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## ASSESSMENT PRACTICES OF LEAD PROGRAMS AND THEIR IMPLICATIONS ON STUDENTS' COMMON FINAL EXAMINATION (CFE) PERFORMANCE AS GROUNDWORK FOR GUIDELINES FORMULATION

**MA. REYZA JANE G. EBRO**

**Instructor II**

PHINMA University of Iloilo

ebromrj@gmail.com

### ABSTRACT

The study aimed to find out the assessment practices of lead programs and their implications on students' Common Final Examination (CFE) performance using mixed method approach by calculating the mean of students' CFE scores and phenomenology under qualitative method. The participants of the study were fifteen teachers purposively chosen from all lead programs of PHINMA University of Iloilo. The data were gathered using a researcher-made questionnaire through in-depth interviews. The study revealed that the teachers in the lead programs of the university provide a variety of assessment activities such as written quizzes, class recitations, group activities, use of active learning strategies, hands-on and oral examinations, return demonstration for clinical subjects, and pre-comprehensive and posttest exams. These mentioned practices were given at different intervals and frequencies across programs, which resulted to their inadequacies and insufficiencies to meet the needs of the students.

A guidelines recommendation was created to help not just the teachers in their assessment practices but also the students in their classroom interaction which may hopefully lead to higher and better Common Final Examination result.

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*Keywords: Teachers' Assessment Practices, Common Final Examination, Student Performance*

## INTRODUCTION

Regular assessments conducted by teachers in the classroom significantly influence student learning more than any assessments performed outside of the classroom (Absolum et al., 2009). These classroom evaluations play a crucial role in enhancing student understanding, especially when they include formative feedback that aids students in grasping their own learning processes.

Classroom assessments enable the evaluation of skills and competencies that are difficult to measure with external, standardized tests. When assessments are carried out regularly, they offer various forms of evidence that educators can use to track student progress and modify their teaching based on learners' needs. Consequently, in countries with effective student assessment systems, there is a stronger focus on classroom activities and the teacher's role (Clarke, 2012).

In addition, teachers in private universities should also employ and practice different assessment strategies to cater the needs of their varied learners while ensuring that they still provide quality instruction. One of the parameters that the school has set for different board programs in the University is for the students to pass their Common Final Examination.

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PHINMA University of Iloilo, in its constant pursuit to bring affordable and quality education to its students, brought about the Common Final Examination (CFE) to all board programs.

The Common Final Examination is given to all students in selected subjects per year level to check and make sure that the students conform and are able to meet the standards and expectations based on the program standards set by the school.

The CFE is given across the network of PHINMA schools, where a common set of tests are given to all students across the network taking the same course. This year the CFE process is being streamlined and thus many initiatives have started. This is where the researcher focused her study on, identifying 15 teachers from the board programs to be part of the study.

The results of the study served as a spotlight that can help Team Learning, deans, school heads, and teachers on what key steps they can do next to provide quality instruction to their students. If the CFE results were to be used correctly, it could determine one student's present levels of strengths and weaknesses, and for teachers to assess and make necessary adjustments in their assessment practices inside the classroom and within the lead program.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

This chapter presents the research method, research design, participants of the study, data-gathering procedures, research instrument, and validity of the research instrument. The purpose of the study is to find out the Assessment Practices of Lead Programs and their

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Implications on Students' Common Final Examination (CFE) Performance as Groundwork for Guidelines Formulation of PHINMA University of Iloilo for the academic year 2023-2024.

## Research Method

The study employed a mixed-method research design, combining the analysis of mean results for each program in the CFE with the collection of assessment practices through in-depth interviews. The interview was conducted face-to-face in the PHINMA UI Sycip Boardroom during the teachers' vacant time to gather the data.

The in-depth interview was employed to have a detailed information about their personal experiences and the different assessment practices they employ in their respective programs.

The interviewer and the respondents engaged in a face-to-face setting to elicit thoughtful responses. The aim was to get their views and experiences through their responses to the questions.

## Research Design

The study gathered information on assessment practices of lead programs and their implications on students' Common Final Examination (CFE) performance as groundwork for guidelines formulation.

The researcher used phenomenological approach of the quantitative-qualitative methods. Bazeley (2009), as cited by Fura et al. (2020), defined phenomenology as a scientific

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approach focused on describing specific phenomena or the appearance of things based on lived experiences. Neubauer et al. (2019) emphasized that the goal of phenomenological research is to portray and capture experiences as they are genuinely experienced. These lived experiences give meaning to each individual's perception of a phenomenon and are influenced by both internal and external factors.

This is why the study adopted the phenomenological approach that shows how lead programs' assessment practices influenced the students' Common Final Examination (CFE) performance.

### Participants of the Study

The identified participants of the study were fifteen (15) tenured teachers taken purposively from all lead programs', with at least two (2) teachers from each lead program of PHINMA University of Iloilo. The teachers have handled subjects with Common Final Examination for at least two consecutive semesters.

### Sampling Design

The researcher used a non-random purposive sampling technique. The researcher agreed with what needs to be known and set out to find people who can and are willing to provide the data by knowledge or experience. The researcher identified individuals who play a key role in teaching subjects associated with the Common Final Examination across all five lead programs at PHINMA University of Iloilo.

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Purposive sampling is the intentional selection of particular individuals, events, or settings due to the valuable information they can offer, which may not be easily accessible through other means (Padgett, 2017).

## Data Gathering Procedures

The researcher formulated the instrument to gather data for the study. A letter of request to conduct the study was sent to the office of the Chief Operating officer for approval. After such, the request was disseminated to the respective program deans. After the approval of the request, permits to conduct the study was also be secured from different levels of governance such as the office of the General Services Department for venue reservations.

Respondents were identified through a purposive sampling technique. Upon approval of the letter, the researcher coordinated with the deans and program heads of all lead programs and picked those qualified teachers. Interviews were conducted at a convenient time for each participant and were done face-to-face with the observance of minimum health protocols. The interview format utilized three different types: open-ended, semi-structured, and structured interviews, all focused on the interview questions.

Using in-depth interview, a voice recording was provided to completely capture the interviewees' responses. Approval from the participants to have the recording taken during the interview was made prior to actual capture. The researcher transcribed, collated the data, and consolidated them for analysis.

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After completing the interviews, voice recordings were transcribed. The original and translated transcripts were categorized into meaningful units and were thematically analyzed.

## Research Instrument

The research instrument used in this study was a researcher-made interview. A panel of experts validated the researcher-made interview guide. All comments and suggestions relative to the validation of the tool was considered.

Face to face and/or group interview was used to conduct the in-depth interview process. A mobile phone with an audio recorder was used to record all the proceedings of the in-depth interviews accompanied by photos. The responses of the participants were transcribed thereafter.

## Validity of the Research Instrument

A panel of experts validated the researcher-made interview guide. Important comments and suggestions relative to the validation of the tool were considered and integrated. The validation ensured that the questions gathered the needed information to answer the research questions.

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## Data Analyses

The research instrument was reproduced according to the number of respondents of the study. The questions were distributed to them to understand and analyze the questions beforehand. Thereafter, the data gathered was organized and analyzed.

The information gathered was analyzed using the thematic approach. Thematic analysis is a method for analyzing qualitative data. The researcher carefully reviewed the data to identify recurring themes, topics, ideas, and patterns of meaning that emerge consistently (Caulfield, 2023).

## Statistical Tools

The researcher solved for the mean score of students in every lead program for the first and second semester in order to identify their overall Common Final Examination (CFE) Performance.

The statistical mean refers to the mean or average that is used to derive the central tendency of the data in question. The mean, commonly referred to as the average, is calculated by dividing the total sum of values in a sample by the number of values in that sample (Hurley, 2023).

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## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The study was conducted to determine the assessment practices of lead programs and their implications on students' Common Final Examination (CFE) performance as groundwork for guidelines formulation of PHINMA University of Iloilo for the academic year 2023-2024.

This study employed the phenomenological research design to describe the assessment practices of the different lead program of PHINMA University of Iloilo. The design is concerned with actual experiences of everyday life as they are experientially lived, sensed, and acted, and in particular the existential experience of situations (Saevi, 2018).

A researcher-made interview guide was used to gather data. The tool was subjected to validity test.

The study revealed that the assessment practices of teachers in the lead programs of PHINMA University of Iloilo are inadequate and insufficient to meet the needs of the students.

The teachers from the lead programs indeed provide a variety of assessment activities such as written quizzes, class recitations, group activities, use of active learning strategies, hands-on and oral examinations, return demonstration for clinical subjects, and pre-comprehensive and posttest exams. However, it is also important to note that only a select few of the teachers were interviewed which sets a certain limit as to the data gathered by the researcher.

It was found out as well that most teachers interviewed in these lead programs do not just rely on the modules provided by the school in their lessons and discussions. They shared that they have to do their research for materials and provide students with supplementary

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notes for a comprehensive coverage of the topics because they have to prepare the students for possible items that may come out in the CFE.

Teachers have varied ways of providing these assessment practices to their students, using the mentioned practices at different intervals and frequencies. Every after discussion, every after two meetings, once a month or seldom only for some teachers. The programs that constantly and strictly use assessment practices in class have shown a higher percentage of students passing the CFE. This highlights the importance of active, meaningful learning experiences and assessments that reflect students' cognitive development. By aligning assessment practices with constructivist principles, educators can better support and understand students' learning processes and foster deeper, more effective learning.

Related problems were relevantly encountered. These are insufficient time for class due to the FLEX class schedule where one meeting is used for remote class and inadequate knowledge of different assessment terminologies and practices that they can use in class. The teachers also mentioned that the coverage of the CFE sometimes does not cover adequate lessons covered in the modules. They also included concerns on test writing and their lack of adequate knowledge and struggles in writing appropriate test items.

The teachers of the lead programs managed the challenges encountered by providing additional materials and resources to their students, catching up on topics and discussion during face-to-face classes and ensuring that written assessments are given once every topic is finished. In terms of test writing, the teachers are still making an extra effort in creating

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relevant and valid test items. However, they are also asking for support and assistance in providing them with trainings best suited for their needs.

Based on the findings, the following insights were drawn: The current assessment practices at PHINMA University of Iloilo are insufficient to address the diverse needs of the students, particularly first-generation college students who lack the foundational assessment of readiness typically provided by entrance exams. This gap highlights the critical need for teachers to adopt tailored, inclusive, and dynamic assessment strategies to support these students in bridging their learning gaps and achieving academic success. By addressing this challenge, educators can foster equitable learning opportunities and empower students to thrive despite their initial disadvantages.

Active learning strategies were proven to be effective in engaging students at PHINMA University of Iloilo, encouraging them to take ownership of their learning process. Teachers have observed that peer-based learning not only makes the experience more enjoyable but also enhances understanding and retention. This highlights the importance of collaborative and interactive teaching methods in creating an inclusive and effective learning environment, particularly for first-generation college students who may benefit from the support of their peers.

The concern on the assistance needed by the teachers in terms of assessing students in class was also raised. Majority of these teachers are incidental teachers—educators who lack formal training in teaching methodologies and assessment practices—creates a significant

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challenge in meeting the diverse needs of students. Their limited exposure to innovative and student-centered assessment strategies often results in the use of conventional methods, which may not align with the students' learning needs. This underscores the urgent need for targeted professional development programs to equip these teachers with the skills and knowledge necessary to implement effective, adaptive, and inclusive assessment practices that foster student success.

To improve the quality of assessment practices at PHINMA University of Iloilo, teachers need institutional support in several key areas: clearly defined program outcomes, access to modern and relevant resources, conducive learning environments, and regular professional development. Challenges such as outdated materials, inadequate facilities, and limited training hinder their ability to deliver effective assessments tailored to student needs. Addressing these gaps through proper resource allocation, classroom improvements, and targeted seminars or training will empower teachers to enhance their practices, fostering better learning outcomes for students.

## Conclusion

In light of the findings and insights arrived at in this study, the following recommendations are forwarded:

A set of guidelines suggested namely: (a) Constant use of formative assessments inside the classroom such as oral recitations and maximize using the "Skill-Building Activities and Check for Understanding" part of the learner's modules. (b) Administration of recorded quizzes like

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written quizzes that must be given at least once per week or 4-5 times per period. (c) Giving summative assessments such as unit tests and long quizzes at least once or twice per period. (d) Use of active learning strategies as formative assessment such as: group activities and brainstorming sessions, individual metacognitive activities and hands-on and problem-solving activities. (e) Administration of pre-comprehensive exam (Summative Test/Post Tests) before the CFE, (f) Strengthening periodical remediation and enhancement efforts from lead programs and (g) Installing Feedback Sessions or Consultation Time.

In order for these guidelines to be effective, they need support mechanisms namely: (1) Program Mapping and Listing of Course Learning Objectives, (2) Continuous Module Editing and Updating, (3) Peer Teaching, (4) Classroom support and layout appropriate for active learning, (5) Coaching teachers, (6) Provide Active Learning Toolkits, (7) Test banking and safe-keeping of test materials, (8) Immediate feed backing, (9) Teacher Seminars and Assessment Training and (10) Teacher-friendly class schedules are needed.

The school administrative council, consisting of the COO, ACOO, Deans and the Program heads, together with PHINMA Team Learning PH should work together in providing these support mechanisms that are best suited to the needs of the teachers in the different lead programs.

The listed guidelines would guarantee not just the quality of teaching but also secure the alignment of the different assessment practices inside the classroom as used by the teachers. The constant use of formative assessments inside the classroom such as oral

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recitations, short quizzes, problem solving activities and maximizing the use of "Skill-Building Activities and Check for Understanding" part of the learner's modules ensure that teachers are catering the different needs of their students.

The use of active learning strategies are highly encouraged and administration of pre-comprehensive and summative exams are a must to help students prepare mentally for their CFE.

Most importantly, periodical remediation and enhancement efforts including immediate and timely feed backing sessions should be provided by teachers to their students. This ensures that students are made aware of their progress and weaknesses in certain subjects and also allows teachers to give targeted and focused remediation to students needing help.

CFE teachers are also expected to continuously improve their pedagogical expertise, share best practices and resources through peer teaching, and are encouraged to participate in different trainings and seminars if there is any that should be provided.

The deans and program heads of each respective program should consistently monitor the needs of their teachers and students so that they may be able to assist them once certain needs arise. Continuous coaching and mentoring sessions should also be provided to the teachers for continuing professional development.

Another research study is encouraged to be conducted in other PHINMA Education Network of schools also to find out the different assessment practices of teachers in their lead programs.

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