

A Guide for Parents and Community Volunteers on Informal Learning: An Extension Program Delivery

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Abstract

Extension program delivery is one of the major functions of higher education institutions in the Philippines, as part of their commitment to contributing to the achievement of the country's development goals. The study investigated the effectiveness of the teaching guide used for the extension program and a total of 191 parents and community volunteers from 15 sitios of Barangay Fairview participated the study. Community volunteers, faculty, and student extensionists collaborated to design a children's teaching guide that assisted in facilitating learning in an informal learning environment. The use of teaching guide in a community with limited access to internet and other available materials can be a viable substitute to promote informal learning in facilitating the child's cognitive development. The findings reveal that participants perceived the teaching guide was excellent and that it was helpful in an informal learning setting. The local officials of the barangay can provide further training to parents and volunteers in recognizing and responding to children's learning behavior and interest. It is also recommended that the partnership between Barangay Fairview and the PUP Quezon City Branch be maintained to develop more learning resources in other subjects like as English language and communication, mathematics, sciences, and arts and crafts.

Keywords: *informal learning, extension program delivery, Teaching Guide, parents and community volunteers*

Introduction

The United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) defined informal education as a subset of non-formal education. It is frequently referred to as experiential learning and can be equated to some extent with accidental learning. It is a learning that occurs because of daily life activities related to work, family, or recreation. Unstructured learning that is typically derived from understanding, knowledge, or skill experiences gained through reading, social contact, and similar training beyond the formal education system—without the use of learning objectives, time periods, or supports, and without the completion of any certification.

Consequently, in 2020, the UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning (UI) supports the use of non-formal and informal learning as a platform to reach underserved communities, promoting relevant learning outcomes, and designing flexible and efficient programs. These intrinsically adaptable modes of instruction are well-suited to rapidly changing circumstances, such as the unprecedented pandemic caused by the COVID-19 disease.

Majority of theorists and designers, as explained in the book written by Evans, Karlseven & Perry (2020), carry a simple idea of informal learning, and present them in terms of categorical interpretation: They often present the idea of simple categorization as categorical analysis (Colley, Hodkinson, & Malcolm, 2002; Manuti et al., 2015). But according to Eraut (2010), knowledge learning is neither a type of learning nor one subcategory of knowledge among a set of knowledge. Rather, it is a spectrum, where one ends up with more intense or less formal knowledge. Although many researchers agree on this perspective, they state that formal learning can be distinguished from non-formal learning on a gradation of learning curve (Sefton-Green, 2004; Straka, 2004). In educational psychology and instructional technology, the sociocultural theory of learning and teaching believed that social and cultural interaction is the source of human development and learning. In other words, people's mental abilities are shaped by how they interact with others and the culture in which they live (Vygotsky, 1978).

Schugurensky (2000) explained self-directed, incidental and socialization as forms of informal learning that are categorized as intentional. Without the imposition of a school-like structure, informal learning among children is typically intentional and guided by elders in the household, such as their parents. Self-directed learning, as defined by Schugurensky, is defined as "learning projects" undertaken by individuals, either alone or as part of a group,

without the assistance of an "educator," but it can also include the presence of a "resource person who does not consider himself or herself to be an educator" (parents fall into this category).

The Philippine constitution stipulates the promotion of informal learning systems, such as self-learning and independent study programs, especially those that address community needs. Since the state recognize the necessity of developing one's talents outside of school, the Department of Education (DepEd) gives many opportunities for expression, encourages community-based entrepreneurship, and gives children training in various skills as a chance to use their own abilities to direct their lives' and encourages everyone to move forward through life in several ways (non-formal and non-academic) interests.

To give more people the chance to learn, DepEd knows it needs to work with different groups (like local governments, non-government organizations, and private businesses) that can not only add to school resources but also help manage them. At the barangay level, the local government units (LGUs) help national agencies plan educational programs, initiatives, and services. Helping parents teach their kids how to learn on their own may help families and communities teach values.

Extension program delivery is one of the major functions of higher education institutions in the Philippines, as part of their commitment to contributing to the achievement of the country's development goals (CMO No.8, s. 2010). Extension is a responsibility to provide services, transfer knowledge, and improve the community's quality of life (Mojares, 2015), especially for underserved sectors, and any developing country's inability to provide an effective extension service is a significant setback during this critical stage of the nation's development (Qamar, 2005).

The conduct of education training initiatives to children in urban poor communities is a continuing effort among state-sponsored universities. A recent extension program with abarangay spurred the authors to investigate the effectiveness of the collaborative effort in designing teaching guide particular for informal learning, the use of appropriate instruction when carrying out learning activities, building of skills in facilitating informal learning, setting learning objectives in informal learning, and physical feature of the teaching guide.

Under the circumstances outlined above, the study aims to help parents and community volunteers in teaching children in their own families and neighborhoods who have little or no access to internet resources is difficult.

Method

Research Design

Survey approach was employed to provide the quantitative or numeric description of the opinions (Creswell, 2014) of parents on the teaching guide used. This helped the researchers to specify and narrow down the variables to describe and determine the participants' evaluation on the effectiveness of the teaching guide used in the delivery of home economics education to the children of Barangay Fairview.

Study Context

The dense households of Barangay Fairview in an official census in 2015 have 36,741 or 69.13% ages 14 and under: 9.19% ages 4-to 9 years old. According to reports, the dropout rate of children going into elementary school in 2015 was 40%. Therefore, an informal learning program through *Edukasyon sa Kalye* (ESK) was launched and became the brainchild of the Barangay Captain (*Punong Barangay*). This initiative aims to enhance the children's motivation to study and learn prior to their formal schooling. In August 2018, the Polytechnic University of the Philippines(PUP) Extension Management Office through PUP Quezon City Branch signed a memorandum of agreement (MoA) with Brgy Fairview. As extension managers, the Branch' Business Teacher Education (BTE) program adopted the *Edukasyon sa Kalye* and helped the Barangay craft lessons, trained ESK parents and volunteers, and facilitated the teaching of children ages 3-5 years old. The '*Edukasyon sa Kalye*' was modified so that it teaches "Home Economics for Kids." Per week, the children learn a new lesson on the Saturdays and Sundays. Parents and other volunteers were taught how to use "Home Economics for Kids" activities to help kids learn about the topics that were planned.

Instruments

A researcher-made questionnaire (Canonizado, 2020) where items have been taken from reading of related literature and studies. The researchers chose to create their own research questionnaire that was tailored specifically for this

study. The questionnaire contains two (2) parts: Part 1-the participant’s profile by age, sex, and sitio where they live; Part 2- the participants’ evaluation of the teaching guide used in terms of designing teaching guide for informal learning;using appropriate instruction when carrying out learning activities;building skills in facilitating informal learning;setting learning objectives in informal learning;and the physical feature of the teaching guide. Cronbach's Alpha, a statistical tool, was used to find out how reliable the 29 questions were, and thirty (30) people evaluated them as a pilot test.Because the participants are from communities, the questionnaires were translated into Filipino so that the participants could better understand the questions.

The questionnaire was administered in Tagalog and then translated into English. However, the author will explain the results to international audiences using the English translation.

Data Analysis

Five-point Likert Scale was used to determine the level of effectiveness of the teaching guide used. Upon calculating the summated score or a mean-item score for a scale or subscale, all items are assumed to have equal weight. Each participant's composite (grand mean) score is calculated by dividing their total score by the number of items on the scale or subscale. This provides each individual with a mean item score that fits within the continuum of response categories (Warmbrod, 2014).

Sample and Sampling Technique

The researchers utilized the stratified sampling technique (Thompson, 2012) in determining the participants of the study. The sample size is distributed from the 15 participating sitios with a total of 376 parents under the *Edukasyon sa Kalye* project. This survey was conducted in Barangay Fairview. Altogether 191 parents whose 3-5 years old children took part in a weekly informal learning conducted by ESK facilitators. Majority of them ages are 30 to 40 years old (34 percent), 41 to 51 years (24 percent), 19 to 29 years (12 percent), and a few teenage parents below 18 years old (7 percent). There are female (92. Percent) and male (7.9%). The 191 participants are from the Barangay Fairview 15 sitios: *Verbena*(7 percent), *Tulip* (7 percent), *Lilac* (7.3 percent), *Basilo I* (7.3 percent), *Basilio 2* (6.2 percent), *Republic* (6.2 percent), *Jaguar* (6percent), *Magnolia* (6.2 percent), *Malibu* (5.2 percent), *Sapamanai* (6.2 percent), *Kislap* (7.3percent), *Sto. Nino* (6.2 percent), *Samafa* (6.2 percent), *Arnai* (7.3 percent), *Cugon* (7 percent), and few did not answer (1.5 percent).

The consent of the Barangay was sought by the researchers prior to the conduct of data gathering. All participants voluntarily took part in the survey.

Results and Discussion

Participant’s overall evaluation of the teaching guide used

Overall, majority of the participants regarded the design of teaching guides and the use of appropriate instructions for carrying out learning activities as 'excellent,' with a grand mean of 4.63 for both. Additionally, building skills (4.62), setting of learning objectives (4.57), and the physical feature (4.56) were also rated as 'excellent'. As shown in Table 1, each of these five criteria was verbally interpreted as 'excellent.'

Table 1. Teaching guide overall evaluation

Evaluation Criteria	Grand Weighted Mean	Verbal Interpretation
Designing teaching guide for informal learning	4.63	Excellent
Using appropriate instruction when carrying out learning activities	4.63	Excellent
Building skills in facilitating informal learning	4.62	Excellent
Setting learning objectives in informal learning	4.57	Excellent
Physical feature of the teaching guide	4.56	Excellent

Designing Teaching Guide for informal learning

As shown in table 2, the instructions provided per activity such as: the statements per instructions are clear; the instruction in each lesson is specific; the instruction in each activity is easy to understand; and overall, the instructions are easy to follow were perceived to be ‘excellent’.

Table 2. Participants’ evaluation in terms of the instructions provided per activity.

<i>Items</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Verbal Interpretation</i>
1. The statements per instructions are clear. [Ang mga nilalaman ng panuto ay nauunawaan.]	4.66	Excellent [Napakahusay]
2. The instruction in each lesson is specific. [Ang mga panuto sa bawat aralin ay tiyak.]	4.53	Excellent [Napakahusay]
3. The instruction in each activity is easy to understand. [Ang panuto sa bawat pagsasanay ay madaling maunawaan.]	4.67	Excellent [Napakahusay]
4. Activities in each lesson are easy to follow. [Ang mga pagsasanay sa bawat aralin ay madaling sundan.]	4.67	Excellent [Napakahusay]
<i>General Weighted Mean</i>	<i>4.63</i>	Excellent [Napakahusay]

As mentioned, *Edukasyon sa Kalye* is a project collaboration between PUP and the Barangay Fairview. The designed teaching guide was regarded as a form of project-based learning (Martinez et al., 2020). As a result, learners typically become active participants in the experience and acquire knowledge naturally as they complete each unit task. Facilitators, as content designers, are thus provided with opportunities for exploration and the development of more contextualized learning activities. The parents and facilitators participation in the design and development of the teaching guide gives a perception of effectiveness among the participants. For some families, school can be a frightening place to go to. Occasionally, it is also a moment when parents are attempting to describe their position as parents and achieve a level of self-assurance in terms of assisting their children in their educational endeavors (Ferrara, 2015). The informal learning setting, in which parents serve as facilitators, can assist parents in bridging the gap between their perceptions of school and the reality of sending their children to school for the first time.

Using appropriate instructions when carrying out learning activities

As shown in table 3, the participants’ evaluation on the use of appropriate instructions includes activities that are based on individual experiences; with real-life application; and activities stimulate learners’ attention were perceived to be ‘excellent’.

Table 3. Participants’ evaluation in terms of use of appropriate instructions

<i>Items</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Verbal Interpretation</i>
1. The module provides activities that are based on individual experiences. [Ang modyul ay nakapagbibigay ng gawain na batay sa sariling kasanayan.]	4.57	Excellent [Napakahusay]

2. The activities provided a real-life application. [Ang mga gawain ay nagbibigay ng kaugnayan sa aktwal ng karanasan sa buhay.]	4.66	Excellent [Napakahusay]
3. The activities stimulate learner's attention [Ang mga gawain ay nakapukaw ng atensyon ng mga mag-aaral.]	4.73	Excellent [Napakahusay]
4. Activities in each lesson are easy to follow. [Ang mga pagsasanay sa bawat aralin ay madaling sundan.]	4.67	Excellent [Napakahusay]
General Weighted Mean	4.63	Excellent [Napakahusay]

Because the parents and volunteers of *Edukasyon sa Kalyelack* formal education or have not been trained as teachers, they lack an understanding of pedagogy. It is essential to include detailed step-by-step instructions when telling others how to complete a task because people must know exactly what is needed and expected of them. Instructions also explain what conditions or resources are needed to complete the task successfully (Kongsvik, 2012). The quality of children's informal learning is linked to their parents' skills (Arsaga, 2011); it is essential to provide simple instructions for proper execution.

Participants' lack of formal teacher training cannot be a hindrance to their initiative in bringing education to all of these children. Thus, the idea of *Edukasyon sa Kalye* is comparable to Ekanayake's (1989) rural pedagogy and alternation pedagogy (Ribeiro, 2008). Rural pedagogy might be seen of as compensatory educational endeavor. Its purpose is to design and employ teaching approaches capable of resolving issues that arise as a result of deficits associated with children's learning difficulties. These children will undoubtedly be connected with economically disadvantaged, socially marginalized, and culturally isolated communities. Poor children, like the majority of children who participated in the *Edukasyon sa Kalye*, fell into this category as well. This approach, which incorporates real-life application in the delivery of learning instruction, is similar to the concept of pedagogy of alternation (Ribeiro, 2008), and it has the goal of capturing the educational experiences of children in a pedagogical project-based setting such as the *Edukasyon Sa Kalye*. However, even if the concept of pedagogy of alternation is more popular in rural education and social movements, the additional learning experiences appear to foster a new project for society and education as well.

Building skills in facilitating informal learning

As shown in table 4, the participants' evaluation on building skills for the learning content such as: each lesson contains enough information and examples suitable to learners; the information is appropriate for the learners; the discussion is up to date; the information is research-based; the module demonstrates the knowledge, skills and abilities that are complete and exact for the learners; the module expressgender appreciation; the module expresses the importance of personal hygiene and nutrition were perceived 'excellent'.

Table 4. Participants' evaluation in terms of learning content

<i>Items</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Verbal Interpretation</i>
1. Each lesson contains enough information and examples suitable to learners. [Ang bawat aralin ay naglalaman ng sapat na impormasyon at mga halimbawa na angkop sa mga mag-aaral.]	4.65	Excellent [Napakahusay]
2. The information is appropriate for the learners.	4.54	Excellent

<i>[Ang mga impormasyon ay akma sa mga mag-aaral.]</i>		<i>[Napakahusay]</i>
3. The discussion is up to date. <i>[Ang mga talakayan ay napapanahon.]</i>	4.56	Excellent <i>[Napakahusay]</i>
4. The information is research-based. <i>[Ang impormasyon ay batay sa pananaliksik.]</i>	4.55	Excellent <i>[Napakahusay]</i>
5. The module demonstrates the knowledge, skills and abilities that are complete and exact for the learners. <i>[Ang modyul ay nagpapakita ng kaalaman, kasanayan at kakayahan na buo at angkop sa mga mag-aaral.]</i>	4.72	Excellent <i>[Napakahusay]</i>
6. The module expresses gender appreciation. <i>[Ang modyul ay naghahayag ng pagpapahalaga tungkol sa kasarian.]</i>	4.53	Excellent <i>[Napakahusay]</i>
7. The module expresses the importance of personal hygiene. <i>[Ang modyul ay naghahayag ng pagpapahalaga tungkol sa personal na kalinisan.]</i>	4.74	Excellent <i>[Napakahusay]</i>
8. The module expresses the importance of nutrition. <i>[Ang modyul ay naghahayag ng pagpapahalaga sa kalusugan.]</i>	4.70	Excellent <i>[Napakahusay]</i>
General Weighted Mean	4.62	Excellent <i>[Napakahusay]</i>

Children frequently struggle with attention, and when presented with a task they perceive to be difficult or challenging, they are even more likely to give up before truly attempting (Reeves, 2015). Assigning learning tasks to children outside of the school context can be extremely difficult, especially when these chores are considered as an alternative to providing no schooling to these 3to-5-year-old children. These children can overcome some of the potential problems offered by home-based or community-based informal learning projects, such as maintaining sufficient motivation, by developing positive attitudes toward learning.

As mentioned in the introductory part of this article, UNESCO (2020) recognized informal learning as a platform to promote relevant learning outcomes. The *Edukasyon sa Kalye* project recognized the value of the learning outcomes that children receive through observation and participation in family activities within their homes, similar to the content of the teaching guide, such as personal cleanliness and home cookery.

Several other scholars have argued that young children should not be exposed to online learning because it does not prepare them socially or emotionally for school and may harm their health and wellbeing (Dong et.al, 2020). Furthermore, brain development is critical during the first five years of life. Babies, toddlers, and young children learn primarily through play (Ramos Jr., 2018); skills building of parents in communities with limited access to the internet and other available materials via the internet is a viable substitute to promote informal learning in facilitating the child's cognitive development.

When it comes to developing teaching materials, deeper understanding of the instructional designs would allow for the proper selection of the appropriate material and the result of illuminating one's content. In knowing what

information to select and how to structure your modules are critical. Recognizing that in choosing projects what is commonly used items is key, not merely accepting the solution that other organizations and project teams have implemented. For learning outcomes, there are two pieces of information that are important to know: 1) and what is required and 2) and which is complementary. The appropriate content selection is most likely to assist learners in achieving the module's learning objectives (Kopzhassarova et al., 2016). With the participants' first-hand experience in developing their own teaching materials, capacity to promote informal learning in young children will be strengthened (Murray, 2021).

Setting learning objectives in informal learning

The participants' evaluation in terms of objectives on the: appropriates; content standards and performance; expresses specific knowledge, attitudes and skills demonstrated in different activities; and providing concepts in many ways that help and allow learners to think independently were perceived 'excellent'.

Table 5. Participants' evaluation in terms of learning objectives

<i>Items</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Verbal Interpretation</i>
1. Each lesson has appropriate objectives. <i>[Ang bawat aralin ay may mga layunin na angkop sa paksa.]</i>	4.56	Excellent <i>[Napakahusay]</i>
2. The lessons provide content standard and performance standard. <i>[Ang mga aralin ay nagbibigay ng mga pamantayang pangnilalaman at pamantayang pang gawain.]</i>	4.49	Very satisfactory <i>[Mahusay]</i>
3. Expresses specific knowledge attitudes and skills that the learner should demonstrate in different activities. <i>[Nagpapakita ng tiyak na kaalaman, saloobin, o kakayahan na dapat ipakita ng isang mag-aaral sa mga pagsasanay]</i>	4.62	Excellent <i>[Napakahusay]</i>
4. The module provides concepts in many ways that will help and allow the learners to think independently. <i>[Ang modyul ay nakapagbibigay ng mga konsepto sa iba't ibang paraan na makakatulong sa malayang kaisipan ng mga mag-aaral.]</i>	4.62	Excellent <i>[Napakahusay]</i>
General Weighted Mean	4.57	Excellent <i>[Napakahusay]</i>

Setting objectives provides a clear picture of what can be accomplished during the process of learning a specific task. Mahajan & Singh (2017) explained the learning outcomes should be listed and written down prior to the start of the course to know and check whether the course is perfectly designed and conducted. To successfully conduct and complete a learning task, the teaching context, learning activities, and assessment scheme must be professionally designed based on the identified learning outcomes.

Physical feature of the teaching guide

As shown in table 6, the participants' evaluation on the appearance of the module such as: being attractive and interesting; use the same designs all throughout the pages; lessons per unit are orderly, arrange and can be easily

understood; the font is readable and clear; the color does not irritate the eye; each photo is clearly shown; and the page is orderly arranged were perceived ‘excellent’.

Table 6. Participants’ evaluation in terms of module appearance

<i>Items</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Verbal Interpretation</i>
1. The cover of the module is attractive and interesting. <i>[Ang disensyong pabalat ng modyul ay kaakit-akit at kawili-wili]</i>	4.44	Very satisfactory <i>[Mahusay]</i>
2. The module uses the same designs all throughout the pages. <i>[Gumamit ng pare-parehong disensyo sa kabuuan ng modyul.]</i>	4.31	Very satisfactory <i>[Mahusay]</i>
3. The lessons per unit are orderly, arranged and can be easily understood. <i>[Ang mga aralin sa baway yunit ay maayos at madaling nauunawaan]</i>	4.60	Excellent <i>[Napakahusay]</i>
4. Each letter is readable and clear. <i>[Nababasa at malinaw ang bawat letrang ginamit.]</i>	4.70	Excellent <i>[Napakahusay]</i>
5. Matches the color and does not irritate the eye <i>[Akma ang kulay na ginamit at hindi masakit sa mata.]</i>	4.60	Excellent <i>[Napakahusa]</i>
6. Each photo is clearly shown. <i>[Ang bawat larawang ginamit ay malinaw.]</i>	4.63	Excellent <i>[Napakahusay]</i>
7. The page is orderly arranged. <i>[Maayos ang pagkakasunud-sunod ng pahina.]</i>	4.63	Excellent <i>[Napakahusay]</i>
General Weighted Mean	4.56	Excellent <i>[Napakahusay]</i>

It is important that children enjoy reading books, and that reading appears to be more fun than work for them. In some studies, picture books provide beneficial importance in the reading skills of children (EBSCO, 2017). Though the book is primarily a teaching tool for parents and volunteers, the authors ensured that it includes a meaningful physical feature appearance (cover page, title, illustration, font size and style) that both parents and children may enjoy.

In terms of narrative and expository text (Swarts & Hendricks, 2000; Gibson, 2011), "most children (and adults) prefer an attractive-looking book over one that is less attractive (dull) in appearance and no linking of its contents."

Conclusion

The *Edukasyon sa Kalye* (ESK) program of Barangay Fairview and the PUP is an informal type of learning that aims to provide children ages 2-5 years old with informal learning opportunities in order to facilitate the child's cognitive development. The parents allowed their children to take part in ESK classes instead of hanging out in the streets. The weekly teaching guide were compiled and turned into a book. Afterwards, participants were asked to voluntarily participate to evaluate the effectiveness of the teaching guide in teaching ‘Home Economics for Kids’.

The “Home Economics for Kids: A Teaching Guide for Facilitators of *Edukasyon sa Kalye* book as the output of the extension program delivery of PUP help the ESK volunteers and parents in teaching the children the basic principles of personal hygiene, home gardening, health and nutrition, and money saving. Barangay Fairview can further develop the ESK program by establishing a community informal education advisory council to help them manage the existing learning centers and facilities in the 15 sitios. The local barangay officials can provide an additional training to the parents and volunteers on understanding children’s learning behavior and interest. The continued partnership between Barangay Fairview and PUP Quezon City Branch through its extension program is also recommended to develop more learning materials in other topics like English language and communications, mathematics, sciences, and arts and crafts.

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