EXPLORING THE CHALLENGES AND APPLICATION OF GAGNE'S NINE EVENTS OF INSTRUCTION IN THE FLEXIBLE LEARNING PROGRAM: A PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY OF TECHNICAL-VOCATIONAL-LIVELIHOOD (TVL) STUDENTS' EXPERIENCES

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ABSTRACT. *This research study explores the experiences of Technical-Vocational-Livelihood (TVL) students in the Flexible Learning Program (FLP) and investigates the application of Gagne's Nine Events of Instruction in the Flexible Learning Program. The study aims to identify the challenges in implementing systematic teaching approaches and provide evidence-based insights to inform program design and curriculum development. The research design utilizes a Hermeneutic Phenomenology approach, and data is collected through in-depth personal interviews with 11 TVL students. The data analysis followed the direct content analysis. The study reveals challenges in meeting the events of instruction, emphasizing the need for improvements in instructional practices to enhance student engagement and learning outcomes. Based on the findings, recommendations are made to provide professional development for educators, allocate instructional design support, establish mentoring programs, offer comprehensive student support services, evaluate instructional practices, and strengthen the technology infrastructure. By implementing these recommendations, the university can create an environment that fosters student engagement, motivation, and meaningful learning outcomes in the flexible learning program.*

Keywords: Andragogy, Challenges, Flexible Learning Program, Hermeneutic Phenomenology, Student Outcomes, Technical-Vocational-Livelihood (TVL)

1. INTRODUCTION:

During the pandemic when face-to-face classes are difficult to implement; the Commission on Higher Education issued a memorandum to allow the Flexible learning program [1]. In response to the need, a Science and Technology State University in Northern Mindanao, Philippines implemented a flexible learning program to accommodate synchronous and asynchronous modalities of learning [2]. Asynchronous learning involves the distribution of learning modules to students, enabling a flexible and self-paced educational approach. It does not require students and instructors to be present simultaneously. The key concept revolves around providing students with access to online resources or modules that they can study at their convenience. This approach allows learners to independently advance through the content at their preferred speed, facilitating personalized learning experiences [3]. At the beginning of the semester, educators uploaded all the modules for the entire semester onto a learning platform. These modules are scheduled and organized according to the syllabus, ensuring that students have a clear roadmap of which module to complete each week. This student residing in areas with unstable internet connections to download and print the materials at their convenience.

In the synchronous learning mode, teachers actively facilitate real-time interactions with students by utilizing video conferencing platforms and other communication tools [4]. They engage in live lectures, lead discussions, provide immediate feedback, and address students' queries [5]. To create an interactive and engaging learning environment, teachers employ diverse teaching strategies and multimedia resources [6]. This approach encourages active participation and enhances students' comprehension of the subject matter. Particularly in higher education institutions, where courses involve significant hands-on skills, educators utilize online platforms. An example supporting the occurrence of synchronous learning is a study conducted by Lagunero and Namoco [7], which

focused on utilizing Web 2.0 tools as an online platform for developing dressmaking competencies among BTLEd students at a State University in Northern Mindanao. It was found in their study that teachers instruct their students to watch tutorial videos on YouTube and conducted class meetings through Google Meet while using Facebook and Messenger for class communication.

Furthermore, another study by Sambaan and Namoco explored the creation of interactive learning objects by educators to replace face-to-face instruction in certain instances [8]. In a similar vein, in a study conducted by Halili [9], the utilization of online platforms for synchronous learning by participants in adult education was examined. The study explored the tools and features they employed to collaborate and communicate in real time.

After three years of implementation of FLP, it has been observed during casual conversations with students that they struggle to learn effectively through both synchronous and asynchronous modalities. This difficulty arises from the absence of a structured instructional delivery system [10]. During FLP, instructors provide minimal facilitation and instead encourage students to explore online platforms like YouTube on their own, resulting in students submitting activities merely for compliance. When teaching approaches lack systematicity, several disadvantages can arise. One significant drawback is the potential for disengagement and a lack of motivation among students [11]. Without clear structures and meaningful learning experiences, students may perceive the content as irrelevant or uninteresting, resulting in reduced effort and enthusiasm [12]. Additionally, a non-systematic approach may foster surface-level understanding, with students focusing on rote memorization rather than deep comprehension. This can hinder their ability to apply knowledge effectively or think critically [13]. Furthermore, a lack of systematicity may lead to a reliance on copying information from external sources, such as the internet or peers, rather than

developing independent learning skills [14]. Consequently, students may struggle to transfer their knowledge to new contexts or provide meaningful explanations, resorting to paraphrasing or citing sources instead [15]. These disadvantages underscore the importance of implementing systematic teaching approaches that promote engagement, deep understanding, critical thinking, and independent learning among students. Gagne's Nine Events of Instruction is an instructional design model renowned for its systematic approach to teaching and learning, ensuring learner engagement, effective information presentation, practice, feedback, performance assessment, and reinforcement [16].

After three years of the implementation of FLP, the pressing question is: How effective has the FLP been, particularly for TVL students who require hands-on activities? This study seeks to investigate the lived experiences of TVL students while navigating the FLP modality, with a particular emphasis on their application of Gagne's Nine Events of Instruction. Additionally, it can contribute to the broader field of technical education research by providing evidence–based insights to guide future program design and curriculum development.

2. METHODOLOGY

The Hermeneutic Phenomenology Research Design was utilized in this study to comprehensively explore the real-life experiences of students in the TVL field who underwent the FLP modality. By focusing on interpreting the meaning of participants' lived experiences, this qualitative approach allowed researchers to capture the context, subjective perspectives, and underlying factors that shaped students' encounters with TVL education and the FLP, providing valuable insights into their unique journey [17].

This study recruited 11 students who were enrolled in the TVL program. The selection process was purposeful and based on specific predetermined criteria. The inclusion criteria for the participants were as follows: (a) being TVL students, (b) having attended general education, professional education, and major courses, and (c) being enrolled onset of the COVID-19 experienced FLP modality. Any students of the Science and Technology University who did not meet these inclusion criteria were not chosen as participants for the study. The focus was on examining the specific similarity among participants and their relevance to the research topic. Table 1 provides an overview of the participants' distribution according to their demographic profile.

Table 1. Profile of the participants

Program	Code Names	Year Level	Sex
BTLED - HE	P1	1st	Female
	P2	2nd	Male
	P3	3rd	Female
	P4	4th	Male
BTLED - HE	P5	1st	Female
	P6	2nd	Male
	P7	3rd	Female
	P8	4th	Male
BTVTED	P9	1st	Male
	P10	2nd	Female
	P11	3rd	Male

The data interview protocol that was used in the study was developed by the researcher anchored on Gagne's nine events of instruction. The interview question items were validated by experts in curriculum development, the department chair, and an expert in principles of teaching. Necessary revisions were made based on the feedback of the experts after they had evaluated the interview questionnaire. Table 2 presents the interview questions that were used in this study.

The researcher contacted the participants individually and, with their consent, the researcher arranged specific interview times and places with each of them. The methods employed by the researcher involved exploring participants' experiences [18]. Throughout the interview and discussion process, the researcher proceeded cautiously, allowing for attentive listening and presence [19]. The interviews took place in a comfortable setting, such as a quiet lounge or conducive or a well-lit classroom. In cases where participants couldn't attend face-to-face sessions, online platforms like Zoom or Google Meet were utilized. Online interviews proved suitable for obtaining in-depth insights, with video and audio recordings made to aid in data collection.

During the interviews, the researcher used the vernacular language in the region to pose questions, offering additional probes or prompts as needed, and communicated in a manner that felt natural and comfortable for the participants. Toward the end of the interview, participants were encouraged to seek clarification for any technical challenges they encountered. The researcher employed video and audio devices to ensure the accuracy and completeness of the collected information [20]. This approach provided detailed insight into the performance of both the participants and the interviewer.

The data analysis followed Gagne's model and employed direct content analysis. The aim was to validate the applicability of Gagne's Nine Events of Instruction within the context of TVL learning experiences during FLP.

Each qualitative research strategy has its own techniques for conducting, documenting, and evaluating data analysis processes. Nonetheless, it is the responsibility of the individual researcher to ensure rigor and trustworthiness [21]. It is crucial to review various analysis types and determine the most appropriate approach for analyzing qualitative data [22]. In this study, directed content analysis was employed, and coding categories were derived from the collected text data [23]. The researcher served as the instrument for analysis, making judgments regarding coding, categorization, and thematic analysis of the data [24]. The researcher and the participants collaborated to verify and confirm the coherence of interpretations, ensuring the reliability and trustworthiness of the codes, categories, and themes. The interviews were transcribed exactly as spoken, capturing nonverbal cues, and background sounds, and translated from the local language to English. The qualitative data in the form of transcribed interviews were then stored on the researchers' personal computers for analysis.

The researcher adhered to ethical guidelines by emphasizing principles such as negotiation, respect, mutuality, and openness to diverse perspectives among the participants [18]. The researcher demonstrated meticulous adherence to ethical standards and took careful steps to thoroughly analyze and comprehend the words [19]. It is important to note that the researcher acknowledged the

significance of incorporating personal and experiential narratives within the field of teacher education [24].

Table 2. Interview questionnaires used in this study

Gain Attention:	How does your teacher capture your attention at the beginning of a lesson?
	Can you describe a specific technique or method your teacher uses to engage you from the start?
Inform Learners of Objectives	How well do you understand the learning objectives shared by your teacher?
	How does your instructor communicate the objectives to you and to your classmates?
Stimulate Recall of Prior Knowledge	In class, how does your teacher help you connect new information to what you already know?
	Please share an example of a time when your teacher asked you to remember or use your prior knowledge related to the topic being taught.
Present Content	How does your teacher present new content or skills to you as a student?
	Is the content explained clearly and effectively? Can you provide an example?
Provide Learning Guidance	How does your teacher support you in understanding and applying the new content or skills? Can you describe a time when your teacher provided guidance or assistance to help you grasp a difficult concept?
Elicit Performance	How do you get opportunities to practice and demonstrate your understanding in the class?
	Can you share an example of an activity or task that your teacher assigned to assess your learning progress?
Provide Feedback	How does your teacher provide feedback on your performance in the class?
	Is the feedback helpful and constructive? Can you give an example of a time when your teacher gave you feedback?
Assess Performance	How does your teacher evaluate your overall performance and understanding in the class?
	What methods or tools does your teacher use to measure your achievement of learning objectives?
Enhance Retention	How does your teacher help you remember and apply what you've learned in real-life situations?
	Can you share an example of how your teacher connected the lessons to practical applications or industry practices?

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Based on the analysis of the data, the themes that surfaced align with Gagne's Nine Events of Instruction. The codes' outcomes were well-suited to each event, enhancing the teaching and learning process.

1st Event of Instruction: Gaining Attention

Challenges: Lack of motivation and inspiration from some instructors in online learning. According to, P10 mentioned that the teachers don't give any motivation at all may be because of online learning. If no motivation, basically online, the students feel sleepy and out of focus because of boredom, and PI1 participants said that not all teachers give motivation. They seldom do it. The students are not attentive during the class if no motivation at all.

Table 3. Themes that emerged from KII

Narratives	Categories	Themes
Self-paced learning is good but we like that the instructor will discuss for better understanding. The other instructors are typical teachers, they just teach and then do their part, nothing more nothing less(P3).	Limited self-directed learning skills	Providing Learning Guidance
Most of the time the instructors will not discuss the lessons, they will just instruct us to search this topic and understand it. They will get angry if we can't cope with their assigned topics (P6).	Lack of guidance from the educators	
Some instructors are contented with the performance even though we are not performing well (P9).	Limited access to quality and consistent feedback from teachers.	Providing feedback
Few instructors will give feedback and sometimes they will give it through chat (P8).		
No feedback at all, the instructor will just require outputs then that's it. We will not know where we can improve and the majority of the instructors don't give feedback, especially on our scores (P10).		
The teacher will give a quiz online. Cheating is always present during online classes (we will add a tab while having a summative test). Much better to have a face–to–face exams to measure the intelligence of the students. We have a high chance of passing the subject (P2).	Difficulty in assessing hands-on or practical skills and limited access to teachers	Assessing Performance
During online classes, I think the teachers are very busy to attend the concerns of the student (P11).		

2nd Event of Instruction: Informing Learners of the Objective

Challenges: Inconsistency in providing learning objectives by teachers. PI noted that while the majority of teachers provide objectives, they do so inconsistently. On the other hand, P3 emphasized the lack of consistency in delivering objectives during class, stating that the absence of clear objectives leads to a complete lack of focus.

3rd Event of Instruction: Stimulating Recall of Prior Learning

Challenges: Insufficient practice of reviewing and discussing prior learning among teachers. According to P4, while there are teachers who conduct reviews, the majority of them tend to discuss lessons by jumping from one topic to another. P9 also mentioned the absence of reviews because teachers immediately delve into discussing the lessons. Similarly, P3 pointed out that not all teachers engage in reviewing; instead, they directly proceed to the lesson. However, P8 did mention a teacher they appreciate who consistently starts with a "Kumustahan" (checking-in) activity.

4th Event of Instruction: Presenting the Content

Challenges: Difficulty in engaging students with multimedia and interactive elements. P6 observed that

typically, teachers are open to adopting technology in their teaching practices. However, there are instances where three out of the teachers lack proficiency in using technology. It is noteworthy that there is one retired teacher who relies on students to teach them how to use technology due to their age and limited familiarity with it. This lack of technical proficiency among teachers becomes problematic as it hinders the progress of the class, leading to a waste of time. Additionally, P4 shared an incident where an older instructor created a quiz using Google Forms, unintentionally providing answers, which students took advantage of. In some cases, teachers struggle to handle the class effectively due to difficulties in operating technology. Nonetheless, P5 highlighted one exceptional teacher among the nine, who, despite being somewhat behind in technology, exhibits great passion in teaching. This teacher dedicates time to discussions and aids in understanding even the most challenging subjects.

5th Event of Instruction: Providing Learning Guidance

Challenges: Limited self-directed learning skills and lack of guidance from teachers. P1 expressed that teachers strive to teach students how to learn effectively, but they often face a lack of time to dedicate to this aspect. P3 shared that some teachers hold a misconception that college students already possess comprehensive knowledge, which is not entirely true. In reality, there are topics and subjects where students require the guidance of teachers to fully comprehend them. It is disheartening when teachers repeatedly state, "You are all college students, so why don't you know this?" Furthermore, PI1 noted that certain teachers seem satisfied with their performance, even if they are not meeting the expected standards or delivering quality teaching.

6th Event of Instruction: Eliciting Performance

Challenges: Difficulty in teaching hands-on or practical skills and lack of clarity and guidance from some teachers. According to P7, currently, there are teachers whose instructions are unclear and lack elaboration, resulting in potential misunderstandings. These teachers often seem rushed and, in a hurry, which further hampers students' understanding. Similarly, P9 mentioned that certain teachers have limited time available to guide students, particularly in hands-on performances. This lack of guidance can be challenging for students to manage effectively.

7th Event of Instruction: Providing feedback

Challenges: Limited access to quality and consistent feedback from teachers. P5 highlighted that teachers occasionally provide feedback solely through chat communication. P8 mentioned the existence of teachers who directly deliver negative comments, but students perceive it as acceptable since it serves as a means for improvement. P4 observed that the majority of teachers are insufficient in providing feedback, resulting in uncertainty about the accuracy and quality of students' work. P2 expressed concern about the absence of feedback, with teachers merely requesting outputs without offering any guidance or evaluation. Consequently, students are unable to identify areas for improvement or recognize their strengths and weaknesses.

8th Event of Instruction: Assessing Performance

Challenges: Difficulty in assessing hands-on or practical skills and limited access to teachers/proctors. P6 noted that teachers often administer quizzes online, which

unfortunately leads to frequent cheating, particularly with the availability of tabs during summative tests. The participant suggests that conducting face-to-face exams would be preferable to accurately measure students' intelligence.

PI1 mentioned that quizzes are only given occasionally after reporting, and during online quizzes, cheating becomes inevitable. The participant further highlights that cheating increases the chances of passing the subject. P8 observed that some teachers do assign quizzes, but in an online setting, cheating consistently occurs.

9th Event of Instruction: Enhancing Retention and Transfer

Challenges: Limited opportunities for practice and lack of attentiveness to students' needs by some teachers

P9 observed that among the teachers, there is a mix of individuals who fulfill their responsibilities diligently, while others may fall short. P7 highlighted that teachers often direct their attention toward students who can readily answer questions or contribute effectively, potentially overlooking those who struggle to articulate their ideas. The participant raised concerns about the visibility of silent students in the classroom. P2 noted that teachers often face busy schedules, making it challenging for them to address all student concerns adequately. The participant suggested that teachers should actively monitor the class to ensure a supportive learning environment. P10 emphasized the importance of teachers recognizing that not all students possess the same level of knowledge and understanding. Students require guidance and support from their teachers.

The challenges faced by TVL students in FLP lack of compliance with Gagne's Nine Events of Instruction. These challenges encompass difficulties in engaging students effectively with multimedia and interactive elements, inconsistency in setting clear learning objectives, inadequate review of prior knowledge, limited development of self-directed learning skills, insufficient clarity and guidance in teaching practical skills, restricted access to quality feedback and proctoring support, limited opportunities for meaningful practice, and insufficient attention to students' individual needs. These challenges collectively underscore the need for comprehensive improvements in instructional design and delivery to enhance student engagement and foster better learning outcomes in the realm of online education.

To address the challenges faced by TVL students in FLP due to non-compliance with Gagne's Nine Events of Instruction, improvements are needed in instructional design and delivery. This includes integrating multimedia and interactive elements, setting clear learning objectives, reviewing prior knowledge, fostering self-directed learning skills, providing guidance for practical skills, offering quality feedback and proctoring support, creating meaningful practice opportunities, and addressing individual needs. These enhancements will enhance student engagement and improve learning outcomes in online education.

4. CONCLUSION

The phenomenological exploration conducted with TVL educators revealed significant challenges in implementing Gagne's Nine Events of Instruction within the flexible learning modality. The findings indicate a lack of compliance with key events such as gaining attention,

informing learners of the objective, stimulating recall of prior learning, presenting the content, providing learning guidance, eliciting performance, providing feedback, assessing performance, and enhancing retention and transfer. These challenges underscore the need for instructional practice improvements to enhance student engagement, motivation, and overall learning outcomes in blended learning environments.

Despite the benefits of modular learning in equipping students with independent learning skills, the study's findings demonstrated that even tertiary level students required guidance from educators. This highlights the ongoing importance of the facilitative role of educators, even when working with adult learners. The concept of andragogy, proposed by Malcolm Knowles [25]., supports this idea by acknowledging the unique characteristics and learning needs of adult learners. Knowles argued that adults are self-directed and motivated to learn when they perceive the learning experience as relevant and immediately applicable to their lives. However, this does not diminish the necessity of guidance and support from educators.

The study conducted by Caffarella and Baumgartner [26] highlighted the critical role played by educators in facilitating adult learning. They emphasized the importance of creating supportive and interactive learning environments, providing clear instructions and feedback, and facilitating the connection between new knowledge and learners' prior experiences. While modular learning equips students with independent learning skills, adult learners still require guidance from educators. Andragogy, as a theory of adult learning, emphasizes the ongoing importance of educators' facilitative role in supporting and guiding adult learners throughout their educational journey.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

To enhance the teaching and learning experiences of TVL students in the flexible learning program, the university should consider implementing the following recommendations. First, comprehensive professional development programs should be provided to TVL educators, focusing on online instructional strategies and effective implementation of Gagne's Nine Events of Instruction. This training should emphasize clear learning objectives, engaging content delivery, self-directed learning support, effective feedback mechanisms, and meaningful assessment practices.

Second, allocating resources to provide instructional design support for TVL educators is crucial. This support can include instructional design specialists, technology integration experts, and access to multimedia resources to enhance content delivery and student engagement. By aligning instructional materials with Gagne's Nine Events of Instruction, educators can create high-quality learning experiences that promote effective learning outcomes.

Furthermore, establishing a mentoring program where experienced TVL educators can guide and support their peers in implementing systematic instructional approaches can be highly beneficial. Encouraging collaboration among educators through professional learning communities or online platforms will facilitate the sharing of best practices, innovative ideas, and effective teaching strategies.

In addition, providing comprehensive student support services, including academic advising, tutoring, and technical assistance, is crucial to help TVL students overcome the challenges of flexible learning. These services will ensure students receive the necessary guidance and support to succeed in their studies and make the most of their learning opportunities.

Regular evaluation of instructional practices and gathering feedback from students will enable the university to identify areas for improvement. This feedback can inform ongoing professional development initiatives and guide adjustments to instructional design and delivery, ensuring continuous improvement and effectiveness in the flexible learning program.

Lastly, strengthening the university's technology infrastructure, including reliable internet connectivity and access to online learning platforms, is essential. A robust technological foundation will minimize disruptions and technical challenges, providing a seamless learning experience for TVL students and educators alike.

By implementing the aforementioned, the university can create an environment that fosters student engagement, motivation, and meaningful learning outcomes in the flexible learning program. Through a systematic approach to instructional design and delivery, aligned with Gagne's Nine Events of Instruction, TVL students will receive a quality education that prepares them for their chosen careers in the ever-evolving world of technology and vocational livelihood.

6. REFERENCES:

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