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ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION ALTERNATIVES FOR THE SCHOOLS DIVISION OFFICE OF LEGAZPI CITY

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ABSTRACT

The study dealt with the assessment of environmental education (EE) in selected public elementary schools in the Schools Division Office of Legazpi City. It described the level of awareness of the learners, teachers and school heads on environmental principles. This was followed by measuring the level of competence of the learners, teachers and school heads on environmental principles. Also, the environmental education practices implemented in the school following RA 9512 and DepEd Order 52, s. 2011 were identified. The challenges encountered by the learners, teachers and school heads in implementing environmental education were identified. And finally, explored what environmental education alternatives may be proposed to further strengthen environmental education.

This study considered the mixed method of quantitative and qualitative research employing the descriptive survey. Data and information were obtained/ generated using the researcher prepared questionnaire-checklist, interview, observation, and documents analysis. This study was participated in by 137 grade 3 pupils, 103 teachers and 35 school heads or a total of 275 respondents.

Some of the significant findings of the study are: (1) the learners are "Aware" of the seven environmental principles of nature while the Grade 3 teacher and elementary school head respondents are "Highly Aware "of the seven (7) environmental principles.

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Based on the results, the learners achieved "Competence" while the grade three teachers and elementary school heads in SDO Legazpi City obtained the "Competent". All respondents are competent on environmental principles of nature.

The leading implemented environmental education practices of teachers in SDO Legazpi City are the following. Making use of various instructional materials such as books, visual aids, teaching guides and materials in making students aware of the concerns and issues on the environment ranked first closely followed by incorporating ecological solid waste management in the school system. Conducting classroom drills, discussions and activities related to environmental education in the related learning areas was reported next followed by intensifying lessons regarding environment on all science subjects while the leading implemented environmental education practices according to the school heads are conducting lecture-seminars, workshops, conferences and other forums relating to environmental education ranked first. This was closely followed by the following which obtained similar ranks, intensifying lessons regarding environment on all science subjects, making use of various instructional materials such as books, visual aids, teaching guides and materials in making the students aware of the concerns and issues on the environment, conducting classroom drills, discussions and activities related to environmental education in the related learning areas, incorporating ecological solid waste management in the school system, establishment and maintaining of a mostly indigenous and endemic flowering plant garden with the revival of Gulayan sa Paaralan (School Inside a Garden Program) and poster- making contest on environmental education awareness which obtained the same rank.

There were challenges encountered by the teachers and school heads in implementing environmental education in schools. Nearly three-fourths of the teachers encountered time constraints due to heavy workload which ranked first, followed by limited training of teachers on environmental education, low awareness and interest of the students on environmental education

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and negative attitudes of concern for the environment and motivation to improve or maintain environmental quality.

The school heads considered limited training of teachers, time constraints due to heavy workload of the teachers, negative attitudes of concern for the environment and motivation to improve or maintain environmental quality and low awareness and interest of the students on environmental education, the leading challenges. Alternatives to strengthen the environmental education include Adopt-A-Tree Follow Through; Co-sponsor continuing environmental to identify the contents; and Intensify partnership with local government and other institutions, among others. Hence the conclusions are: The learners are aware of the environmental principles while the teachers and school heads are highly aware or knew and understood well the said environmental principles. The respondents have the competence related to environmental principles. This is the reason why they can be effective in delivering classroom instruction and in giving technical assistance as regards environmental education.

There were several environmental education practices implemented by the teachers and school heads in schools which are beneficial in EE implementation. There were also practices which were not implemented that should be given more attention by the higher authority. Teachers and school heads have four topmost environmental challenges encountered in the implementation of Environmental Education in school. Several alternatives were presented to further strengthen Environmental Education in schools.

Thereby, the study recommended that there is a need to continue exposure of the respondents to the environmental principles to sustain their level of awareness through participation in field trips, continued awareness campaigns in school involving them and strengthening the integration of environmental education not only in science subjects but in all learning areas. Also, participation in training, seminars and symposium on environmental

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education. The respondents need to further enhance their level of competence to become highly competent on environmental principles. This will be done through the conduct of training, seminar-workshops, conferences and forums. The Environmental Education should be further strengthened through conducting activities like field trips to eco-parks and other nature parks, construction of material recovery facilities in all schools, contest on reduce, reuse and recycle and conduct of activities on preservation of campus heritage trees through co-sponsorship with the DENR/LGU/NGO/PTA and other stakeholders. Training/seminars, workshops, symposium related to Environmental Education should be given to teachers and school heads to help them acquire knowledge, skills and attitude in resolving environmental challenges. Also, Environmental Education should be incorporated in all learning areas. Other alternatives will be accepted to further strengthen Environmental Education in schools. A similar study should be conducted in another division.

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