Enhancing Modules on Readings in Philippine History: An In-Depths Evaluation and Input for Improvement

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A B S T R A C T

Modular learning has been one of the resorted modalities due to restrictions brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic. Most educators, including Quezon City University academic personnel, were compelled to redesign course syllabi and develop instructional materials such as the writing of modules suited for distance learning. This study evaluated the module currently utilized in the Readings in Philippine History (RiPH) course and provided inputs for module enhancement. A descriptive method was employed to gather data from one hundred ninety-seven (197) students and nine (9) faculty members. The evaluation of faculty and students showed satisfaction with the module but the feedback revealed some lacking features and weaknesses in the modules, particularly in the content. Validation of various learning tools, like modules, should also be emphasized to ensure the quality of the educational material that is being provided. The inclusion of the student's academic performance measures the learning effectiveness, necessitating validated rubrics to assess students' outcomes through module utilization. Thus, the suggested improvements may provide future directions for the instructional materials as well as for teachers and students to achieve the main purpose even in a flexible learning environment.

RESUMO

Modular learning has been one of the resorted modalities due to restrictions brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic. Most educators, including Quezon City University academic personnel, were compelled to redesign course syllabi and develop instructional materials such as the writing of modules suited for distance learning. This study evaluated the module currently utilized in the Readings in Philippine History (RiPH) course and provided inputs for module enhancement. A descriptive method was employed to gather data from one hundred ninety-seven (197) students and nine (9) faculty members. The evaluation of faculty and students showed satisfaction with the module but the feedback revealed some lacking features and weaknesses in the modules, particularly in the content. Validation of various learning tools, like modules, should also be emphasized to ensure the quality of the educational material that is being provided. The inclusion of the student's academic performance measures the learning effectiveness, necessitating validated rubrics to assess students' outcomes through module utilization. Thus, the suggested improvements may provide future directions for the instructional materials as well as for teachers and students to achieve the main purpose even in a flexible learning environment.

Introduction

The beginning of 21st-century education marked the emergence of technological-mediated pedagogics, critical and creative thinking, collaborative learning, and complex problem-solving (Kong, 2016). These 21st-century skills yielded the educational system to be recalibrated and transformed. This evolution in the educational system can be rooted in technological advancement and innovation (Ebrahim et al., 2020).

In the present day, the COVID-19 virus compelled, even more, tertiary education institutions to migrate their learning delivery from conventional to what we called now e-learning (Dayagbil et al., 2021). This is evident as schools on a global scale are adapting educational technology in teaching and offering online courses due to boundaries brought on by the pandemic. However, the pandemic revealed how only far the preparedness of higher educational institutions are in e-learning and optimizing technology in the teaching and learning process (Ebrahim et al., 2020).

The Philippines and its neighboring countries like Indonesia, Thailand, and Vietnam faced the same problems in education, such as access to technology, connectivity, and digital literacy (Joaquin, 2020). The Commission on Higher Education acknowledged these challenges and responded through Memorandum No. 04 Series of 2020 directing all universities and colleges to implement flexible learning. Flexible learning refers to a pedagogical perspective in which the learning delivery can be done in various ways, depending on the availability and resources of the school's stakeholders (Commission on Higher Education, 2020). In flexible learning, students were given greater opportunities to decide on a learning approach determined by their needs and preferences. This includes the time, place, content, and learning modes that the students preferred which make the learning delivery continuous and uninterrupted (Pawilen, 2021).

The challenges in education due to the restrictions in connection with the pandemic paved the way to see other possibilities in which the academe can innovate to keep pace with advancements brought by technology. The unexpected shift to fully online classes brought educational reforms and policies. The mapping of terrain in education and the volatility, uncertainty, complexity, and ambiguity of the world make these educational reforms and policies continuously explored and developed. This includes the redesigning of the syllabus as well as the learning materials, teaching methods, student interaction, and assessment tools responding to the flexible learning that the school had adopted.

As these unforeseen challenges in the educational landscape brought by COVID-19, it is imperative to evaluate the worthiness of the modules handed to students and to identify areas of improvement, particularly the existing modules for the course Readings in Philippine History (RiPH). The main purpose of the investigation is to evaluate the current module utilized in teaching Readings in the Philippine History course in a flexible learning setting.

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Specifically, this study identifies the strengths and weaknesses of these modules in terms of their language, content, format, objectives, presentation, and usefulness assessment based on the perceptions and experiences of both students and teachers. Through this evaluation, the study aims to offer valuable inputs for enhancing the current RiPH course modules' design and delivery. Ultimately, this endeavor offers to contribute to Quezon City University's efforts to elevate the quality of teaching and learning experiences for students across these pandemic challenges and changing educational landscape.

Literature Review

This exploration is anchored on the comprehensive framework designed by Bundsgaard and Hansen (2011) for the evaluation of learning materials. This framework emphasizes the importance of evaluating learning materials from a holistic point of view, focusing on the determination of both strengths and weaknesses. The application of this design demonstrates relevance in the evaluation of modules developed for flexible learning, as these modules divide the whole curriculum into smaller and manageable units (Guido, 2014). These modules include objectives, content, activities, and assessment, providing learners with self-directed, self-instruction, and self-paced engagement to empower them to study the materials intelligently (Dejene, 2019).

Elaborating on the characteristics of effective modules, Yulastri et al. (2018) underscore qualities like self-instruction, stand-alone usability, accessibility, and manageability. A high-quality module incorporates clear instruction, concise content, reflective questions, interactive activities, and engaging images and graphics to maintain the student's interest and involvement (Ambayon, 2020), considering the primary role of the module is to transfer learning to students. Thus, even if there is an absence of direct teacher presence, emphasizing the importance of careful planning and designing of the module facilitates an effective learning process.

In the landscape of online modular learning, Friestad-Tate et al. (2014) explored the utilization of language patterns and demonstrated how modules encourage self-paced and self-directed learning. However, the authors stressed the supporting role of teacher facilitation in providing assistance to deepen students' understanding through online conferences. This blended approach, which combines modular instruction and teacher-guided interaction, enhances the overall student learning journey.

A complementary perspective by Rajabalee et al. (2021) accentuates the significance of online interaction in reinforcing student participation. Beyond mere knowledge acquisition, students' involvement also demonstrates the ability to apply their learning to real-world challenges (Matthews et al., 2018), increasing satisfaction and mitigating feelings of confusion

or isolation (Rajabalee et al., 2021). Hence, fostering online interactions is crucial for effective learning outcomes.

Despite the fact that there are numerous of literature on modular instruction. However, there are challenges experienced by the teachers using this approach that need to be addressed. Studies revealed that the engagement and interest of students are very limited (Abante et al., 2021) because the framework for presenting the lesson is still traditional and monotonous (Licayan et al., 2021). In this situation, comprehensible guidelines that come from a systematic and well-planned educational framework are needed (Joaquin et al., 2020). Moreover, the importance of reviewing, evaluating, and revising the modules extends beyond mere error correction and fine-tuning, it extends to adapting to the continuously changing demands of the educational system (Maloloy-on et al., 2021).

In light of the ongoing situation, this investigation utilized an alternative approach by involving students and teachers as evaluators of the modules used in RiPH that were developed in the midst of the pandemic. Commonly, in the assessment of instructional materials, experts were the main evaluators. However, this study employs students and teachers as evaluators for the reason that they were the ones who utilized the modules since the involvement of students and teachers should be given great importance in the review process of the constructed module (Dechavez, 2023). Moreover, learners' participation in the evaluation process of the created modules greatly provides assistance towards their acquisition of information and the development of new skills (Olipas, 2023). The experiences and perceptions of these participants provide different angles in planning, designing, and implementing the modules in different courses. This research thus aims to bridge the gap between module design and effective learning in the context of changing educational frameworks.

Methods and Procedures

The descriptive method was used in research to investigate the current condition and interpretation of the findings (Creswell, 2014). This method is appropriate for this study since it aims to evaluate the existing RiPH course modules. The flexibility of this method allows for determining the ways to improve the modules based on the various components.

There were 197 students of Quezon City University enrolled in the RiPH course for the 2nd semester of the Academic Year 2021-2022 and 9 faculty members who strictly utilized the module as they taught RiPH serve as the respondents of the study. The students were 3rd-year Bachelor of Science in Information Technology (BSIT) and were handled by one of the researchers. It is one way to guarantee that students have experience using the module. They were chosen as the respondents because, during the second semester, the course RiPH was only offered to BSIT students. On the other hand, teachers who were part of this endeavor were those who only taught RiPH. However, to avoid biases, faculty members who developed the

modules in RiPH were excluded. Respondents were chosen through convenience sampling due to some limitations brought about by flexible learning.

In conjunction with the mentioned context, this study utilized the Likert-type Instructional Module Evaluation Instrument developed by Torrefranca (2017), with modifications in some of the items to align the indicators according to the objectives of the study. To support the data produced from the Likert-scale responses, an open-ended question in each component was thoughtfully incorporated. This strategic inclusion allowed the researchers to gather more information, which demonstrated the value of a comprehensive evaluation of RiPH modules. Moreover, the presence of these questions facilitated a deeper examination of participants' perceptions, providing qualitative insights that further enriched the understanding of module effectiveness and specific nuances of their involvements.

The experts in the field of Social Science and module writing were requested to verify the validity of the instrument. These authorities hold master's and doctorate degrees in History and Social Science. Additionally, they have experience in both developing and evaluating tests, instruments, and learning materials that were used in various schools and universities. The instrument was evaluated based on the content, format, and language used. Likewise, a Cronbach Alpha test was used to examine the questionnaire's item consistency and internal reliability measures. The results range from 0.797 to 0.988 indicating that the reliability of the instrument was acceptable to excellent (DATAtab, 2021). This indicates that the instruments were capable of eliciting consistent responses from the target populations, either students or teachers, for each component.

Two different survey instruments were employed in this investigation. The first instrument is for the teachers who handled the RiPH course and the second set is for the students who used the modules. The teachers' evaluation instrument used in the study was comprised of six indicators, which are as follows: objectives; language; format; content; presentation; and the usefulness of the modules. On the other hand, the student evaluation instrument was comprised of three indicators, which are the module, language, format, and content of the modules. Teachers were asked who among them used the RiPH modules as their materials for student learning. An ethical review was secured from the Quezon City University – Research, Extension, Planning, and Linkages before the data gathering. All respondents were informed of the whole process regarding their participation in this study. This includes their informed consent and voluntary participation as it was also made clear that they are free to withdraw their involvement in the study anytime. The whole duration of the study guaranteed all respondents no human risk may it be physical, psychological, emotional, or verbal. The identity and information of all respondents were handled with the utmost confidentiality even after the completion of the study. The collected data were used strictly for this study only. Data

were saved in Google Drive and researchers are the ones who have access to it. Finally, after successfully publishing this, all the data gathered will be deleted.

Results and Discussions

The evaluations of students on the modules as revealed in Table 1, provides valuable insights into the students' perception of the materials they utilized. Results revealed that language got the highest mean of 3.21 among all the components with a standard deviation of 0.39. This means that students find the language used in the modules satisfactory, implying that it is suitable for their learning level and helpful for them to acquire the necessary knowledge and skills through the use of the module. Additionally, the standard deviation suggests that students' ratings were relatively consistent with a little variability around the mean rating for the module language component. In other words, students generally agreed on its importance as shown by the relatively low variability value.

The importance of language in instructional materials is supported by Mustapha & Argungu (2019), who claim that language of instruction plays a crucial role as it may enhance or negatively influence students' learning. The overall positive evaluation across all components indicates an affirmation of the success of the instructional modules in satisfying the requirements and preferences of students. Further, this student satisfaction serves as an essential indicator of the effectiveness of the module in supporting the learning process. Although the results are promising, it is important to accept that there are some areas of the modules that need to be improved. The ongoing module modification and fine-tuning provide continued alignment and effectiveness imparting the varying nature of educational challenges and technological developments.

On the other hand, students find the module content as the least satisfactory (Mean=3.15) among the other assessed components, despite still considering it to be at an acceptable satisfaction level. Also, the relatively small variability (SD=0.44) demonstrated consistency in student assessment in this aspect. However, it has the smallest amount of consistency compared to language (SD=0.39) and format (SD=0.38). Building on this sentiment, some student participants revealed the insufficiency and weaknesses of the module content. Supporting this view, Ahmad Zabidi et al. (2017) pointed out that learning materials content accuracy is vital. This alignment of point of view highlights the importance of exploring the specific factors contributing to module content's comparatively lower ranking. In gaining a deeper understanding, it becomes apparent that the content's relevance, benefits, and accuracy play critical roles in molding students' sensitivities. This investigation further provides insights into potential enhancement and ensures a holistic improvement in various module aspects.

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Table 1.

Evaluation of Students on Modules

Components	Overall Mean	SD	Interpretation
Language	3.21	0.39	Satisfactory
Format	3.19	0.38	Satisfactory
Content	3.15	0.44	Satisfactory

Source: Own authorship

The teachers' evaluation of the modules shown in Table 2, offers an understanding of their perceptions and fulfillment with the instructional modules. Remarkably, objectives were spotted as the highest component, with a mean score of 3.40, signifying that teachers were highly satisfied with the modules' objectives. This result is an indication that the teachers' expectations about the instructional outcomes of the modules have been met and effectively aligned with the learning objective.

The main role of the objectives in a constructed module guide the students in their individualized instruction learning experiences. In harmony with the needs, well-defined objectives provide students with proper directions about the fundamental aspects of the module's content to maintain concentration on their learning destination. Thus, upholding objectives to quality standards is paramount, since they are an essential part of the entire quality system (ASQ Statistics Division, 1983).

Additionally, the Format and Language obtained a high satisfaction level among teachers, with mean scores of 3.33 and 3.29, respectively. This indicates that the teachers were satisfied with the modules' organization and structure as well as with the language used. These positive evaluations for Format suggest that the modules present content in an organized and accessible manner, while Language reflects the effectiveness of the modules in facilitating understanding and engagement during the learning process.

Transitioning to the overall module's usefulness, teachers were least satisfied with this characteristic of the module (Mean=3.20). Moreover, the variability result of 0.59 signifies a lack of consensus among teachers with regard to the usefulness aspects of the modules. These findings further suggest that the usefulness of the module could be enhanced by focusing on the areas where teachers find it least substantial. Building upon these insights into the module's apparent limitations and potential areas for improvement, the influence of module usefulness on the motivation and engagement of students becomes predominantly evident in the studies explored by Torrefranca (2017) and Goode (2003).

In conclusion, teachers' modules' evaluation demonstrates their overall satisfaction. The positive outcomes of this evaluation highlight the importance of well-developed modules catering to the various needs of both teachers and students. Constant enhancement and following the quality standards are necessary to optimize the modules' possible influence on students' learning experiences. Finally, conducting research and evaluation addresses the potential areas of improvement and innovation in the delivery and instructional design.

Table 2.

Evaluation of Teachers on Modules

Components	Overall Mean	SD	Interpretation
Language	3.29	0.38	Satisfactory
Format	3.33	0.43	Satisfactory
Content	3.26	0.48	Satisfactory
Objectives	3.40	0.34	Satisfactory
Presentation	3.22	0.52	Satisfactory
Usefulness	3.20	0.59	Satisfactory

Source: Own authorship

Inputs to the Readings in Philippine History (RiPH) modules for flexible learning

The survey implied satisfactory ratings from all the components both from students and teachers. However, some respondents have noted their observations that reveal both the weaknesses and insufficiency in the content of the module. There are parts that became challenging for the students to understand because of the unfamiliar words used and how they are conveyed with clarity. This resulted in the need for the teacher's presence and guidance which means students cannot afford to miss synchronous classes despite the presence of the module. This leads to a suggestion to simplify the words and make them readily comprehensible, especially in giving instructions. Since there were vocabulary words that may be unfamiliar to the students, at least have a part of the module wherein important terms are given a definition. Lastly, an idea came out questioning the use of English as the instructional language for the course RiPH. It seemed appropriate that the Filipino language/mother tongue should be used as the medium of instruction instead. This was supported by a study conducted at the National University which revealed the use of the Filipino language in RiPH class had improved the students learning engagement (Villegas, et al., 2021).

The dense text in the module contributes to the dullness of the module presentation. It is highly recommended to at least include a visual design, links for voice, and video recordings that make the module suitable for all kinds of learners. One factor that contributes also to the dullness of the module is the lack of activities or thought-provoking questions in between the

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presentation of the content. It is also helpful to highlight important keywords or details in the body of the content to make it noticeable.

The main goal of the module is the independent learning of students particularly in times of inability to attend the synchronous class. This makes the content extremely important as the learning transfer depends on the quality of the content found in the module.

First, the observation in terms of the module conveyed information was very short and incomplete. The lack of information restricts the students to dig further and deeply understand the lessons on history.

Second, students also noticed that the lessons failed to touch on the vital values that should be inculcated for them to become morally upright and responsible citizens as these are the end goals of the RiPH. This supports the study of Gregorious (2022) on the importance of integrating values into RiPH not only for character development but also in improving the student's academic progress.

Third, students find the activities absurd. The module's activities should be revisited and ensure that it is meaningful, and useful (University of Tasmania, 2022). It means that activities should be aligned with the learning outcomes and will engage students in holistic learning. Lastly, the activities should have a long-lasting impact on the lives of the students as they can apply them in real-life situations as supported by the studies of Rajabalee et al. (2021).

The weaknesses observed in the modules manifest that characteristic of modules particularly, stand-alone failed to achieve. This characteristic is important as modules are self-directed and self-instruction which was mentioned and supported by the claims of Yulastru et al. (2018), and Friestad-Tate et al. (2014).

Conclusion

The self-assessment results demonstrate that the RiPH modules were appreciated by both teachers and students. The student's assessment in terms of the three aspects (language, format, and content) received a rating that was considered to be satisfactory. The teacher's evaluations based on the five factors (language, format, content, objectives, presentation, and usefulness) received a rating that was considered to be satisfactory. Although the self-evaluation suggests positive results, the feedback from the respondents revealed the areas where the module can be improved. The most cited area is the quality and quantity of the content which learning highly depends on it.

This study suggests revisiting and revamping the module, particularly in the component of content. Providing the most essential and sufficient information will help the teachers and students achieve the end goal even in a flexible learning setup. The validation of learning tools like modules should also be included in the process as it ensures the quality of the educational material.

The self-assessment tool may fail to offer accurate evaluations. Thus, triangulations are advised for use in evaluating the modules. A one-on-one interview may help to dig deeper into the realm of students' and teachers' experiences and challenges in using the instructional module. Aside from an interview, the turnout of module submissions may also be an indicator of the effectiveness of the material. Lastly, the student's academic performance should be considered as a mechanism to determine if the module facilitates learning for the students. A validated rubric is needed to gauge students' learning through the module and its designed learning.

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