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Exploring the implementation of curriculum quality audit in a Philippine State University

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Abstract

Demands of developing graduate competencies have led Teacher Education Institutions (TEIs) to engage in curriculum quality evaluations. This study investigated the practices in implementing Curriculum Quality Audit (CQA) Cycle in one Philippine State University. Twenty-three College of Education (COE) faculty, who are teaching Professional Education courses, were the participants. Narrative Inquiry was employed and facilitated by the use of Open-ended questions, focus group discussion, and document analysis. The Thematic-narrative approach in data analysis revealed that the institution's practices are described to be informed and coordinated, rigorous, designated, evidence-based, iterative, collegial, and continuous. Challenges encountered include difficulty in managing time, insufficient understanding of the Philippine Professional Standards for Teachers (PPST), difficulty in motivating the faculty, and sustaining CQA's iterative nature. Findings suggest the formulation of policy on the institutionalization of CQA in the college.

Keywords: Curriculum Quality Audit, Implementation, Philippine Professional Standards for Teachers

1. Introduction

1.1. Introduction to the problem

Curriculum Quality Audit (CQA) has been considered one of the best practices in curriculum development and implementation. It ensures that standards are aligned with the course content, activities, and assessment (Arafeh, 2016). CQA is an outcomes-based, meticulous audit process, comparable to international practices. It can be used to develop new programs or review existing pre-service teacher programs, assuring the alignment to nationally adopted standards (Philippine Normal University- Research Center for

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Teacher Quality [PNU-RCTQ], 2017). It is a form of curriculum mapping and is indispensable in this current era of standards-based reform and accountability.

From a global perspective, universities worldwide are expected to develop graduate competencies regarded by completing university qualification. Moreover, countries are now experiencing a proliferation of curriculum change, which further triggered changes in other areas of educational practices (Amimo, Bosire, & Role, 2014). With the demands of developing graduate competencies, mechanisms are implemented in the teacher education program (Parkes, 2013), and assurance for the quality of teacher education curriculum has drawn the attention of policymakers, curriculum designers, and academia (Dhull & Sangeeta, 2018).

In the Philippines, the landscape and perspective in offering curricular programs dramatically changed over the past decades. These changes necessitated the development of competencies among students to meet the requirements set by globalization, internationalization, regional integration, and the Fourth Industrial Revolution. The Commission on Higher Education (CHED), through the issuance of CHED Memorandum Order 15 series. 2019, articulated that students must be able to optimally use 21st century skills in their daily work and professions. In addition, pertinent issuances such as CMOs 74, 75, & 76, series of 2017, indicated a "shift to learning competency-based standards/outcomes-based education".

Furthermore, Pre-Service Teacher Education Curriculum in the Philippines effectively responds to the educational systems such as the K-12 Curriculum, Outcomes-Based Education (OBE), and the Philippine Qualification Framework. With the CHED's mandate to develop competitive professionals, Teacher Education Institutions (TEIs) are encouraged to engage in curriculum quality assurance evaluations vis-à-vis the established national standards. Since June 2013, when the K to 12 Reform was institutionalized, the landscape of teacher quality requirements has also changed. Reforms in basic education warrant equivalent supportive focus on pre-service teacher (PST) education, ensuring that TEIs' graduates are prepared enough to assume the roles of K-12 teachers.

Henceforth, the PNU-RCTQ, the Teacher Education Council (TEC), together with the Basic Education Sector Transformation (BEST) and selected TEIs across the country, led the development of an outcomes-based, K to 12-aligned PST education curricula through the conduct of CQA. The Philippine Normal University (PNU) in partnership with the National Network for Normal Schools (3NS) in the Philippines collaboratively participated in this audit process, which maps the components of the curriculum to the national standards (PPST).

PPST was nationally adopted by the Department of Education (DepED) through the issuance of DepEd Order No. 42, s. 2017, to provide uniform measures in assessing teacher performance and appraisal. It is composed of seven (7) domains, each with varying numbers of indicators summing up to 37. Alongside, TEIs, being tasked for the

country's teacher preparation, are expected to offer teacher education programs with curricula that develop the standards indicated in the PPST.

Educational change theorists suggest that any innovation's implementation should culminate in its actual practice (Hall & Hord, 2010). In the participant university's case, the implementation of CQA, being a new curricular innovation, has to be assessed, especially if the aim is to see whether this innovation culminates in the member's actual practice. Moreover, the literature on implementation research indicated the tendency for members to practice multiplicities of enactment. In the multiplicities of enactment, the members-only perform certain parts of an implemented innovation, which will better suit their situation (Buxton et al., 2015).

Meanwhile, studies on educational change argue that smooth and non-problematic innovations could not be expected; it could not be viewed as a straightforward-linear process (Marsh, 2009). Additionally, research has rarely been focused on the processes in implementing curricular innovations and the experiences of those involved in it. Thus, the need to explore the conduct of curriculum innovations like CQA was perceived.

It is deemed necessary to explore the participant university's implementation of CQA, to investigate alignment of its curriculum vis-à-vis adhered outcomes and standards-based designs and principles. In this context, the significance of keeping track and scrutinizing the practices of curriculum developers, teachers, instructional leaders, and other staff members in auditing the curriculum, based on cycle followed and making the modifications or changes necessary for continuous improvement is heightened. Moreover, to attain a locally responsive and globally attuned curricula in the Philippine Higher Education (Licuanan, 2018), upgrading quality harmonized academic programs and innovations with international standards is placed into spotlight. Therefore, the researchers intend to document the CQA implementation, aimed at providing evidence and research-based recommendations for policies, gearing towards curriculum quality assurance and targeting the development and revision of teacher education curriculum that adheres to national standards

1.2. Framework of the Study

This study anchor on the CQA Cycle of the PNU-RCTQ. It provides pre-determined and established stages (Figure 1) that offer this study a basis for the procedural exploration of the participant university's practices in its implementation of CQA. The cycle includes the following stages:

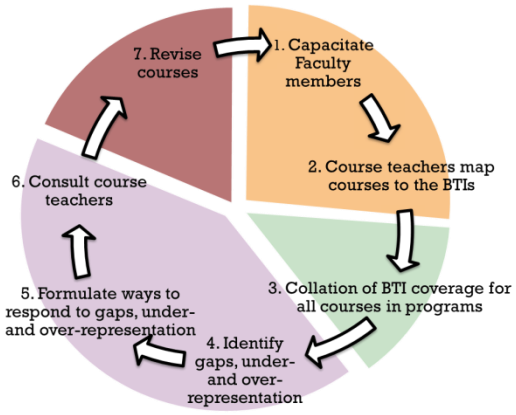

Figure 1: Stages of the CQA cycle
Source: Philippine National Research Center for Teacher Quality (2017)

- *Capacitating Faculty Members*- Stage 1 involves the conduct of seminars, workshops, and training to equip the faculty on CQA.
- *Mapping of Courses to the Beginning Teacher Indicators (BTIs)* - Stage 2, components of individual courses, specifically the learning outcomes, teaching and learning activities, and assessments are mapped against the BTIs stipulated in PPST. It is done using various mapping tools such as the CQA forms, heat maps, and audit matrix.
- *Collation of BTI Coverage for All the Courses in the Program*- Stage 3 combines the individual audits results to reveal the program coverage.
- *Identifying the Gaps and Under-and-Over Representation*- Stage 4 is the process of identifying the competencies that are not taught in the kind of depth needed (*Under-and-Over Representation*) or even not taught at all (Gaps). This stage answers whether or not the desired outcomes/standards (PPST) and the actual outcomes are aligned.
- *Formulating Ways to Respond to Gaps, and Under-and-Over Representation*- Stage 5 refers to the mechanisms implemented to discover solutions to the ambiguities identified.
- *Consultation with the Course Teachers*- Stage 6 includes schemes conducted to meet and inform the individual course teachers.
- *Revising and Amending of Courses*- Stage 7 deals primarily with enhancing/revising the course syllabus, addressing the outcomes adequately, and aligning the under and over-represented outcomes

The cycle operates contextually. The research instruments were specifically constructed to document the implementation practices in each of the seven stages. Because CQA is implemented not only by the curriculum specialist but by the entire college, it is just inherent to explore the processes from the viewpoints of the implementers with consideration to the idea that the implementation phase is complex

due to numerous possible factors which can impact educational innovations (Shilling, 2013).

Furthermore, this study also documented the challenges encountered by the faculty and college CQA team. Darling-Hammond (2012) emphasized that Higher Education Institutions' (HEIs) implementation of curriculum innovations deserved to be explored, especially in light of the fact that teacher education is a vital ingredient in effective teaching. Challenges encountered and experiences are/were showing actual implementation practices shall provide the basis for the formulation of policy.

1.3. Objectives of the Study

The study explored the implementation of CQA in the participant university.

Specifically, it sought to:

1. describe the practices of implementing CQA vis-à-vis the seven stages of the cycle (Figure 1),
2. identify the challenges encountered by both the faculty and the local CQA team, and
3. come-up with policy recommendation to strengthen its conduct.

2. Method

2.1. Research Design

This qualitative research employed the use of Narrative Inquiry. This approach studies experiences understood narratively. It is considered a valuable way to explore how individuals perceive and construct events and experiences (Reissman, 2008). It required the researchers to reconstruct participants' experiences to the context framing this research. It includes the process of moving from the field (with starting points in telling of stories), to field texts (data), to final research texts (Clandinin and Connelly, 2000).

In this study, Narrative Inquiry focused on the content of the participants' responses gathered through qualitative data gathering tools (Focus Group Discussion and open-ended questions). Reissman's Narrative Thematic Analysis was utilized where themes were framed after commonalities in the data were organized. It employed an a posteriori temporal designation of themes or theme designation after collecting data (Constas, 1992). Since the researchers tried to uncover the practices in implementing CQA, and the data were generated directly from the participants' experiences, Narrative Inquiry is deemed suitable for the study.

2.2. Research Locale and Participants Sampling

The study was conducted in a state university in the province of Bukidnon. The university has been serving as a teacher-training institution since 1924, and its curriculum has undergone shifts and transitions. Awarded as Center of Development (COD) for Teacher Education, it is committed to submitting its Pre-service Teacher Education programs into the CQA process to align with the PPST.

The university's College of Education (COE) has 37 faculty who are teaching professional education courses. This research involved 23 purposively selected COE faculty handling professional education courses in the school year 2017-2018. The purposive sampling technique allowed the researchers' deliberate choice of an informant due to the qualities the informant possesses. It is considered a nonrandom technique, where the researchers set out the people who can and are willing to provide the information under knowledge or experience (Bernard, 2002).

There were two groups of participants. The first group included the regular faculty, teaching professional education, and the second group is the local CQA team. The CQA team attended the PNU-RCTQ's series of workshops about CQA's conduct, the language of the standards (PPST), and the audit tool, which capacitated them to lead the on-site curricular development work in the university. A total of 23 professional education faculty were invited to answer the open-ended questions. Seven of them were further invited as participants in the FGD. The FGD included three CQA team members and four regular faculty. Alongside the other members of the CQA-Team, who were not participants in any of the data collection, were invited as a panel of experts to validate the themes that were created and to inter-code the results of the document analysis.

2.3. Instruments

The researchers used three tools in gathering the data, which facilitated the triangulation method. The list included a validated questionnaire, Focus Group Discussion (FGD) protocol, and archives of CQA documents. The researcher-made questionnaire was composed of open-ended questions about the CQA implementation, reflecting the participant's actual practice of every stage of the cycle and its challenges. Protocols were also used to guide the researchers in the conduct of the FGD. The FGD questions were made parallel to the open-ended questionnaire to develop more detailed information on the responses. Both instruments were content-validated by panel of experts.

Archives of CQA documents were used and have provided the researchers with close checking to the narrative responses collected from the questionnaire and FGD. These documents include printed and electronic copies of Workshop design, attendance, certificates, Resource Packages, Audit Tools, External Evaluator's Feedback, and Proceedings from Curricular Development work and Syllabi. The documents were not appended to observe the confidentiality of information strictly.

2.4. Data Collection

The primary data collection was conducted through the administration of the open-ended questionnaire. A Proper protocol in gathering data was observed. All participants accomplished an informed consent form. Another letter was given to seven of them, as the participants of the FGD, which is the secondary data collection procedure. The FGD participants were informed that their participation was strictly voluntary, as stipulated in the informed consent. Motive questions guided the FGD. Only one session was conducted. Questions were answered individually by the participants. The researchers made follow-up questions for clarifications until saturation of data was achieved. During the FGD, the discussions and responses that lasted about 1 hour and 25 minutes were videotaped. The Proper venue inside the school was selected to ensure that it was free from noise and distraction.

Subsequently, document analysis was also done. Permission was secured from the dean to allow access to documents used and produced in the cycle stage. To determine what documents to check, the researchers considered the input processes and output requirements as agreed by the University and PNU-RCTQ. These documents include workshop attendance and proceedings, course syllabi, audit tools, resource packages, and evaluator's feedback. Confidentiality was assured and emphasized. No names were mentioned in the discussion of the results.

2.5. Validity and Reliability

The researchers considered the validity in this study in measures such as rigor (Golashani, 2003) and trustworthiness (Onwuegbuzie & Johnson, 2006). Reliability appraises the consistency of results over time. Reliability contains a particular embedded notion of stability which means that results are repeatable over time (Golashani, 2003). The researchers subjected the instruments (the open-ended questionnaire, the FGD protocol, and the document analysis matrix through a rigid review and examination by 3 experts (all curriculum specialist). The experts' comments and suggestions were integrated before the instruments took their final form and were administered for data gathering. The researchers gathered the data employing triangulation. According to Patton (1999) triangulation makes it possible to compare and to cross-check the data, thus assessing the consistency of information coming from the different sources at different times. Olson et al. (2016) noted that triangulation has been one of the most used methods to ensure validity in research. Additionally, Fusch, G., Fusch, P., and Ness, L. (2017), highlighted that the triangulation technique allows the researcher to explore several facets of the studied phenomenon. Data were gathered using the three instruments, that is employing triangulation. After data were gathered, codes were generated. To ensure reliability of the coding, they were sent to panel of experts for inter-coding.

2.6. Analysis of the Data

Reissman's Thematic Approach aided in the narrative data analysis. The process includes coding, sorting, and identifying of themes as they capture commonalities across the data gathered. The researchers consolidated the qualitative responses of the 23 participants who answered the open-ended questionnaires. In obtaining a general sense of information, rudimentary patterns were noted. The two sets of transcripts (Questionnaire and FGD) were compiled in one table to check for commonalities in the participants' narratives. In doing the compilation, participants were assigned with code names, and any participant identifiers (e.g., names) were removed.

The coding process was done manually. Recurring words and patterns generated were identified. The researchers reread the narratives and highlighted main ideas on which corresponding codes were developed. Codes were then placed into themes. Themes were generated for every stage of the cycle. Themes were created as a posteriori to data collection.

To further validate the analysis, the researchers explored the documents such as workshop attendance and proceedings, course syllabi, CQA audit tools, resource packages, and external evaluator's feedback. Analysis of the documents provided the researchers with a way to close-check the qualitative data interpretation from the first two gathering tools. It is to be noted that the researchers only conducted a document-availability check to verify if the available documents supported the statements of the participants regarding their claimed practices.

2.7. Ethics Statement

The study adhered to the ethical requirements of the university. Since there is human participation, all ethical guidelines on the Data Privacy Act was followed and there were no issues raised by the participants during the entire duration of the study.

The researchers also explained important details such as the objectives and methodology. Informed Consent forms were given to the participants to signify who will voluntarily participate in the study. No names were revealed to provide anonymity and confidentiality. Also, due permission was sought in the access of documents.

3. Findings

This section presents the results of this qualitative narrative inquiry, reflective of the themes derived from: (1) the practices of the university in the conducting CQA, and (2) the challenges encountered. The sequence of presentation parallels this study's statement of objectives.

3.1. Practices of COE in the Implementation of the CQA stages

The themes developed from the participants' narrative responses regarding the CQA cycle's conduct is presented in this section. The researchers generated thematic areas on each of the seven stages in the CQA cycle, as shown earlier in Figure 1.

3.1.1. On Capacitating Faculty Member: ***An Informed and Coordinated Process***

CQA, being distinctive in its process, requires that the faculty are able to perform the audit procedures, which need knowledge on the PPST, understanding its language and pathways of mapping. The ability to participate and skills to perform the procedures necessitate capability building and capacitating activities. Establishing this stage appropriately will run in concurrence to the idea of Hardy and Pegg (2015) that one of the focused areas of curriculum planning and implementation is capacitating colleagues to plan, evaluate and modify learning programs to be able to exhibit exemplary practice in developing students' knowledge, understanding and skills.

Data revealed that the participant university adhered to the capacitating faculty mechanisms established by PNU-RCTQ as the original CQA developer. Implementation Fidelity was shown in the capacitating stage with an informed process of conducting campus-based seminars and workshops for the faculty to participate. The members of the CQA team were the pioneering faculty who were trained first-hand by PNU-RCTQ and who further spearheaded the campus-based activities through cascades of trainings. Participant A stated:

> *"PNU made sure that the collaborators would understand the process, so there were series of conferences, there were workshops that were designed to make sure that the identified experts, who formed the core team, would grasp the whole process. So in the series of orientations among the local participants, it was not difficult because we were also duplicating what has happened and has transcribed the orientations done by RCTQ."*

Additionally, coordination was also practiced. This is evident, when the conduct of the capacitating activities was extended to other colleges. Certain documents such as workshop proceedings and attendance validated this claim, with records showing the attendance of 78 faculty members from the different units of the College of Arts and Sciences (the service provider for General Education); and two faculty from the College of Nursing, the College's partner for the health courses.

Consequently, learning, improvement, and skills gained by all participants from the capacitating stage have to be assured as Hall and Hord (2010) noted that the success of a change begins and ends with the member's understanding of the importance of constructs and dynamics of an innovation's implementation.

3.1.2. On Mapping Courses to the BTIs: ***A Rigorous Process***

The key process of CQA is the actual mapping of courses (syllabus) to the standards (BTIs). This determines how the next stages are done. This is the stage where the involvement and participation of the faculty is deemed to be the most important. The conduct of this stage emphasized the idea of Harden (2001) and Zelenistky (2014) who both agreed that to determine the degree of alignment, individual course/subject is

evaluated in terms of learning outcomes with agreed-upon standards for alignment and depth of coverage.

In the case of the participant university, numerous tasks were done to map the components of individual courses to the BTIs. Curriculum maps and audit matrixes available revealed that the College has mapped all the subjects of all its programs, as also shown by the availability of the accomplished CQA forms, basic and differentiated matrix in the college repository online account.

The CQA forms allow the checking of the content and assessment of the syllabi with the BTI it develops. The coverage map (also called heat map) provides a visual presentation on the extent by which the courses have developed the BTIs (is answered as partially-developed/fully-developed). The audit matrix provides a numerical designation of one (1) if a subject covers a certain BTI and zero (0) if not. Therefore, it shows how many BTIs a certain course develops. The availability of these tools validated the theme of being rigorous. The audit tools played a very important part of this audit process since they provided the basis for the university's development of the standards in its curriculum. Moreover, significant statements from the participants reveal the practice/action done in mapping the course.

> *"We did the BTI heat map where you have to shade according to partial or full, and then we also did the differentiated audit, which was, the existence or non-existence (1-0-1-0)"* *Participant D*

3.1.3. On Collating BTI Coverage for all courses the Programs: ***A Designated Process***

After auditing the individual courses, the audit tools were compiled to develop a general program matrix, which provided a visual representation of the competencies that the whole program covered. Implementation Fidelity was sought, especially with a data manager (person responsible for organizing and restoring electronic and printed data), having been designated. The collation done produced a summarized map that indicates how frequent an indicator was covered, as derived from participant A's response:

> *"There was a summation of all the data. So we were able to put that on a general map, which now comes out as a heat map where we can see the extent of the BTIs being covered in all the courses because this is now coming in a general summarized sort of map or chart or graph."*

The accomplishment of the audit matrices in this stage provided a holistic, visual view of the program's coverage. With these done, the RCTQ's (2017) requirements were adhered to, which are in the form of the program heat map, the basic audit matrix, and the differentiated audit matrix. Moreover, it enabled the evidence-based review and analysis of BTI coverage at the program level. Joyner (2016), in a review of curriculum maps, showed that individual courses are not expected to cover the entire set of established competencies, yet the curriculum as a whole. This is specifically parallel to Participant D's response that:

> "*When you map everything, you get to realized that each subject has its role, and not necessarily that you have to hit everything. Then the bigger picture would also show you that at the end of these major subjects, you get to hit the domains and it's not necessarily that every subject should hit everything."*

3.1.4. On Identifying Gaps, Under-and Over-Representation: ***An Evidence-Based Process***

Being an evidence-based and documented process, CQA underwent critiquing of the accomplished audit tools and collated audit matrices. Significant gaps (under- and over-representation) were revealed. This is supported by the idea that concepts maps allow the members to visualize curricular goals, scopes, and the outcome often for accountability purposes (Perlin, 2011). Thus, the identification of gaps, under-and-over representations in its syllabi employed an evidence-based analysis of its documents.

Meanwhile, in the matrices submitted to external panels, it was found out that over-representation was present when some subjects covered too many BTIs and when certain BTIs were mapped heavily while others were not equally covered. As an evidence-based practice, available documents such as External Panel Evaluation Feedback were analyzed to validate the found gaps. The statement below was lifted from the document sent by PNU-external panels.

> *"Many CQA forms listed topics without information that explicitly articulated the relationship(s) to the BTIs".*

Audit tools have helped the faculty, specialists, and external evaluators to come up with a consensus on the gaps. Figure 2, a sample CQA form, was analyzed to validate the responses on the theme that identification of gaps is an evidence-based practice. Figure 2 further shows that there was an abrupt assigning of BTIs to the topics/content of the sampled course. The second column represents the contents of the course, while the third column indicates the competencies in the Beginning Teacher Indicator of the PPST (presented in numerical figures such as 1.1.1, etc.) that the faculty teaching the subject claimed to have covered. For this specific example, the topic on the Social Dimensions of Education corresponds to indicator 1.1.1 of the PPST. It encompasses the Pre-service teacher's ability to demonstrate content knowledge and its application within and/or across curriculum teaching areas. This points out that the listing of topics alone does not explicitly establish alignment to a claimed competency in the PPST. From the themed-responses, it was analyzed that in identifying gaps, evidence-based identification was made with the availability of documents such as Figure 2 and other documents that were not appended.

Course Structure and Content

Duration	Topic	BTIs CLOs
Week 1-3	**I. The Social Dimensions of Education** • Consensus theory and structural functionalism • Conflict theory • Various interactionist theories	CLO 1; 1.1.1;
Week 4 - 6	**II. Four Pillars of learning** • Learning to know • Learning to do • Learning to live together • Learning to be	CLO 1; CLO 2; 1.1.1 ,1.2.1; 2.5.1 6.1.1
Week 7-10	**III. Intercultural Communication** • Communication and Language • Relationship between language and culture	CLO 1; 1.1.1; 2.5.1 6.1.1

Figure 2. Portion of the CQA form showing topics and BTI hits
Source: COE, Data Manager

3.1.5. On Formulating Ways to Respond to Gaps, Under-and-Over-Representations: ***An Iterative Process***

When gaps, under-and-over representations are already identified, addressing these through responsive mechanisms is the next major undertaking for the CQA team and the panels. It was observed that the faculty had to revisit, review, and re-accomplish audit tools to incorporate the different recommendations in the external evaluations. This practice was observed to be iterative. By requiring inter-coders (who further review and re-audit the same courses), bias auditing as one of the gaps can be addressed, especially when the process has to undergo two-three discerning eyes. This increases inter-coder reliability. Figure 3 shows how iterative practice happens as the form shown in Figure 2 was remade with the insertions of inter-coders, where two or more equally capable coders operate in isolation in coding/mapping the same course, to attain reliability of the auditing. This practice is also captured from one of the participants' actual statements.

> *"Perhaps the most fitting approach there was on the agreeing among the inter-coders because what came out after that is the rewriting of the syllabi"*
> *-Participant B*

Accordingly, re-auditing courses with the inclusion of some elements serve as an essential process since it will then be used to revise the course syllabi.

The iterative nature of responding to the found gaps is also shown with the availability of CQA forms with more substantive and explicit inputs. Responses of the participants also articulate the practices/activities which transpired in this stage:

> *"We're thought all over again, on how to really identify the BTIs and that was the time I think I was thinking in line with completely what is CQA is." -Participant A*

Course Structure and Content

Week	Topics	Coder	Intercoder 1	Intercoder 2	Main Issue	Resolution	Differentiated Audit	BTI Coverage	
								P	F
1- 3	I. The Social Dimensions of Education • Consensus theory & structural functionalism • Conflict theory • Various interactionist theories	CLO 1; 1.1.1	**1.5.1 2.2.1 3.4.1 CLO 1, 2, 3**	**CLO 1; 1.1.1 6.1.1 6.3.1**		**1.1.1 1.5.1 2.2.1 3.4.1 6.1.1 A, B,C**		✓	
4-6	II. Four Pillars of Learning • Learning to know • Learning to do • Learning to live together • Learning to be	CLO 1 & 2; 1.1.1, 1.2.1 2.5.1 6.1.1	**CLO 1, 2, 6 1.1.1 1.2.1 2.3.1 6.4.1**	**CLO 1 & 2; 1.1.1, 1.2.1 2.4.1 2.5.1 6.1.1**		**1.1.1 1.2.1 2.3.1 2.4.1 2.5.1 6.1.1 6.4.1 A, B, C**		✓	

Figure 3. Revised CQA form
Source: COE, Data Manager

Considering the aim of CQA on enhancing and maintaining quality teacher preparation, the gaps found in the process served as an avenue to improve implementation, which further emphaisized the importance of a rigorous systematic analysis. Samsujjaman (2017) accentuated this need as he averred that an effective teacher education curriculum requires systematic analysis as to relevant contents and outcomes, to which Eurydice (2006) echoed, saying that doing so allows the creation of an enabling implementation system, significant to the operationalization of quality assurance in higher education.

3.1.6. On Consulting Course Teachers: ***A Collegial Process***

Collegiality was gleaned in the various ways of consulting the course teachers. There were large-group re-echoing during faculty meetings and even one-on-one consultation between the CQA members and the teachers assigned to audit a certain course. The cooperative relationship was maintained as the faculty agreed to conduct the practice of working by the cluster. The statement can see this of Participant A:

> *"We were already aware of who the faculty that we have to work with is and what subjects we are supposed to audit. So there really was no problem doing that."*

Participant C also stated that:

> *"We are all part of the whole process so, there was no problem in communicating as to the needs and the next step to take because we were all part of the process from the beginning."*

In this collegial manner of consultation, it was seen that the members share a common vision of aligning the curriculum with the standards. Furthermore, the study of Uchiyama and Radin (2009) hypothesized that as a part of managing the mapping process, appropriate steps should be done, which include the consultation with teachers, mainly when gaps are observed.

3.1.7. On Revising/Amending Courses: ***A Continuous Process***

The highlight of the CQA process's implementation is the actual accomplishment of its purpose, which is to redevelop the existing pre-service teacher education curriculum, using evidence-based findings as a basis in writing and revising the course syllabi. At this stage, syllabi are revised, integrating the graduate competencies stipulated in the PPST. When done correctly, the revision process will pave the way for the assurance that the course syllabus/syllabi which Fink (2012) asserted as a structure in HEIs, and Bilbao et al. (2015) as a written curriculum to be a tool that helps in the actualization of the curriculum, are integrating and developing the required competencies among the pre-service teachers.

In the above discussion of the CQA implementation, patterns of faculty engagement to the different activities reflective of what and how it ought to be implemented, as established by the CQA developers, have been evident. It was gleaned that administrators and faculty exhibited fidelity in engagement throughout the first six stages.

At this point in the cycle, the researchers can briefly explore notable practices on how the faculty enacted the final stage of this audit process, and which calls for the commitment and shared vision of everyone involved. Considering the various mechanisms facilitated by the university to revise its written curriculum (syllabi), as evident on the available documents and the participants' actual narratives, it was revealed that the syllabus revisions were made but were still not fully done. Over time, teachers became increasingly aware and engaged in the implementation of CQA. The challenge of the course syllabi's actual revision was also made clear as part of the cycle, but they responded to the challenge differently. Participant G said:

> "*I already have implemented the PPST-based syllabi that I revised, although it's still not yet done"*

It was analyzed that even if the faculty members were provided with the same capacitating activities and went to the same stages of the CQA cycle; still, they perform different pace and adjustments in pushing through with their individual revisions.

> *"The good part was, we are conscious already of these competencies, and so while there is not yet a formal-like a sit-down session on writing the syllabus, I believe the teachers are already conscious of these indicators that would need to be touched."*
>
> *– Participant C*

Considering that the requisite stages were already performed, the faculty enactment of this culminating stage of the cycle still varies due to the individual faculty's situational/contextual considerations. Some faculty members shared that the lack of references for the new curriculum is a reason. Some indicated that they need time. This delayed revision, of course syllabus amongst individual teachers may also be attributed to the different challenges they encountered, which will be discussed in the next section.

3.2. Challenges Encountered in the Conduct of Curriculum Quality Audit

In this section, the challenges encountered by both the faculty and the CQA team are identified. Challenges, which refer to the situations that impede the implementation of CQA were also explored. Shilling (2013) contended that due to the complexity of curriculum mapping, factors that can positively or negatively impact the change could also be numerous. Change theorists cautioned that change could not be viewed as a straightforward, linear process due to the factors and challenges that need to be addressed.

Most of the faculty agreed that ***time management*** is a major challenge. The lack of time caused some faculty to commit errors in the mapping process especially that conclusions regarding course/subject coverage were done abruptly without thorough judgement. If given enough time, procedures might have been done more systematically. The course audit tasks were done within the faculty's regular office hours alongside many other paper works and deliverables. Thus as a participant responded to, the audit process was done out of compliance and submission purposes only. This can be further deduced from participant Q's statement:

> *"Time was of the essence because of the numerous amounts of responsibilities handed to us; we compromised the importance of doing it to do it."*

Insufficient understanding of the complexity of the PPST language and CQA audit tools was also a challenge. Although capacitating activities were provided in the initial stage of the program, the faculty still needs more training on the language of the BTIs. Some faculty members attribute their lack of understanding of the BTI's complexity to the lack of time and training to unpack the pathways of the language of their syllabus against the corresponding indicators in the PPST. The need to organize a well-planned capacitating activity has long been emphasized by Hall and Hord (2010) who noted that successful change begins and ends with an understanding of the importance of implementation constructs and dynamics. The ideas and paradigms, including their technicalities that build the concept of CQA has to be included substantially in the conduct of activities

Since the capacitating stage is one of the two-shot events conducted with topics jam-packed in two days, there was a minimal focus on the technicalities (unpacking of pathways and lexical patterns of the BTI. As seen in the workshop program, topics on the language of the PPST, unpacking of BTIs, and the pathways were allotted with just a

range of one to two hours. Furthermore, there is a big population of newly hired teachers in the College who are not acquainted with the National Competency-Based Teacher Standards, where the PPST was anchored. One participant shared:

> *"Some faculty also find it hard to fully understand the language of the BTIs since not all were trained with NCBTS, the main anchorage of the PPST."*

The conduct of a one or two-shot event was seen to be insufficient in assuring the development of capacities. This result is similar to the idea promoted by Shilling (2013) that continuous learning opportunities should be offered to continuously train newly hired teachers in curriculum mapping processes and procedures and to address the emerging challenges of implementation (Hale & Dunlap, 2010; Yuen & Cheng, 2000).

The CQA team members also encountered challenges as they were assigned to lead the CQA on-site development work. Participant A, a member of the CQA team, agreed that ***motivating the faculty*** has been a challenge, during the focus group discussion. They said:

> *"I am ambitious to look at every subject, but my power is only for maybe two or three subjects. Therefore, the challenge here is how I would invite my co-teachers to sit, do the amendments. The challenge there is the motivation."*

It was sustaining the faculty participation until the revision stage that was hardly realized. In a compilation of the revised audits (an output requirement of the university) in the timeline given by PNU-RCTQ, it was seen that the CQA team did the revisions themselves instead of waiting for the faculty to do it. This is supported by the university's terminal narrative report where the CQA Team Members explicitly indicated that:

> "*The diversity of the faculty also posts another challenge. Reigning in the faculty members' attitude problems in taking the responsibility seriously towards auditing the syllabi, revising the syllabi, and aligning the syllabi with the PPST and the PSGs."*

Assuring *this iterative audit process's sustainability* is another major challenge—this stems-out from the perceived difficulties in managing time, insufficient understanding, and motivation. The iterative nature of CQA requires repetitions of evidence-based making/building, reviewing and audit evaluation. Participant A further expressed:

> *"We know that it is still being implemented; there are still changes that are coming. So, it's disheartening to know that you have finished everything, and you are going to revise again…"*

The challenge of the iterative process of CQA can be associated with the member's resistance to change. The same has been said by Shilling (2013) in her study on challenges of curriculum mapping, where she concluded that it's not the mapping that

teachers don't like; it's more of whether they want or don't want to change. In curriculum initiatives whose features are new and iterative, the tendency for faculty to resist is to be expected. Kurt Levin's Force Field Model of Curriculum Change emphasized that traditional values of the members is a restraining force that hinders its implementation.

The challenges expressed by the members were particularly noteworthy since it affects the over-all implementation of this audit process. It was especially significant to document these challenges. They have influenced how the faculty engaged themselves with the different activities and how they enacted the tasks required, especially the actual auditing of the courses and the final revisions of their courses.

4. Discussion and Conclusion

The mapping exercise provided evidence of the university's continuous quality enhancement in curriculum development. This study, which documented the university's CQA implementation, revealed that crucial features of this audit methodology were practiced. Features like being an informed process, rigorous, collaborative, evidence-based, collegial, and iterative are followed and reflected fidelity to how the program developers describe CQA.

Consequently, additional features also emerged that are not frequently discussed in the literature related to curriculum review practices. These include the practice of designating specific individuals and the revision stage which was revealed to be a continuous endeavor. This can be associated with the claim that teachers make decisions with regards to curriculum implementation based on their knowledge, experiences, beliefs, and preferences (Shilling, 2011).

The revealed features spur a more nuanced conclusion that although implementation fidelity was followed on how the stages of the cycle were practiced, it is the participants'/faculty's commitment, participation and shared vision that determines how curriculum innovations and evaluations would progress. This echoes what educational change theorist opined, that the success of any innovation's implementation culminate in its actual practice (Hall & Hord, 2010), where the faculty serves as forerunners. These features enumerated addressed the study's first statement of objective and it provides insights and understanding into how curriculum audit methodologies such as CQA can be better employed in an academic institution and how future conduct may strategically be done to achieve its aim, maximize the gains and assure faculty participation.

Moreover, challenges affecting the implementation were also revealed. Sustainability of its iterative nature is a significant challenge that stems from other challenges like difficulty in managing time, insufficient understanding of the language and methodology of CQA, and difficulty in sustaining faculty motivation. This conforms to the findings of Shilling (2013), which explicated that teacher buy-in, training for mapping, and resistance to change are the perceived challenges that respondents' fall into in the conduct of curriculum mapping. The significance of giving utmost priority to the faculty and participants couldn't be underestimated, especially that they are at the

frontline, from curriculum mapping to classroom instruction and vice-versa. It is to be particularly noted that though high faculty engagement was sought in the first few stages of the cycle, still, enactment on the culminating stage is a concern to be addressed, giving actions to the various challenges that members encountered in the duration of the audit. Addressing this would concur with Mills' (2003) idea that when expertise and active participation of faculty is ensured, curriculum mapping can be an effective tool to enhance the faculty's curriculum planning skills and more so, it improves collaboration across subjects.

The evidence-based conduct of this audit methodology has provided the university with a tool to shape collective thinking of the college's curricula and to capture the realities in its actual conduct. To further facilitate continuous organizational learning and improvement, it is however, the researchers' wish to leave future researchers with the challenge of studying how institutions could better address faculty members' needs on the efficient conduct of their roles as curriculum makers, implementers and evaluators at their end. This would improve not only the teacher's ability to align their courses, but also, to promote collaborative culture and shared vision in conducting curriculum reviews (Uchiyama and Radin, 2009).

5. Recommendations

As a starting point, the authors recommend that a policy be formulated to ***institutionalize CQA*** in COE. Since the conduct of this rigorous, iterative and continuous CQA process cannot entirely be the responsibility of the educational leaders, institutionalizing it, would provide an assurance of increase in faculty engagement, particularly on requiring individual commitment and shared vision. With courses whose syllabi revision is on-going, continuous conduct is necessary. Thus, institutionalization would be an advantage.

Considering the challenge on the lack of teacher motivation due to insufficient understanding of the complexities of PPST, the institutionalization of CQA would provide the possibility of officially designating a college curriculum committee whose roles include: providing faculty capability building and orientations, facilitating periodic curriculum reviews, and other curriculum development activities.

This qualitative research, however, has limitations. First, it focused only on documenting implementation practices and challenges. It did not provide an exhaustive evaluation of this audit methodology. A distal and anticipated endeavor that this research points, is to conduct more rigorous researches, evaluating not just the implementation, but also, the CQA model used. Future researchers may consider how to reconstruct the model, which merely analyzes documents and artefacts, into a model that would include assessments of implemented curriculum in the actual classroom delivery. This is to consider that teaching and learning is behavioral, and goes beyond the written curriculum. Second, since it documented only the challenges encountered, researchers may consider the conduct of thorough needs analysis among the teachers, especially the newly-hired faculty, regarding their needs on the curriculum development requirements in Higher Education.

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