



Research Article

Impact assessment of a campus journalism extension project: Write here right now

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ABSTRACT

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Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) are directed to instill change in the people of their community and implementing extension programs and services is one of the modalities. This study assessed the impact of the “Write Here, Right Now” extension project of the College of Teacher Education of one state university in Laguna. “Write Here, Right Now” is a set of training aimed to develop skills in campus journalism, such as news writing, feature writing, sports writing, editorial writing, editorial cartooning, literary writing, photojournalism, and layout design with students of one elementary school in the Department of Education Sta. Maria District is the beneficiary of the project. This mixed methods research utilizing the sequential exploratory design intends to explore the attainment of the objectives of the project and the impact of the project on the social aspect of its beneficiaries. The responses of the total enumeration of the beneficiaries were considered in the analysis of the evaluation of the project and two participants for the case study were interviewed. All the training conducted was rated excellent and beneficiaries have gone from zero to adequately skilled in campus journalism due to the competencies acquired from the project. Triangulated results showed that the “Write Here, Right Now” extension project has contributed significantly to the improvement in the knowledge and skills of the students as evidenced by the establishment of a school paper and awards received in district-wide and division-wide press conferences. It is therefore recommended to replicate the project in a different locale and with an increase in the number of beneficiaries.

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INTRODUCTION

Educational institutions, as the pillar of social development, have the social responsibility to be involved in empowering communities and in transforming lives through knowledge and technology transfer by way of training, workshops, seminars, and technical advisories (Codamon-Dugyon, 2016). Laguna State Polytechnic University (LSPU) as a Higher Education Institution (HEI) includes in its general mandate to undertake extension service (RA 9402). Among the extension services modalities of the university are programs or projects implemented to the community stakeholders which have the aim to develop capabilities for the efficient and effective transmission of technologies to rural households and farm families and to increase the productivity and income of farmers and rural households, especially those in the lower income categories. Of the thirteen colleges of LSPU, the College of Teacher Education (CTE) specifically targets clientele in the education sector whose needs are those anchored to the thrust and priorities of the college that includes Education Services, Skills Training and Literacy, Disaster Resiliency, Environmental Conservation and Management, Poverty Alleviation, Livelihood and Entrepreneurial Development, and Gender and Development.

Campus Journalism, which is aligned to Skills Training and Literacy, plays a vital role in every school in a way that it molds the skills and ability of the pupils/students when it comes to creative writing, and also it measures the capacity of schools to compete with the other institutions. To make this possible, building seminars and workshops in campus journalism are necessary. In line with the vision of the university to transform lives and community and in response to the request letters from two elementary schools relative to training and workshops on school paper writing, the College of Teacher Education Extension Implementing Unit planned to implement an extension project entitled “Write Here, Right Now”. The project This project is a seminar and workshop about news writing, literacy writing, feature writing, sports writing, editorial writing and cartooning, photojournalism, and school paper layouting that will give a great opportunity for the school to create and name their school paper and be able to establish their school publication. This extension project was intended to reach out to the academic community through the delivery of relevant services and appropriate materials to develop the potential of the target clientele. This includes students’ areas of specialization and other related endeavors.

The extension and training service of the College of Teacher Education has a mother project entitled Knowledge Caravan and anchored under this project are CTE: MATHematica Alalay Tungo sa Hamon ng Buhay, Busgog na Isipan, Malusog na Katawan, Silid Aklatan: Kadluan ng Karuningan (all three projects implemented from 2014 to 2015) and “Write Here, Right Now” implemented from 2015-2019. The project “Write Here, Right Now” was conducted to provide appropriate skills and competencies for the elementary students in one elementary school in the District of Santa Maria to provide training that addresses the basic information on the different types of journalism writing and thereafter the application of acquired skills to create a school paper. The proponent of the project, Dr. Mercedita O. Alberto, is a faculty member of the College of Teacher Education having a specialization in English and during the time of implementation, was designated as the adviser of the university paper. Dr. Alberto has grouped with other Language (English and Filipino) professors of the college and involved BSE and BEEd students during the conduct of the project.



Figure 1. Project Methodology

The project has implemented eight training sessions and for each training, a contest among students was the form of assessment of different acquired skills. The training included topics on News Writing, Feature Writing, Sports Writing, Editorial Writing, Editorial Cartooning, Literary Writing, Photo Journalism, and Layout Design. Extensionists from the College of Teacher Education were the trainers for the project. The project followed the methodology illustrated in figure 1. Three years from its implementation and completion, an impact assessment of the project is beneficial to measure how the project transformed the lives of its beneficiaries. This impact assessment study evaluated the eight training sessions using a 5-point Likert (ETS ISO System Form 007) scale and described the point of view of the beneficiaries regarding the project and how the project has had a significant effect on their lives specifically in their responsibilities as student journalists.

METHODS

This study used mixed-method research wherein the achievement of the objectives of the “Write Here, Right Now” project was assessed for the quantitative research part of the study. Moreover, for the discussion of the outputs and outcomes of this study qualitative research (Dela Fuente, 2021) was utilized, it followed the 3-part impact mapping approach (figure 3) that can accommodate non-linearity in the impact pathway and can more broadly include and assess both ‘hard’ impacts, those that can be directly attributed to the project, and ‘soft’ impacts, those that can be indirectly attributed to project (Fryirs et al., 2019). The basis of the impact mapping approach was the project methodology followed as seen in the project proposal. The sequential exploratory research design of the Mixed Methods research was the basis of this study which followed the framework shown in figure 2.

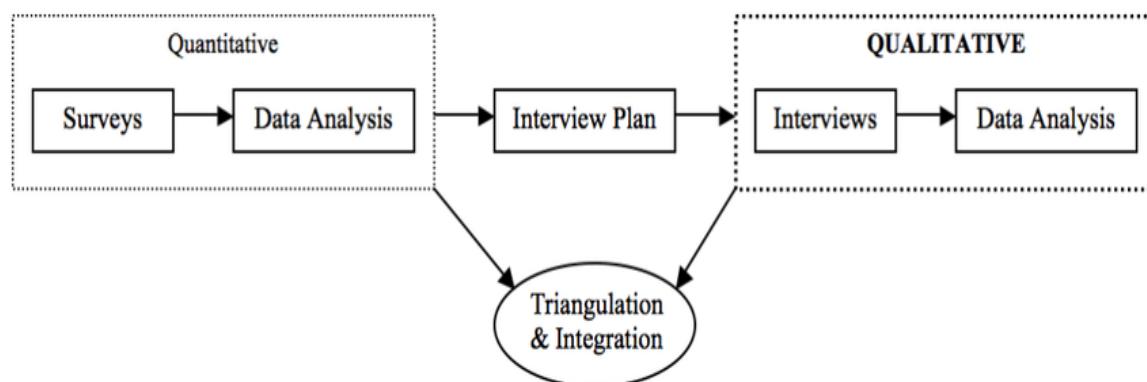
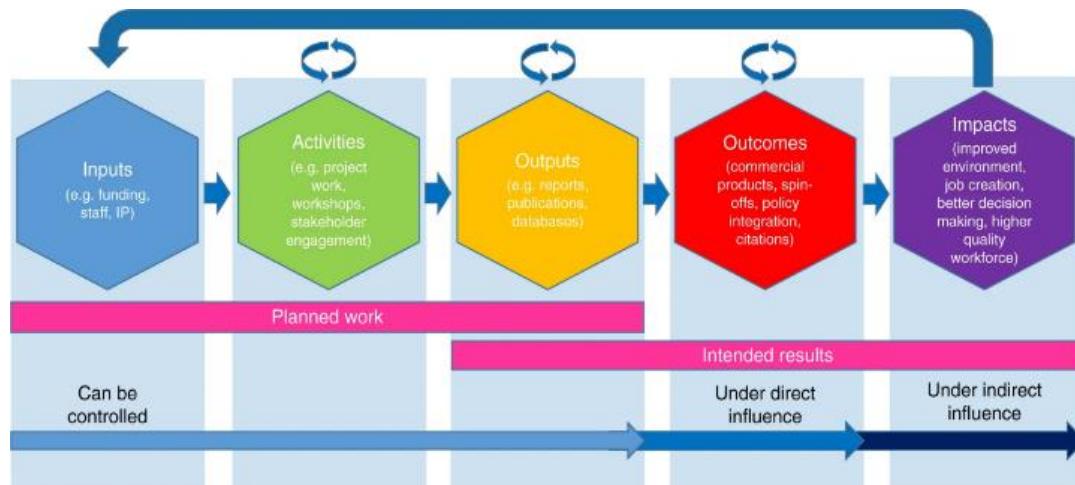


Figure 2. Sequential Exploratory Research Design



(Fryirs, K. A., Brierley, G. J., & Dixon, T., 2019)

Figure 3. Impact Mapping Approach

A total enumeration of the student beneficiaries was considered in the evaluation of the 8 sessions of the project. These beneficiaries were the lone section of the grade 6 class of one elementary school at the Department of Education District of Sta. Maria located at barangay Talangka Sta. Maria, Laguna. Of the thirty student beneficiaries, the 2 students who excelled in the district-wide Press Conference competition were interviewed twice, the first was one year after the implementation of the project, and the second was three years after the implementation of the project. The evaluation results of each of the training tracks were tabulated, described, and presented. Of the thirty students, two students were the participants of a case study to significantly present the impacts of the project 3 years after its conclusion and responses will be analyzed using thematic analysis. The two students considered as participants of this study were those who have won an award in a district-wide and division-wide journalism contest.

RESULTS

The “Write Here, Right Now” project was launched on July 3, 2015, involving thirty students in one elementary school in the Department of Education Sta. Maria District. Initial data that were gathered through a one-on-one interview with the beneficiaries shows that the students have zero knowledge of the different journalism skills.

Direct Influence of Write Here Right Now

The implementation of “Write Here, Right Now” was considered successful in attaining its objectives as seen in the skills assessment of the students after each session of the different pieces of training was conducted. Among the journalism skills shown in table 1, Sports Writing, Editorial Writing, and Photo Journalism got the highest evaluation with an average weighted mean of 5.0 followed by New Writing and Literary Writing with 4.86 and 4.76 average weighted means respectively. The lowest is Layout Design. Nonetheless, all of the tracks got a verbal interpretation of Excellent. This implies that the beneficiaries viewed that the extension project “Write Here, Right Now” leads to the acquisition of different campus journalism skills.

Table 1. Training evaluation results of “write here right now”

Journalism Skills Training Topics	Average Weighted Mean	Verbal Interpretation
News Writing	4.86	Excellent
Feature Writing	4.70	Excellent
Sports Writing	5.0	Excellent
Editorial Writing	5.0	Excellent
Editorial Cartooning	4.70	Excellent
Literary Writing	4.76	Excellent
Photo Journalism	5.0	Excellent
Lay-out Design	4.6	Excellent

After the implementation of the project in 2015, several participants of the project participated in a district-wide Elementary Level Press Conference. One (1) student-beneficiary of the project garnered 2nd place in Editorial Writing and 3rd place in Sports Writing and another student-beneficiary garnered 2nd place in Copy Reading and Headline Writing.

Analysis

In terms of the specific skills acquired by the students in Copy Writing and News Writing and Photo Journalism, it shows that three have significant acquisitions as seen in the 2016 District Level Press Conference and Journalism Contest. From 2nd place in Sports Writing, a student beneficiary now bagged 1st place. One student-beneficiary got 2nd place in Photo Journalism, another student-beneficiary got 2nd place in Copy Reading and 1st place in Headline Writing and Opinion Writing, and another student-beneficiary got 1st place in Science News Writing.

Table 2. Students' achievements

Student Beneficiary	Award	Category
Sporty	2 nd place (2015)	Editorial Writing
	3 rd place (2015)	Sports Writing
	1 st place (2016)	
Jorney	2 nd place (2015)	Copy Reading and Headline Writing
	1 st place (2016)	
Rain	1 st place (2016)	Science News Writing
JK	2 nd place (2016)	Photojournalism

DISCUSSION

Indirect Influence

The project “Write Here, Right Now” influenced the student-beneficiaries greatly in terms of their responsibilities in school publication-related tasks which were in association with the training the students have directly experienced. The impact of the project “Write Here, Right Now” is connected to two main aspects: (1) the objectives of a project and (2) the establishment of a school paper publication. From this, the following was deduced from the participants of this impact assessment study for the “Write Here, Right Now” project.

“Malaking tulong ang journalism training ng iinagkaloob sa aming paaralan noong kami'y nasa elementary dahil nadala ko ang natutunan hangang ako'y naging high school na” (*the Campus Journalism Project that was conducted in our school during my elementary grade was of great help since I have used the knowledge in high school*) - Sporty -

“Natutuwa po ako dahil sa tulong ng mga gawain sa journalism training na Write Here Right Now, nanalo ako sa Copy Reading sa ginanap na press conference dito sa Sta. Maria” (*I am glad that because of the journalism training Write Here, Right Now, I won in the Copy Reading category during the Press Conference that took place here at Sta. Maria*) - Jorney -

Learnings

The most significant training among the 8 tracks given to the teacher-beneficiaries of the project was on Sports Writing and Copy Writing.

“Ngayon po na ako'y 18 years old na ay dala dala ko ang mga natutunan ko. Ginaya po namen ang sistema ng pag papatraining ng Write Here Right Now

para maibahagi sa mga kapwa ko studyante ngayon na may interes sa school publication" (*Now that I am 18 year old, I still have with me all the things I have learned. We copied the system if the Write Here, Right Now project to be able to share what we have learned to my fellow students who has interest in school publication*) -Sporty -

The Casual Sequence

The learnings acquired by the beneficiaries of "Write Here, Right Now", particularly on Sports Writing and Copy Reading have helped them and their fellow students in the school they belong in terms of assistance in editing articles. Similarly, the attendees of the training have also shared their knowledge with their fellow students and particularly helped in the establishment of their school paper. The "Write Here, Right Now" project as implied by the beneficiaries served its purpose of capacitating the students in terms of enhancing their skills in journalism and the acquired knowledge of the beneficiaries was passed on to other students who were not able to attend the said training thru the help and learnings that the beneficiaries have extended. With this project, a school paper was established.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The extension project of the College of Teacher Education entitled "Write Here, Right Now" has excellently implemented training sessions on Sports Writing, Editorial Writing, Photo Journalism, News Writing and Literary Writing, and Layout Design. It has had a big impact on the acquisition of journalism skills of the students who were the beneficiaries of the project. This assessment study implies that a community service project in an education sector helped in journalism skill building, establishing a school paper, and honing competitive individuals who excel in competitions during Press Conferences. Based on the study, the results of the evaluation, and interviews with the beneficiaries the following are recommended:

1. Replicate the project in different locale and with an increase in the number of beneficiaries.
2. Improve the training plan with the consideration of having beginner and advanced classes/training to address different journalism skills level of the beneficiaries; and
3. Include the "Write Here, Right Now" beneficiaries as trainers for the next version at a different elementary school in the Department of Education in the District of Sta. Maria, Laguna.

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