KaPEhan:
A Collaborative Virtual Platform for Learning During Leisure Hours

Julius Ceazar G. Tolentino, Don Honorio Ventura State University, Philippines

 https://orcid.org/0000-0002-3728-3089

Josephine Luz De Leon-Pineda, Don Honorio Ventura State University, Philippines*

ABSTRACT

This study explored the perceptions of pre-service physical educators (PSPEs) on the KaPEhan strategy, a collaborative virtual platform session to complement classroom-based instruction. This study made use of a qualitative action research design. The action undertaken was implemented among PSPEs of a teacher education institution in Pampanga, Philippines. A purposive sample of those who completed the sessions were asked to voluntarily participate in a structured interview. Aided by thematic analysis, findings revealed that the strategy was viewed positively by the PSPEs in terms of their academic and personal experiences. Although challenges such as conflicts in schedule and inevitable technical glitches were notable, the students recommended that more participants should be encouraged to participate and called for the continuity of the enjoyable sessions. The intervention may be a useful strategy that can be adapted by other teacher education institutions to ensure functional use of leisure time for learning.

KEYWORDS

INTRODUCTION

The threat of facing the novel coronavirus resulting in the coronavirus pandemic (CoVid19) affected most schools, specifically the tertiary institutions, to uphold the continuity of teaching and learning. Considering the pandemic's circumstances on the educational system, the government and higher education institutions across the globe initiated various schemes to sustain teaching activities amidst the new setup (Ali, 2020). This pandemic has provided creative opportunities in the education sector to design activities that will maximize learning through worthwhile learning activities.

Since the restrictions in the pandemic halted the face-to-face operations of the universities in the country, ways to adjust to this situation were proposed and one of these is the conduct of virtual

*Corresponding Author

schools. Virtual school was initially utilized in the mid-1990s and is one of the most prominent methods of distance learning used. Distance delivery using the internet was the most accepted definition of a virtual school. Three forms of instructional delivery in virtual schooling were reported: independent, asynchronous, and asynchronous (Barbour & Reeves, 2009). Also, the education institutions provided several learning opportunities to address the COVID-19 pandemic including online workshops, e-classes, and virtual training. These activities are all web-based (Sonali, 2020).

The implementation of contemporary distance learning contributed to the challenges that the stakeholders are currently facing. Several studies reported the barriers that prevent the improvement of the teaching and learning process in this new setup (Ali, 2020; Srichanyachon, 2014). Ali (2020), upon examining the continuity of the teaching and learning process during unaccustomed situations mentioned that implementing an online learning environment imposes a lot of challenges aside from technical issues. The teaching and learning process may also be subjugated to pedagogical and instructional challenges. Moreover, problems with internet connection are one of the unavoidable barriers that arose in the report of Srichanyachon (2014). The internet being down was hindering the learning process on either the student's or the instructor's end. Thus, delay in the instruction is inevitable. Also, the engagement of the students influences the learning process as they lose interest quickly. The teachers must initiate remarkable activities to capture their students' interest. In consideration of the foregoing situation, administrators were advised to aid and support to their faculty in the construction of creative instructional materials that would help to address the problem (Srichanyachon, 2014).

In contrast, one of the benefits brought by the pandemic was the opportunity for many educators to adopt online learning as Information and Communications Technology (ICT) became a driving force to transform the educational landscape all over the world (Ali, 2020). One Chinese university observed the implementation of online teaching and reported six instructional strategies to ameliorate the learning processes of the students upon the transition to virtual set-up such as emergency preparedness plans, dividing teaching contents into smaller units, accentuation of "voice" in teaching, working with teaching assistants and gaining support from them, strengthening students' active learning ability outside of class, and combining online learning and offline self-learning effectively (Bao, 2020). On the one hand, the online learning modality brings limitations to student learning because of the lack of face-to-face interaction and hands-on opportunities. One of the opportunities provided by this modality is the wider and more flexible venue for collaboration and learning. It allowed teachers, students, and experts to come to one virtual place regardless of their geographical location.

Reinventing learning opportunities in this pandemic challenged the education sectors on how to be creative and innovative. Using various virtual platforms provided a space for learners and teachers to continue learning. The utilization of online learning environments provided venues for collaboration while equipping learners with digital skills. These online platforms can be utilized to facilitate group problem-solving and develop communication skills. Moreover, educators can take advantage of the advantages of these platforms to make personalized learning scalable in large introductory classes (Johnson et al., 2014).

A webinar is defined by Gegenfurtner and Ebner (2019a) as a web-based seminar that is a method to connect the participants and speakers in one online platform regardless of their geographical locations. In this form of a forum, the attendees may interact with each other synchronously using voice-over Internet Protocol (VoIP) and a web camera (Gegenfurtner & Ebner, 2019a). Gegenfurtner and Ebner (2019b) further revealed that webinars are more effective in fostering knowledge compared to other modalities like face-to-face and asynchronous instructions. These web-based seminars may also be an effective instrument for learning and teaching for students and educators (Ramos & Soliven, 2020) It was further suggested that there must be a need for researchers to investigate the current status of technology in an educational context (Gegenfurtner & Ebner, 2019b). The total number of webinars hosted last March 2020 escalated to more than 330% and the number of participants doubled as well (Mayday, 2020). Ramos and Soliven (2020) also reported the experience of the participants

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