

ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION OF TRANSITION SKILLS: A TRANSITION ENHANCEMENT PROGRAM FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

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ABSTRACT: *The transition program is designed to develop the transition skills of students with special needs to become independent and productive citizens in the future. The study was conducted to assess and evaluate the transition skills of students with disability and the level of partnership among parents/guardians and teachers. Pre and post-assessment of students' transition skills in bread and pastry and housekeeping were conducted to determine the skills need to develop and master. Students do not have knowledge and skills in the competencies of bread and pastry and housekeeping in the pre-assessment of their skills. However, the students performed satisfactorily to fairly in the post-assessment of their transition skills. Further, there is a highly significant effect of the transition skills training in the development and mastery of the students' skills both in bread and pastry and housekeeping. It is therefore recommended that the Department of Education should improve the transition program focused on skills enhancement training with skills assessment for students with disability. The collaboration of parents, school heads, and teachers should be built to support the performance and well-being of the students. The school should also organize training of transition programs for school heads, teachers, company/establishments for advocacy and future partnerships. Time series evaluation should also be done in the transition skills training for monitoring and sustainability.*

Keywords: Assessment and Evaluation, Transition Skills, Transition Enhancement Program, Students with Disability

INTRODUCTION

The COVID-19 pandemic has created unprecedented challenges economically, socially, and politically across the globe. More than just a health crisis, it has resulted in an educational crisis. During lockdowns and quarantines, 87% of the world's student population was affected and 1.52 billion learners were out of school and related educational institutions [1]. The suddenness, uncertainty, and volatility of COVID-19 left the education system in a rush of addressing the changing learning landscape [2].

In addition, the disruption of COVID-19 in the educational system is of great magnitude that schools must cope with at the soonest possible time. Coping with the effects of COVID-19 in education institutions demands a variety of perspectives among stakeholders. The students who are the core of the system, the faculty members or teachers who perform various academic roles, parents, and guardians who share the responsibility of learning continuity, the community, and the external partners who contributed to the completion of the educational requirements of the students [2].

Specifically for secondary students with disability, their work skills regressed because of the pandemic. Thus, providing a job for students with disability is an issue for many employers. Even though some of the students with disability have basic learning skills and are capable to acquire more vocational skills through training, they are not given the opportunities to gain work experience and maximize their potential in the working world [3]. Students then continue to face significant difficulties in living independently and significant barriers to participation in the workforce [4]. Preparing these students to be independent, productive, and even skillful in performing work tasks, some employers still do not consider them as potential members of the workforce. There are perception, fear, myth, and prejudice continue to limit understanding and acceptance of students with disability in the workplace everywhere [5]. These are the challenges for DepEd teachers handling students with disability.

Thus, these students must be trained in dealing with people and equipped with the transition skills which primarily begin at an early age or at least by the age of 14. This is the core objective of the transition program to develop the basic work skills the students needed for independent living and future employment. This must also be delivered in a manner that it would generate employment and teach the students the skills and competencies that they will be able to manage the aspired job [4].

In view thereof, [6], appended that the training for students with disability should be based on manual or practical skills. The practical skills should be explicitly taught which are necessary for survival in the workplace and in the community [7].

In this study, the students were already trained of transition skills in preparation for a job later in life. However, intensive training is needed for mastery of the skills. Their skills must be assessed too based on their capabilities and chances to develop their skills. The most significant transition program that has a clear and practical path for the students is bread, pastry, and housekeeping. These programs develop their skills in preparing and producing bakery/pastry products, and organizational skills to arrange things in an orderly yet simple way. However, due to the pandemic, activities assigned and maximizing the utilization of their skills are not properly observed and monitored. Teachers find difficulty in the delivery of instruction and its practical tasks for the students to perform. Moreover, parents' cooperation is needed as partners for the teachers in the achievement of the goals set for these students.

Thus, assessment and evaluation of students' transition skills is of great importance through the skills enhancement program for further skills development and to be effective workers.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The study used of mixed method approach, [8] specifically the sequential exploratory approach. It is characterized by an initial phase of qualitative data collection and analysis followed by a phase of quantitative data collection and analysis. The quantitative data is used to enhance and complement qualitative results. This approach is especially useful when the researcher's interest is in enhancing generalizability, and it may or may not be guided by a theoretical perspective. Exploratory sequential mixed methods are an approach to combining qualitative and quantitative data collection and analysis in a sequence of phases [9]. In the first phase, the researcher collected qualitative data and then analyzes the data, the results of which direct the next, quantitative phase, a survey or some other form of quantitative data collection. That is, the qualitative analysis provides critical fodder for developing specific research questions for the quantitative phase, which involves a questionnaire, survey, or another form of quantitative data collection. The qualitative aspect of this study is the discussion of the Skills Enhancement Program for students. The quantitative aspect in the study is on the performance of students in pre-assessment and post-assessment.

Participants

There are six (6) students in the high school level transition class between the ages of 18-30 that serve as the participants of the study. These students are assessed by a doctor specialist with their specific types of disability.

RESULTS AND FINDING

The result of the pre-assessment of students' transition skills in bread and pastry is very unsatisfactory. This means that they do not have knowledge and skills in the competencies of bread and pastry (Table 1). Although the competencies are explained in detail with demonstration, they have difficulty in their application considering their ability to grasp knowledge and understand the procedure given. For familiarization and mastery, an activity was conducted in the identification of ingredients and utensils to be used in bread and pastry. Different ingredients for baking and pastry were introduced such as flour, yeast, vanilla extract, salt, sugar, egg, cheese, and the likes. Different tools and equipment were also introduced like mixing bowl, whisk, measuring cups and spoons, and others.

Table 1 Pre-assessment of Transition Skills in Bread and Pastry

	Description	Mean	Standard Deviation	Verbal Description
Competency 1	Prepare bakery products	1.13	0.10	Very Unsatisfactory
Competency 2	Prepare pastry products	1.07	0.10	Very Unsatisfactory
Competency 3	Decorate and present pastry products	1.00	0.00	Very Unsatisfactory
Competency 4	Store pastry products	1.00	0.00	Very Unsatisfactory
Competency 5	Prepare sponge and cakes	1.00	0.00	Very Unsatisfactory
Competency 6	Prepare and use fillings.	1.00	0.00	Very Unsatisfactory
Competency 7	Decorate cakes	1.00	0.00	Very Unsatisfactory

However, they had difficulty identifying it, especially those ingredients, tools, and equipment that are not familiar to them. Students have a hard time selecting, measuring, and weighing ingredients according to the recipe and choosing and using appropriate equipment as well. Preparing, filling, and decorating pastry products were also a big challenge to the students. They were hesitant to read the labels and explain the usage of each ingredient.

Table 3 Post-assessment of Transition Skills in Bread and Pastry

	Description	Mean	Standard Deviation	Verbal Description
Competency 1	Prepare bakery products	3.73	0.21	Satisfactory
Competency 2	Prepare pastry products	3.73	0.21	Satisfactory
Competency 3	Decorate and present pastry products	3.33	0.52	Fair
Competency 4	Store pastry products	3.33	0.52	Fair
Competency 5	Prepare sponge and cakes	3.73	0.21	Satisfactory
Competency 6	Prepare and use fillings.	3.33	0.52	Fair
Competency 7	Decorate cakes	3.33	0.52	Fair

They would shrug their shoulders as an indication that they do not have the idea. Therefore, full assistance is needed for them to be motivated to do the activity most in familiarizing themselves with the ingredients, equipment, and usage.

It can be gleaned from Table 2 the pre-assessment of students'

transition skills in housekeeping denotes a very unsatisfactory result. The competencies given are basic in a real-life situation that may or not be experienced yet by the students. Still, they do not have knowledge and skills in housekeeping. They have difficulty in using/handling appropriate cleaning tools, equipment, and supplies. Similarly, they need more time in washing soiled dishes, and pot pans as well as wiping kitchen fixtures, tables, and chairs. They need also full assistance in checking beds and mattresses, stripping, pillows and linen for changing or making bed and cot. Basically, they were not used to doing these activities because these are done by their parents or house helper.

On the other hand, students also have difficulty in reading and following instructions. Simplification and repetition should be given emphasis for clear instruction for the students.

Table 2 Pre-assessment of Transition Skills in Housekeeping

	Description	Mean	Standard Deviation	Verbal Description
Competency 1	Use appropriate cleaning tools, equipment, supplies, and materials.	1.33	0.52	Very Unsatisfactory
Competency 2	Maintain cleaning equipment	1.00	0.00	Very Unsatisfactory
Competency 3	Use Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) correctly in accordance with Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) procedures and practices.	2.00	0.00	Unsatisfactory
Competency 4	Clean surfaces and floors	2.00	0.00	Unsatisfactory
Competency 5	Clean furnishing and fixtures.	1.25	0.39	Very Unsatisfactory
Competency 6	Make up beds and cots.	1.83	0.41	Very Unsatisfactory
Competency 7	Clean toilet and bathroom.	1.14	0.00	Very Unsatisfactory
Competency 8	Clean kitchen	1.00	0.00	Very Unsatisfactory

The post-assessment (Table 3) of students in bread and pastry as evaluated by two teachers is from satisfactory to fair. This is indicated that the performance of students varied in each task per competency. Moreover, students were able to prepare a pastry & bakery product following the steps and procedure. They have properly mixed the ingredients in dry and wet ingredients and mixed them both. They have also performed the bakery products filling and decorating the pastry product using icing. The practical use of tools and equipment like a hand mixer, oven, electric stove, and rice cooker was also performed by the students. At first, they fear using the tool but when encouraged to hold and experience gradually becoming to use it. Based on their experiences, students were able to complete their tasks on time. Students were able to overcome challenges like adapting to the new mode of learning, experiencing difficulties to communicate and understanding instructions, and completing tasks given on time. They were able to complete the tasks with self-confidence and pride with adequate training and emotional support.

The success of the tasks completed is an opportunity for the students to gain work experience. With the assistance and support from teachers, supervisors, and parents, students with disability can overcome the challenges [10]. Therefore, the success of the students does not only depend on the training but also the commitment of the individuals who played important roles as mentors, friends, and family members.

While the post-assessment of transition skills in housekeeping (Table 4), most of the competencies were performed fair by the students. Though there is one competency that performed unsatisfactorily the increase in performance as compared to the pre-assessment is

noticeable.

As mentioned in his study [10], students faced challenges in their workplaces. They have struggles in adjusting to their new environment, interacting with others, understanding instructions, and displaying negative attitudes. Fortunately, with assistance from special education teachers, supervisors, and members of the family, students were able to perform the tasks and gain valuable experience at the end of the training.

Table 4 Post-assessment of Transition Skills in House keeping

	Description	Mean	Standard Deviation	Verbal Description
Competency 1	Use appropriate cleaning tools, equipment, supplies, and materials.	3.33	0.52	Fair
Competency 2	Maintain cleaning equipment	3.00	0.00	Fair
Competency 3	Use Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) correctly in accordance with Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) procedures and practices.	2.00	0.00	Unsatisfactory
Competency 4	Clean surfaces and floors	4.00	0.00	Satisfactory
Competency 5	Clean furnishing and fixtures.	3.50	0.77	Fair
Competency 6	Make up beds and cots.	3.33	0.52	Fair
Competency 7	Clean toilet and bathroom.	3.43	0.00	Fair
Competency 8	Clean kitchen	4.00	0.00	Satisfactory

In Table 5, most of the skills in bread and pastry are not yet mastered even though it was introduced and performed in the pre-assessment of students' transition skills. The tasks they have performed is with the assistance and guidance of an expert and/or even the members of the family. Moreover, the assistance given will be gradually ceased to ensure their capability in performing the tasks [11].

However, they really need time to process the steps and procedures in doing the tasks. As per observed, they were confused as to what comes first and so on. Thus, demonstration be repeated and mind conditioning in performing the tasks. In this situation, various techniques were used to help the students better understand the concepts and skills required to perform a task on their own.

In the post-assessment, students mastered the skills in preparing bread and pastry products and preparing sponges and cakes.

While in housekeeping, it was highlighted their fair performance in the cleaning of surfaces and floors and cleaning the kitchen as well. The rest were also performed without the teacher's assistance. By then, they gradually performed the tasks with confidence even if not perfectly done. In this phase, the students were able to complete tasks independently and mastered the skill set required to do so. The students did not need the help of the teacher anymore.

According to [12], the "more knowledgeable other" is needed for the students to provide them with instruction during their learning process. While a student might not yet be capable of doing something on their own, they are able to perform the task with the assistance of a skilled instructor, which may include a parent, a teacher, another adult, or a peer. Eventually, support can be quickly and easily assembled and disassembled once the learning task is accomplished.

Table 5 Student's transition skills as mastered on their pre-assessment and post assessment

Transition Skills	Pre assessment	Post Assessment
Prepare bakery products	1:13	3.73
Prepare pastry products	1.07	3.73
Decorate and present pastry products	1.00	3.33
Store pastry products	1.00	3.33
Prepare sponge and cakes	1.00	3.73
Prepare and use fillings.	1.00	3.33
Decorate cakes	1.00	3.33
Bread and Pastry	1.02	3.50
Use appropriate cleaning tools, equipment, supplies, and materials.	1.33	3.33
Maintain cleaning equipment	1.00	3.00
Use Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) correctly in accordance with Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) procedures and practices.	2.00	2.00
Clean surfaces and floors	2.00	4.00
Clean furnishing and fixtures.	1.25	3.50
Make up beds and cots.	1.83	3.33
Clean toilet and bathroom.	1.14	3.43
Clean kitchen	1.00	4.00
Housekeeping	1.51	3.66

The result indicates (Table 6) that there is a highly significant effect of the transition skills training in the development of the students' skills both in bread and pastry and housekeeping. Skills training is significant in the development and mastery of transition skills of the students. This would be the platform for preparing them for the real workforce and be given the space and opportunity to develop their potential. By then, assessed their readiness for work later in life [13].

Table 6 Performance of students with disability's when grouped according to pre-assessment and post-assessment

	Pre-test	Post-test	T-Stat	P-Value
Bread and Pastry	1.03	3.50	15.358	1.06x10 ⁻⁰⁵ **
House keeping	1.51	3.66	42.527	6.78x10 ⁻⁰⁸ **

*** Highly Significant*

Hence, the study put emphasis to conduct transition skills training through a modified transition skills program to develop the skills of students with disability in terms of bread and pastry, and housekeeping. Hands-on activities are provided for the students to practice and master. This skills enhancement is not just a set of activities; it is an educational equity package that includes curriculum and policies that will support the education of students with disability. The activities and skills in the enhancement program will prepare students for several vocational programs. These programs are benchmarked with technical and pre-baccalaureate vocational programs to ensure coherence, alignment of curriculum to higher-level learning, and quality. It includes skills-based activities that aim to develop further the skills and competencies of the learners with the possibility of helping them become entrepreneurs.

Furthermore, it enhances the skills acquired by the students for mastery in preparation for any job opportunity. The transition skills aimed to help students become functional despite their disabilities, enjoy their daily lives, and empower them to become more useful and productive citizens.

CONCLUSIONS

Transition skills pre- and post-assessment are essential in determining the skills of the students to be developed and need to be mastered in preparation for a job later in life. A skills enhancement program is needed for mastery of the skills through a transition enhancement program. This program served as a platform for preparing them for the real workforce and being given the space and opportunity to develop their potential. This is also in preparation for the world of work as well as to create positive and meaningful experiences. Moreover, it is not all about the skills training but the positive attitude of the students with the guidance of the teachers and with the all-out support of their parents.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Transition skills aim to help students become functional despite their disabilities, enjoy their daily lives, and empower them to become more useful and productive citizens. The transition program is significant for the students to improve and master skills tailored to their capabilities. Thus, the Department of Education should improve the transition program focused on skills enhancement training with skills assessment for students with disability. The collaboration of parents, school heads, and teachers should be built to support the performance and well-being of the students. The school should organize training in a transition program for school heads, teachers, company/establishments for advocacy and future partnerships. Time series evaluation should be done in the transition skills training for monitoring and sustainability.

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