

Implementation, Success And Challenges Of The Omsc Learning Continuity Plan : From The Lens Of Faculty

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Abstract.

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a profound and rapid impact on higher education institutions across the world resulting from the lockdowns and movement restrictions which resulted to cancellation of face to face classes and necessitated the crafting and implementation of a learning continuity plan. This study focused on the extent of the implementation, success and challenges of the OMSC Learning Continuity Plan viewed from the lens of the faculty members. The qualitative-quantitative approach and Reflective Cycle design were used to gather and give meaning to the experiences of the faculty as the plan was implemented. A questionnaire was used to gather data and virtual focus group discussions were conducted to contextualize the narratives of the respondents. Results of the study indicate that the faculty believe that LCP was highly implemented in terms of its four major components of: instructional management and supervision, human resource development, learning resource development and delivery and safety and conducive learning environment. Moreover, the LCP was highly successful in terms of attainment of learning outcomes, resource mobilization; and equity in access to learning resources. Finally, the common challenges encountered by the faculty members in the implementation of the LCP were: limited access to internet and unstable internet connection, difficulty in assessing performance-based tasks and related learning experience especially laboratory subjects, difficulty in tracking, checking student's outputs especially for large class sizes in online modality, late submission of students' outputs particularly those in modular distance learning, dissertation/Thesis defense schedule could not be fixed due to students' connectivity problems and students' inability to participate in group activities.

Keywords: Higher education learning continuity, COVID-19, OMSC Learning.

I. INTRODUCTION

The Covid-19 pandemic is one of the most disruptive, unexpected and life-changing event that took the world completely by surprise in 2020. Schools and institutions of higher learning were adversely affected by the lockdowns and movement restrictions imposed by the governments. As a result thereof, students and faculty have migrated from physical to virtual classrooms, with many caught unaware and had to learn new things at a lightning speed. (Creed and Morphet, 2020). For educators, the COVID-19 pandemic is an ultimate test of adaptive and transformative agility, one for which there is no guidebook or standard procedures that can guide appropriate responses. Education leaders must roll out their adaptive capacities – and with specific outcomes – as the pandemic runs its course (Chekin Lee, 2020). In the Philippines, when the HEIs were closed during the lockdown period, students and teachers faced a great uncertainty with the swift change in the educational system (Judy, 2020) from face to face physical classes to flexible learning often described as online classes, within a matter of days (Johnson, Veletsianos & Seaman, 2020).

The Covid-19 pandemic caused an academic crisis that needed effective learning continuity planning to ensure that learning continues even as the whole country is plagued with the pandemic. A learning continuity plan seeks to ensure that students' learning progresses even amidst disasters such as natural calamities, storms, fires, and pandemics. This plan overcomes obstacles created by the disasters through innovative means of teaching and learning, keeping students on track with their courses. With today's COVID-19 pandemic, the main obstacle that has to be overcome is the need for social distancing, making face-to-face interaction impossible. Therefore, any learning continuity plan to be implemented today has to account for this limitation. In Occidental

Mindoro State College an SUC with an enrolment of 11,200 students during AY 2020-21 , a Learning Continuity Plan was made as a proactive response to ensure continuity of learning amidst a crisis. It called for the College to extend the learning environment beyond the traditional face to face leaning to flexible learning which allowed distance learning system delivered via either online , offline (modular) or blended modality. The roll out of the activities enabled the College to still pursue its mandate of continuously providing higher education services. The study aimed to examine and document the academic continuity efforts of OMSC and the resulting learning experiences and lessons gained from the faculty members' perspective, during the COVID-19 pandemic period. The study hoped to provide insights to academic leaders in managing future disruptive events.

II. OBJECTIVES

This study sought to assess the extent of the implementation, success and challenges of the OMSC Learning Continuity Plan from the lens of the faculty members . Specifically it endeavored to :

1. Assess the extent of implementation of the OMSC Learning Continuity Plan in terms of:
 - a. Instructional management and supervision;
 - b. Human resource development
 - c. Learning resource development and delivery
 - d. Safety and conducive learning environment
2. Measure the level of success of the LCP in terms of :
 - a. Attainment of learning outcomes
 - b. Resource mobilization; and
 - c. Equity in access to learning resources
3. Identify the challenges experienced by the respondents during the implementation of the LCP.
4. Based from the results of the study, make recommendations to better improve learning delivery during the pandemic.

III. METHODS

Research Design

This was a descriptive study which gathered data from the respondents using a questionnaire as the main research instrument. The mixed qualitative-quantitative methods were used to present a more exhaustive assessment of the OMSC Learning Continuity Plan (LCP). Additionally, the Reflective Cycle framework was used to evaluate the LCP and give meaning to the feelings of the faculty and propose a plan of action to further improve the delivery of higher education services in the new learning environment.

Time and Place of the Study

The study was conducted in Occidental Mindoro State College in its five campuses namely, Main, San Jose, Murtha, Sablayan, Mamburao and Lubang . Data was collected from January 2021 to September 2021 which would have seen the LCP implemented for at least one academic year from August 2020. The total student enrolment inclusive of all the campuses was 11,200 and total faculty implement of 468.

Respondents

Research respondents of the study were the faculty members who were either on contract of service and those with regular status of employment with at least three years of teaching experience. A transmittal letter signifying the intention to conduct the study permit was first sought. When the permission was granted, the researchers distributed the questionnaires together with a consent form among the faculty respondents through their email. A response rate of 67% was recorded with a total of 150 faculty members participating in the study

Research Instrument

A questionnaire was the main research instrument used in the study which prompted the respondents to rate using likert scale the extent of implementation and success of the LCP. The third portion allowed the respondents to narrate the challenges they have experienced during the implementation of the LCP. To validate responses, virtual focus group discussions were held via Zoom meetings.

Data Collection Procedure

Due to the restrictions brought by the pandemic, data was collected online using a questionnaire floated as google form which was sent to the email addresses of the respondents. A waiver was made part of the questionnaire in accordance with the provisions of RA 10173 otherwise known as The Data Privacy Law . A retrieval rate of 67% was achieved after four months. After the survey results came, an online interview was conducted with several faculty respondents to validate the findings of the study. A survey instrument was used as the main tool for data gathering. To validate data and to allow the respondents expound on their perceptions , virtual focus group discussions were conducted virtually . This also allowed the researchers to gather additional qualitative data.

Data Analysis

To present an assessment, frequency, percentage and mean were used. Additionally, the Reflective Cycle framework was used to methodically assess the implementation, measure the success and ascertain the challenges experienced by the faculty members as the forefront of higher education services delivery.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Extent of Implementation of the LCP

There were four main components of the OMSC Learning Continuity Plan namely, Instructional Management and Supervision, Human Resource Development, Learning Resource Development and Delivery, Safety and Conducive Learning Environment and Administrative Support. Together, these were set in place to ensure the continuity of learning in Occidental Mindoro State College beginning August 2020. The following is a presentation of the assessment by the respondents.

Extent of Implementation of the OMSC LCP in Terms of Instructional Management and Supervision

Instructional Management and Supervision refers to the general direction and enabling systems that address the new learning environment as laid out in the LCP (Bates, 2020). The respondents generally perceived a high level of implementation of instructional management and supervision. Specifically, very high implementation levels were observed in adoption of flexible learning modalities in delivering instruction, processes and services (4.54) and clearly communicated instructional and supervisory and management responsibilities (4.58). These findings imply that the LCP has successfully prepared the groundwork for flexible learning suited to the time of the pandemic where traditional face to face modality has given way to distance learning as health and safety of both the learners and the faculty were of utmost priority. Moreover, instructional supervisory and management responsibilities were clearly rolled out. Generally, there was a high extent of implementation of this LCP component.

Table 1. Instructional management and supervision.

| Indicator | Mean | Interpretation |
|--|-------------|-----------------------|
| 1. Adoption of a flexible learning strategy or mode in delivering instruction, processes and services | 4.54 | Very high |
| 2. Clear and unequivocal instruction for an inclusive learning continuity plan rollout , implementation and monitoring | 4.51 | very high |
| 3. Cascading of desired outcomes, goals, and instructional strategies of the remote | 3.54 | High |

learning program.

4. Clearly communicated instructional and supervisory and management responsibilities 4.58 Very high

5.A Learning Management System established for faculty and students' use. 4.02 High

Overall Mean 4.31 High

Scale: 1.00-1.50 Very low ; 1.51-2.50 -Low ; 2,51-3.50 -Moderate ; 3.51-4.50 High; 4.51-5.00 -Very high

Extent of Implementation of the OMSC LCP in Terms of Human Resource Development

The LCP specifically provided for the continuous professional development, cross-skilling upskilling, and retooling the faculty members and other academic staff to meet the rigors of flexible learning. The respondents believed this component of the LCP was highly implemented (3.98). Specifically, high implementation were observed in terms of provision of training/workshops on module development and the training of non-teaching academic staff to enable them to lend support to the faculty members in facilitating flexible learning. The respondents revealed that at first they needed assistance from IT proficient staff to get used to technology and the platforms for online synchronous and asynchronous teaching modalities. The respondents also cited that the webinars and training conducted by the College helped them prepare for flexible learning modality but struggles with the use of technology were felt during the first two weeks of classes. A moderate implementation (3.5) was perceived by the respondents in terms of provision of career development opportunities by sending to graduate studies and attendance to e-learning and development activities. Validating this finding with the faculty and Staff Development Committee, it contended that no new faculty scholarships were awarded for institutional finding but faculty were encouraged to seek externally-funded local and international scholarship grants. However, in-house faculty e-trainings and webinars were largely available for the faculty's taking. One respondent said "*There were many webinars to choose from, sometimes we prioritize which one to attend. Some are initiated by the College, others by other agencies*".

Table 2. Extent of implementation of human resource development.

| Indicator | Mean | Interpretation |
|---|-------------|-----------------------|
| 1.Faculty training and webinars on facilitating flexible learning | 4.02 | High |
| 2. Workshops/training on module development were carried out | 4.23 | High |
| 3. Non-teaching staff are trained to extend administrative/technical support to faculty in the new teaching modalities. | 4.13 | High |
| 4. Faculty members are capacitated on use of various distance learning online/offline platforms | 4.01 | High |
| 5.Faculty members were afforded further career development either by allowing them to enroll in graduate studies or attend e-learning and development activities such as paid/free webinars and trainings | 3.50 | Moderate |
| Overall Mean | 3.98 | High |

Scale: 1.00-1.50 Very low ; 1.51-2.50 -Low ; 2,51-3.50 -Moderate ; 3.51-4.50 High; 4.51-5.00 -Very high

Extent of Implementation of the OMSC LCP in Terms of Learning Resource Development and Delivery

An equally vital component of the LCP is Learning Resource Development and Delivery which constitutes the conceptualization, preparation and packaging of learning resources for use in the new learning delivery whether online, modular or blended. The highest degree of implementation was observed in the revision of course syllabi to attune the learning objectives, desired competencies, teaching strategies, learning resources and assessments tools to attune to the new learning environment (4.31). Understandably, the course syllabus provides a comprehensive description of the course's goals and objectives, assessment techniques and learning outcomes and therefore must be responsive to flexible learning. Pre-covid syllabi used purely face to face

modality and hence must be reconfigured to accommodate flexible learning. The lowest mean was observed in the adequacy of time on the preparation of IMs, recorded lessons and other e-learning resources (3.50). While the respondents felt that the LCP provided for this upskilling, the time was simply inadequate to prepare for at least four subjects' worth of instructional materials. During the virtual focus-group discussion, the respondents cited they particularly found it difficult to prepare printed modules for completely off-line students since it also required printing, binding and distribution of these modules to the students. In the online learning modality, the respondents disclosed that they just upload just the specific lesson in the module for a given week. A respondent said “ *There was just too little time for the preparation, printing and binding for completely off-line students. I have five sections of at least 40 students each and I found it very taxing to prepare 200 sets of module.*”

A finding of interest was the strategy of clustering of general education subjects where the subject teachers collaborated on the production of an instructional material. This not only eased the burden but also established uniformity in learning content and assessment. This constituted the mentoring support for relatively new faculty members. On the other hand vetting by experts was highly implemented with local experts (3.76) in specific field having been designated to review instructional materials for roll out. As was provided in the IP Policy of the College, faculty members may opt to seek copyright of their own works but the same had to undergo vetting and final approval by experts in the College. During the focus group discussion, the respondents revealed they continuously undergo training on distance learning modules development, additional technology skills, digital citizenship and data privacy, social and emotional learning, among others as part of the human resource development during the pandemic. A respondent revealed :”*Good that we were already required to prepare instructional materials even before the pandemic as a requirement in the IPCR, we only have to tweak the lessons to adapt to the new learning environment*”.

Table 3. Extent of implementation of learning resource development and delivery.

| Indicator | Mean | Interpretation |
|--|------|----------------|
| 1. Faculty members are given adequate time to prepare learning resource development such as preparation instructional materials, recorded lessons and other e-learning resources for flexible learning delivery. | 3.50 | High |
| 2. Course syllabi are revised and checked to cater to the new learning modalities | 4.31 | High |
| 3. The faculty are provided with mentoring support in the development of instructional materials | 3.85 | High |
| 4. Use of appropriate assessment tools are ensured | 3.51 | High |
| 5. Learning resources such as modules undergo vetting by experts prior to finalization and roll out | 3.76 | High |
| Overall Mean | 3.79 | High |

Scale: 1.00-1.50 Very low ; 1.51-2.50 -Low ; 2,51-3.50 -Moderate ; 3.51-4.50 High; 4.51-5.00 -Very

high

Extent of Implementation of the OMSC LCP in Terms of Safety and Conducive Learning Environment

One of the hallmarks of the LCP was provision of safety to school personnel as well as the students and the provision of a conducive learning environment for both the students and faculty to thrive in the new normal. This component was assessed to be highly implemented. Specifically, there were very high extent of implementation in terms of : flexible work arrangements (4.46), suspension of face to face learning modality unless prior approval is issued by both the CHED and the local IATF (4.51)and virtual mode of large gatherings such as general assembly, student orientation (4.51).Overall, the respondents felt there was a high degree of implementation of the LCP component safety and conducive learning environment. They cited during the focus-group discussion that whenever a member of their college gets infected with covid, the primary contacts are

advised to work from home for a minimum period of 14 days. There was a general consensus that the LCP was able to provide the faculty a safer teaching environment.

Table 4. Extent of implementation in terms of safety and conducive learning environment.

| Indicator | Mean | Interpretation |
|--|-------------|-----------------------|
| 1. Policies on attending, participating, and organizing events that draw large crowds; travel restrictions | 4.12 | High |
| 2. Where applicable, flexible work arrangements are allowed provided that teaching is continuously done | 4.56 | Very high |
| 3. Provision of temperature scanners, disinfecting stations | 4.12 | High |
| 4. Suspension of face to face learning modality unless approved by both the CHED and IATF | 4.51 | Very high |
| 5. Meetings, general assemblies and student orientation among other large gatherings are conducted virtually | 4.51 | Very high |
| Overall Mean | 4.36 | High |

Scale: 1.00-1.50 Very low ; 1.51-2.50 -Low ; 2,51-3.50 -Moderate ; 3.51-4.50 High; 4.51-5.00 -Very high

Extent of Implementation of the OMSC LCP in Terms of Management and External Stakeholder Support

Management support constitutes the roll out of fiscal and other resources to ensure the successful implementation of the LCP. The respondents believed this component was highly implemented as manifested in adequate supply of paper and printing services for modules (4.65) and provision of internet connectivity (4.12). On the other hand, they deemed provision of e-learning supplies like tablets or laptops for the faculty and collaboration (3.25) with external stakeholders for support (3.45) to be moderately implemented.

On validation during the focus group discussion, the respondents revealed that the earlier announcement for provision of laptops and external memory devices did not materialize due to bidding requirements. However, some said that they have been issued netbooks in 2017. Those who did not have laptops were allowed access to desktop computers in the computer laboratories to conduct online classes. Those who did not have access to the laboratory desktops used their cellular phones. Moreover, the respondents said that more collaboration with external stakeholders would have helped expedite the issuance and retrieval of printed learning modules using LGU resources/services especially during lockdowns when students were not allowed to be out of their homes to either get or submit their printed modules.

Extent of implementation in terms of management and external stakeholders support.

| Indicator Table 5. | Mean | Interpretation |
|---|--------------|-----------------------|
| 1. Provision of internet connectivity to faculty members to ensure continuous learning delivery | 4.12 | High |
| 2. Provision for adequate supplies for e-learning supplies (tablets, laptops) | 3.25 | Moderate |
| 3. Supplying paper and printing services for learning modules | 4.65 | Very high |
| 4. Partnership with the DICT and other stakeholders for bandwidth support and other services. | 3.61 | High |
| 5. Collaboration with external stakeholders for a range of support, including LGUs. | 3.45 | Moderate |
| Overall Mean | 53.81 | High |

Scale: 1.00-1.50 Very low ; 1.51-2.50 -Low ; 2,51-3.50 -Moderate ; 3.51-4.50 High; 4.51-5.00 -Very high

Success of the Learning Continuity Plan

Dayagbil et al. (2021) outlined the indicators of tertiary education LCP to have afforded the stakeholders, especially the students the following: attainment of learning outcomes, resource mobilization and equity to learning resources. In the context of the OMSC, these were given emphasis during the implementation of the LCP.

Success of the LCP in Terms of Attainment of Learning Outcomes

Learning outcomes are statements that describe the knowledge or skills students should acquire by the end of a particular assignment, class, course, or program, and help students understand why that knowledge and those skills will be useful to them. They focus on the context and potential applications of knowledge and skills, help students connect learning in various contexts, and help guide assessment and evaluation (Edizon, 2020). The pandemic has created a new platform in teaching and learning delivery that students and faculty are compelled to accept. In this situation, students have to take responsibility for their learning, be more self-directed, make decisions about what they will focus on how much time they will spend on learning outside the classroom.

Table 6 presents the success of the LCP in terms of attainment of learning outcomes. There was generally a high level of success of the LCP in the attainment of learning outcomes. Particularly, the respondents believed that the learning assessments for specific learning areas were appropriate (4.21) and required learning outcomes were sufficiently attained (4.15). On the other hand, the respondents believed there was a moderate level of success in attaining the skills-based competencies. One contended that : *“There was just no substitute for face to face learning for skills -based courses. While simulation exercises were used in laboratory subjects, complex skills such as those learned by performing an experiment was hard to achieve..”*.

Table 6. Success in terms of attainment of learning outcomes

| Indicator | Mean | Interpretation |
|---|-------------|----------------|
| 1. Overall, the course syllabus was appropriate covered within the semester | 4.12 | High |
| 2. Required student learning outcomes are sufficiently attained | 4.15 | High |
| 3. Learning competencies in skills-based courses were adequately achieved | 3.01 | Moderate |
| 4. Learning assessment tools were tailor fit for specific subject areas | 4.21 | High |
| Overall Mean | 3.90 | High |

Scale: 1.00-1.50 Very low ; 1.51-2.50 -Low ; 2,51-3.50 -Moderate ; 3.51-4.50 High; 4.51-5.00 -Very high

Success of the LCP in Terms of Attainment of Resource Allocation and Mobilization

The LCP provided for expenditures attendant to its successful implementation. Resource allocation and mobilization , either internally or externally funded were made to ensure continuity of learning. There was generally a high level of success in terms of this indicator particularly on printing of modules (4.51) and strengthening of bandwidth capacity to accommodate more users (4.25). One respondent said that :*“Dedicated internet accounts per College have become available so that more teachers could connect to the internet for their online classes”*. Another respondent revealed that: *“Supplies are always available for the printing of modules. We just had to give our master copy for copy printing to the VPAA’s office and the modules would be available the following day”*. There was however, a moderate level of success in availability of DICT-enabled wifi per campus (3.45) and subscription to e-journals and e-references (3.42). The respondents claimed that while there were indeed DICT enabled internet in every campus, some campuses were located in deadspots which resulted to limited internet connectivity. Subscriptions to e-journals have become available only during the second semester of the academic year 2020-21, some respondents noted.

Table 7. Success in terms of resource mobilization.

| Indicator | Mean | Interpretation |
|---|-------------|----------------|
| 1. DICT-enabled free wifi is available per campus | 3.45 | Moderate |
| 2. Provision for printing of modules is ensured | 4.51 | Very high |
| 3. Use of LMS (Google classroom, Moodle) | 3.45 | High |
| 4. Strengthened bandwidth capacity to accommodate more internet users | 4.25 | High |
| 5. Subscription to e-journals, procurement of e-references | 3.42 | Moderate |
| Overall Mean | 3.90 | High |

Scale: 1.00-1.50 Very low ; 1.51-2.50 -Low ; 2,51-3.50 -Moderate ; 3.51-4.50 High; 4.51-5.00 -Very high

Success of the LCP in Terms of Equity in Access to Learning Resources

For many years, students have been exposed to traditional, face- to-face classroom-based teaching when access to learning resources was equal for each student. Outcomes-based education has been integrated into the curriculum and its implementation, but the learning delivery is still under the actual supervision of teachers. Due to ECQ students had to shift to independent learning through the home-based tasks assigned to them by their teachers. While students were allowed to choose among online, modular and blended modalities, their equal access to learning resources was a major consideration. The respondents believed there was a high level of success in terms of equity in access to learning resources provided by the college to the students during the implementation of the LCP. Particularly, a very high level of success was noted in provision of printed modules to students with no internet capability (4.67) and the students' being allowed to choose their learning modality (4.51). During the focus group discussion, a respondent noted that: *"There were specific instructions from our Dean and Program Head that no student should be left behind, that the learning modality should be for the students alone to make and that differentiated teaching if need be will be used in class"*.

Table 8. Success in terms of equity in access to learning resources

| Indicator | Mean | Interpretation |
|--|------|----------------|
| 1. Students are allowed to choose between online and offline modalities depending on their internet connectivity/capability | 4.51 | Very high |
| 2. E-learning resources are made available in LMS | 4.45 | High |
| 3. Students with no internet capability received printed module | 4.67 | Very high |
| 4. Additional learning resources are made available to students and faculty through the e-library services (access to e-books and online journals) and list given by the subject teacher | 3.51 | High |
| 5. E-copies of learning modules are interspersed in between online classes | 4.50 | Very high |
| Overall Mean | 4.30 | High |

Scale: 1.00-1.50 Very low ; 1.51-2.50 -Low ; 2,51-3.50 -Moderate ; 3.51-4.50 High; 4.51-5.00 -Very high

Challenges Encountered by Faculty Members

The themes that emerged as the challenges experienced by the respondents are provided in Table 9. The flexible learning environment has brought with it challenges. With little preparation, there was a finite assortment of resources to address sudden shift from traditional face to face classes to distance learning either online, offline or blended modality. The respondents' biggest challenge was the sudden migration from traditional face to face to distance flexible learning. With 50% of the students opting for online or synchronized classes, the College's IT infrastructure was simply inadequate to accommodate all faculty members with online classes causing limited access and intermittent connectivity especially during the first months of the implementation of the LCP. Another theme that emerged was the difficulty in assessing performance-based tasks and RLE especially laboratory subjects. This was a major concern as reflected in the narratives and during focus-group discussions where some of the comments made were: *"It is very difficult to assess performance tasks for complex skills meant to be performed only face to face. Most of the time simulations would never be enough to judge whether the student has really acquired a particular skill set"* and *"I hope face to face sessions will be allowed soon for laboratory subjects"*.

The assessment measures are essential as an assurance that learners have attained various knowledge and skills and that they are ready for employment or further study (Coates, 2015). Still another theme that emerged on the challenges of the LCP was the difficulty in tracking and checking student's outputs and grading them especially for large class sizes in online modality. The respondents said that :*"while the LMS (Google classroom)*

provided a way for us to track student submissions, checking and returning the checked documents took so much time.”.

There is a need to address the teachers’ concern on how to conduct off-classroom performance evaluation and the bulk of submissions that they have to evaluate which are submitted *online* or offline through the learning management system. The design and planning are important factors to consider not only in the assessment per se but also in the parameters on how students will be graded. The covid 19 mobility restrictions have forced the faculty members to migrate to flexible learning modality for the students through synchronous and asynchronous instruction (Osborne, 2020).

On the other hand, some respondents also found it disconcerting to wait for students’ output in the distance modular modality where communicating directly with the students was very remote possibility. Late submission by students also caused delay in the computation and submission of grades. As reported by respondents: *“It is very hard to communicate with students who were on distance modular learning. Since we do not regularly communicate with them checking their progress was a major challenge. Even if they belonged to the class’s group chat in Messenger, there would be very rare times you could find them online.”*

Another challenge that was cited by the respondents in their narratives was the difficulty in fixing schedules for dissertation/thesis/capstone defense since these had to be conducted online because some students were simply incapable of online defense either due to lack of connectivity or IT resource such as laptops, cellular phones or tablets. Lastly, some respondents pointed out the students’ inability to participate in group activities especially those in the distance modular learning as a challenge. As was pointed out by a respondent in her narrative: *“In the online modality it would be easy to assign students in groups by using breakout rooms, whereas, it is almost impossible to assign group tasks to students in the modular distance learning”.*

Table 9. Challenges encountered in the implementation of the LCP

| Challenges | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|-----------|------------|
| 1. Limited access to internet and unstable internet connection | 100 | 67% |
| 2. Difficulty in assessing performance-based tasks and related learning experience especially laboratory subjects | 71 | 47% |
| 3. Difficulty tracking, checking student’s outputs especially for large class sizes in online modality | 115 | 76% |
| 4. Late submission of students’ outputs particularly those in modular distance learning | 80 | 53% |
| 5. Dissertation/Thesis defense schedule could not be fixed due to students’ connectivity problems | 55 | 37% |
| 6. Students’ inability to participate in group activities | 50 | 33% |

V. CONCLUSIONS

Based from the findings of the study, the following conclusions were drawn:

1. The LCP was highly implemented in terms of its four majors components of: instructional management and supervision, Human resource development, Learning resource development and delivery and Safety and conducive learning environment
2. The LCP was highly successful in terms of Attainment of learning outcomes, resource mobilization; and equity in access to learning resources.
3. The common challenges encountered by the faculty members in the implementation of the LCP were: limited access to internet and unstable internet connection, difficulty in assessing performance-based tasks and related learning experience especially laboratory subjects, difficulty in tracking, checking student’s outputs especially for large class sizes in online modality, late submission of students’ outputs particularly those in modular distance learning, dissertation/Thesis defense schedule could not be fixed due to students’ connectivity

problems and students' inability to participate in group activities.

VI. RECOMMENDATIONS

Anchored from the findings and conclusions of the study are the following recommendations:

1. Building on the initial success of the LCP, other strategic actions may include short-term plans of limited physical classes and long-term plans of pure online classes for some academic programs. Embedded in the plans should be the in-class and off-class mode, re-structuring and retrofitting requirement for limited face-to-face classes, and the further upgrading of internet-based facilities for pure online classes especially in campuses where internet connection is limited.

2. In designing for online or distance learning, there is a need to understand the role of technology to attain the success of the engagement. Internet is not the only factor to consider but also the equipment that is needed for the teachers and the learners to engage effectively. If these are not available, there is a need to evaluate the approach used in the teacher-learner engagement. With the current health crisis with the shifting of learning delivery, the challenge would be on how to provide an inclusive IT infrastructure to provide quality education for all.

3. An assessment of the LCP from the lens of the students is highly encouraged to obtain perspective from the students for whom the LCP was designed. Inputs from the students are valuable in redesigning the academic plans during the pandemic and beyond.

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