amazed at how the Japanese have preserved their traditions. I also saw how older people teach and engage kids in these practices. I also saw and appreciated how disciplined and time-conscious the Japanese are. I am indeed blessed to have learned more about the Japanese culture by participating in homestays, study tours, interacting with Japanese friends, and by simply living my everyday existence here.

Lastly, I have changed academically. My stay in KUE changed me a lot in terms of my research skills. My professor's guidance and support was very humbling. His expertise and experience was a big help. The available facilities were a huge help too. More importantly, being able to be with fellow teachers in my classes and school visits opened my eyes to the Japanese educational system. The education classes in spite of it being in Japanese were challenging and informative. My other classes pertaining to language teaching (Izumi Sensei) and philosophy (Nishimoto Sensei) gave me additional substantial knowledge. My favorite subject is Children in Developing Countries under Utsumi Sensei gave me a global (and realistic) perspective of education in other developing countries like mine.

I am really grateful I had the opportunity to study here in Japan. This experience enlightened me not only intellectually and professionally but also personally and culturally. Everyday was a learning experience for me --- something I will forever cherish. Now, as I embark on further studies, I thank Kyoto University of Education for the trust and opportunity given to me. To everyone, no goodbyes; instead, see you soon.



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