

The Seminar-Workshop Experience in Journalism Class: A Best Practice?

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Abstract

21st century teaching and learning process requires innovation in the delivery of instruction in order to meet the needs of the 21st century learners and the demands of both the higher education institution and other clientele. Seminar-lecture mode of instruction is becoming a trend in the teacher education program in an attempt to provide additional information and first hand experiences. This study aims to assess the effectiveness of the method used, evaluate the responses of the learners who were subjected to the program and appraise seminar-workshop method as one of the best practices in facilitating learning. Moreover, this study is conducted to serve as a source data in the field of English language towards improvement of communication skills both in writing and speaking. Thus, this study aims not only to help the student participants enhance their logistic or planning skills but also to help the students, the teachers and the University to encourage collaboration by engaging other professionals and experts in the field and establish external linkages which could strengthen the quality of teaching and learning process.

Keywords: effectiveness, evaluation, language practices, seminar- lecture, 21st century instruction.

Introduction

Education has always been immersed with the new ideas about teaching and learning process. The schools, administration, and teachers are regularly bombarded with various education reforms to abreast with the fast changing approaches, strategies, and techniques in teaching and learning. As stated by Wilson & Peterson (2006), teachers are directed to prepare students for the new way of learning, work through portfolio, and performance assessment. Fri. et.al (2009) said that teachers were urged to use research-based strategies to teach a particular subject in their class. Moreover, as the demand in implementing 21st century, teachers now became facilitators and co-learners and learners become investigators, seekers, and problem-solvers. In the article entitled Summary of 21st Century Teaching and Learning Researches, teacher should allow the students to collaborate and communicate effectively in the classroom, be open to diverse perspectives, and incorporate group feedback into their school homework.

In addition, 21st century teaching and learning process requires innovation in the delivery of instructions in order to meet the needs of the 21st century learners and the demands of both higher educational institution and other clientele. One of the strategies use in the 21st century

teaching is the seminar-workshop mode of instruction. According to Bates (2005) seminar-lecture/seminar-workshop mode involves generating a situation for a group to have guided interaction among themselves on a theme which is generally presented to the group by one or more guest speaker. In the article of Bates (2005) entitled LECTURE NOTE ABOUT SEMINAR-WORKSHOP METHOD, this mode of instruction is being employed to realize the higher objective of cognitive and effective domains. It also requires that interactive and integrate methodologies based on the psychological principles. Therefore it applies such techniques of human interaction/intervention with learning and teaching experiences. The aim of the seminar-workshop mode of instruction according to Peterson (2005) is to enable students to deepen their knowledge of themes studied at the lecture under the supervision of a professor or an experience teacher or professionals in their field of specialization.

In the study conducted by Ju et.al (2013) about the traditional method combined with seminar teaching method in the graduate education shows that the combination of the traditional lecture method and the seminar method is better than others. It is greatly significant for the cultivation of graduate students While Gentile (2015) revealed in her study that using industry professionals as a resource speaker in undergraduate teaching has a great impact to students' learning especially students were exposed in the first hand information and experience . The study entitled Innovative and Interactive methods for Improving Learning Quality in Higher Education by Wickramasinghe & Uperka (2016) revealed that students were interested in seminar-workshop strategy because they meet new people and other professionals in their respective profession. Daluba (2013) found in his study that seminar-lecture method revealed that seminar-lecture mode of instruction had significant efforts on students' achievement than those taught with conventional method. Loveland (2014) found out in her study that activity based (including seminar-workshop) led to students' comprehension and procedural activity in planning and logistic skills.

In Rizal Technological University (RTU), the traditional classroom lecture-discussion is still observed. Similarly, campus journalism classes are still held in the classroom wherein the students are assigned topics and are required to present them orally.

However, due to the increasing demand of 21st century instruction, RTU College of Education continuesly explore and strive harder in introducing new and best practices in teaching and learning to achieve its goal as the center of development by engaging into various innovations and current teaching processes.

Based on these empirical observation the researchers prompted to conduct this study to assess the effectiveness of the method used and evaluate the responses of the learners who were subjected to the program and appraise seminar-workshop method as one of the best practices in facilitating learning. Specifically it sought to answer the following questions

1. What is the assessment of the learners of the strategy in teaching?
2. What are the experiences of the learners through the program?
3. What are the benefits from the conducted seminar-workshops?

This study will serve as the source of data to the field of English language teaching and for the improvement of classroom instruction in English subjects specifically in writing skills since the subject utilized is the Campus Journalism. In addition, this study will help both students and teachers to encourage external linkages through the guest speakers in each seminar-workshop that will serve as a partner of the English department in providing quality teaching and

learning process and to upgrade English Teachers and English major students in the trends and issues in the said subject.

On the part of the learners, this will help them to enhance their logistic or planning skill by serving as the facilitator of each seminar-workshop. It will also help them in building connections outside the University by engaging with other professionals in the field of Journalism. Moreover, the students will gain new information and ideas from various institution and universities through the experts in the mentioned field who will serve as the resource speaker in the series of seminar workshop.

Method

Participants

The participant-oriented models, an evaluation strategy was activated to emphasize the central importance of the evaluation participants, especially the users of the program (<https://www.socialresearchmethods.net/kb/intreval.php>). Thereby, the fifty (50) 4th year English majors who were enrolled in Campus Journalism during the first semester of the school year 2016-2017 were subjected to the study. They were both the respondents of the survey and interview and the organizers of the seminar-workshop who also invited the guest speakers.

The participants ages from 20- 26 years old and were on the terminal year of their study. During the conduct of the study, they were deployed in different schools for their practice-teaching. Thus, they go back to school for their last major or specialization subject- English : Introduction to Campus Journalism.

Design

The study used evaluation method design. Evaluation is the systematic assessment of the operation and/or the outcomes of a program or policy, compared to a set of explicit or implicit standards, as a means of contributing to the improvement of the program or policy.

Using Snyder model to demonstrate qualitative evaluation (Dick, 2001), the study specifically explored the outcome evaluation or product evaluation to determine how effective the use of seminar-workshop approach in the teaching of Introduction to Campus Journalism. Thus, the study focused on evaluating how well the program objective have been met, what outcomes were observed and more importantly, what do the outcomes mean (<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK235374/>)

Materials

A researcher-made survey questionnaire which composed of open ended questions was used to gather necessary data. It was pilot tested to a small number of respondents prior to its dissemination to the target participants.

Procedure

The respondents at the beginning of the semester were assigned topics for the subject Introduction to Campus Journalism. As part of the strategy, each group was required to facilitate a seminar-workshop in which they could either serve as the guest speaker or they could invite experts in the field who would talk on their behalf.

After the seminar-workshop, they were requested to answer the survey questionnaire. After the questionnaires were retrieved, they were subjected to analysis. The analyzed data were interpreted and presented.

Results and Discussion

Assessment of the learners of the strategy in teaching

Assessment is in terms of the content, the respondents found the seminar-workshop as:

“The seminar was really a different one and I am thankful that I’ve experienced this because I never experience it to my whole school year. I met different personalities and learn different ideas from their experiences...”

“The seminars conducted in our class are really big help for us as a future teacher of campus of journalism. In terms of content, the seminars are very informative and knowledgeable.”

“...it’s worthy”

“...informative”

“I’m satisfied to the information”

“They present the topic with many examples”

“..presentations were complete, full of details and more examples.”

“Effective as well as comprehensive because I was able to make an output...”

“A combination of theories about journalism and guest speakers experiences were the content which filled our seminar-lecture series.”

“...had exerted full of effort in giving lots of examples, as a result, we became more interested and gain strategy”

“Effective because his experiences were shared and workshop was more presentable and more prepared”

It could be gleaned that the respondents were satisfied in the content of the seminar-workshop as it was informative. Hence, they found it effective other than comprehensive, a lot of authentic samples were shared by the speakers.

While in terms of the speaker, the respondents assessed the guest speakers who were dominantly school paper advisers in different schools in the metro as :

“they are all equipped with knowledge about their field”

“really fantastic because of the resource person they’re invited is such a huge personality in DepEd...”

“The feature writing seminar was good because the speaker discussed the matter with the highest extent of her experiences and knowledge.”

“She let us also give an opportunity to make own creative feature writing that to be check by her.”

The respondents assessed the guest speaker to be experts in their field not only because they were the school paper advisers but because during the seminar-workshops they were able to communicate with the audience using their experiences. The passion exhibited and the effort they exerted were observed and felt by the respondents during the activity.

Moreover, the respondents even:

“ appreciate the effort and time exerted by each guest speakers”

Hence, the respondents commented that:
“really a wonderful experience to have a person like them.

While in terms of the seminar-workshop as a strategy, the respondents found the”
“mini-seminar workshop to be very impressive”

The respondents perceived the strategy to be a “bold move”. Thus:

“Seminar strategy is a best way for us as future educator to acquire the knowledge we get from the speakers. It’s good approach for us to have an idea on how are we going to teach this subject to our future students. conducting a seminar and inviting a speaker is better than letting us to discuss everything about campus journalism and worst we don’t have a background related to it. So having the person who is more knowledgeable with it is the perfect thing for us to gain and learn more about it.

In fact,

“I appreciate the strategies used by each and every seminar-lecture series conducted inside and outside our classroom.”

“This strategy really proves the upgrading system of RTU as ISO certified and I am hoping that other departments and students especially the education students with other majors may also experience this kind of activity”

“We did not think that it is possible in the classroom that we get to invite professionals to teach us.”

“...gave us the opportunity to discover the real world of journalism. It also gave us the chance to explore the real world of journalism”

“Since they are the part of the K-12 Program Developers, my initial impressions would be they will be presenting ideas that may help us improve ourselves”

“..Huge advantage”

Based on the statement of the respondents, the general assessment on the seminar-workshop is positive and beneficial to the participants.

Experiences of the learners through the program

Experiences are based on the data gathered, the experiences of the respondents include:

*Satisfied,
Great,
Excellent,
Enriching,
informative and enlightening,
exceeded expectations
amazed
Really impressive
were able to go beyond my expectation, beyond expectation of the subject teacher, beyond expectation of everyone.*

The responses disclose that the respondents had a positive experience towards the seminar-workshops. Hence, they felt:

“overwhelming since the venue would be in the Plenary Hall for this seminar. I felt like that was a big event.”

which unveils that even them could not believe that they would be able to organize such kind of event. In fact, they even recognized the efforts exerted by the organizers:

“really amazed on how the group were able to arrange a seminar as big as this. Everything was obviously well prepared, cramming wasn’t on their list.

“committees really work hard for that event the presence of certificates of every participants, certificates were distributed not only to the guest speakers but also to the participants of the seminar, seems like attending true range seminars it is also well-organized the speakers really shared knowledgeable ideas through their experiences in fact we really had fun

“seminar was really a fruitful one. The organizers got hold of the fact that the seminar could benefit not only those who are enrolled in the subject, but also those who are into journalism and even the lab high school. From the venue to the audience to the speaker, the seminar in general was very satisfactory

The respondents also realized that the program they made was not just a simple class activity but rather:

“indeed a seminar type because it was not limited to the students who were taking the subject but was also open for the High School and other English Major”

And so, at the end;
everyone was happy that they will go home with another learning input

people in-charge of the seminar did a great job

Furthermore, they even commented:

“I can say I’d hope to really apply it in my life”

“I realized that this kind of success would be possible if each of the seminars of the group is willing to give all the things needed to conduct this kind of seminar”

“that first impression do not last...”

“I felt honored having the opportunity to invite guest speakers to our school to share their knowledge and provide guidance to our class.”

On the other hand, the organizing teams said that:

“I was excited and pressured at the same time.”

“Conducting a seminar is never easy. The fact that the number of organizers were limited which led to lack of financial support. The personal insights I gained from this experience is that, make connections to people. Conducting a seminar requires patience and perseverance to make the vent worth remembering for the speakers and audiences too.”

“great pleasure to be part of the despite of the hindrances we faced in conducting this kind of seminar. “

“All the hard work were paid off because we made it successfully.”

“I was happy and overwhelmed because I was able to organize a seminar with my group mates.”

The organizers hard labor were paid off through the success of the program. Hence, they did not only learned event management, people connections but their values were also formed and virtues were strengthened :

“I learned to be patient and work harder in order to achieve goal”

“I learned to be patient and hard work in order to achieve the goal. And develop teamwork with my group mates that would enhance our capacity as future teachers”

“Being prepared can make everything possible...”

At the end, the respondents:

...” realized it is also good experience like we are the one who will invite professional people and it's a good”

“I appreciated the efforts gave by guest speakers”

“Motivational activity and assessment too.”

“Seminar was full of activities that engage me to creative way of making own feature writing

“I learned to become aware and observant”

“It was a challenging responsibility as a student who has minor background what a campus school paper is. Somebody needs to contact he/her “connection” like people who he/she know who is knowledge about the topic of the seminar. It was a bit scary too because, these people are established journalism and maybe they were expecting a lot from us as a student. Need to have foresight. Think the responsibilities may happen the day before or on the day the event takes place. DO not rely on one speaker. Always have a back-up plan. Like what happened in our group, one speaker back-out a day before the next day. So, foresee everything that might happen.”

Learning by doing is an important aspect of teaching and learning. It provides the learners the opportunity to immerse themselves into the real world where they are given the chance to make decisions and

Benefits from the conducted seminar-workshops personal gains

The seminar-workshop triggered the respondents' excitement for it is a new experience for them apart from the usual lecture method done in the class. The program provided them the opportunity to work with other classmates as a team where camaraderie, team work and constant communication were established. Moreover, the program provided them the chance to demonstrate leadership the event organization.

On the other hand, most of the respondents were impressed not only of the outcome of their seminar-workshop but were also inspired because of the experiences shared by the guest speakers:

"I'm very inspired..."

The impression reveals that through the activity, the respondent's passion for learning was inflamed. It was even strengthened by the lines:

"an honor to be a part of this seminar..."

"really fantastic because of the resource person they're invited is such a huge personality..."

"really a wonderful experience..."

Professional growth

According to the respondents:

"seminars gave the audience the benefit of a discussion rounded with campus journalism and an ideal journalism class"

"...gave us the opportunity to discover the qualities of a good writer. It can also give us the chance to explore the world of journalism..."

"comprehensive and explicit..."

"Every question was addressed..."

It could be gleaned from the responses that the program provided the respondents an avenue of academic discussion where comprehensive inputs were explicitly shared through the experiences of the speakers where questions were directly addressed. Thus, the seminar-workshops gave the respondents the chance to apply the theories through the workshops after the talk. Moreover, the seminar-workshop provided the respondents a constructivist approach of teaching:

It is beneficial to us, especially in the way that we do not focus only in the four walls setting of learning, instead, we bring them into a reality of outside world.

On the contrary, every activity would always have room for improvements .The respondents feedback that there were a number of seminar-workshops in which

"we were really stressed because of the first incident wherein our supposed speaker turned down our invitation a day before the seminar..."

Also, there were incidents wherein:

"There was a delay in the seminar schedule due to the availability of the speaker..."

If not :

The speaker is late, and the organizers were not able to organize everything in an organized way

Or

"Seminar was moved due to bad weather"

And

disappointed with some the organizers or the committee for the seminar. They were not able to plan and prepare the seminar.

While on the part of the presentations, some powerpoint have

“Font size are small”

It could be detected from the responses that the respondents met several challenges during the seminar workshops such as time element, speakers' concerns and group member participation which are normal occurrences in events management.

Recommendations of the Respondents

In order to improve the program, the recommendations were solicited from the respondents. In response, they commented that:

“...give enough time duration”

“Extended time for seminar”

“...that the talk should not exceed the time allotted”

“required time should be met...”

“One hour and 30 minutes class time for seminar type is very short...”

“time duration of this mini-seminar lecture should be prolonged so that questions can be answered”

“... more extended time in conducting seminar and give us more time to let him criticized our taken photos”

“...Short period of time”

“...more time”

“time is not enough...”

“More time to elaborate more information”

“Time management”

“Extend time”

It could be discerned that the primary concern of the respondents is **time allotment** for the strategy. Thus, it recommended that a staright 3hrs be allotted to make the strategy more effective.

Room assignment is also another factor mentioned by the respondents:

“should conduct it on a bigger or wide place so that more students could attend or listen with the is better when it was conducted in the Plenary Hall”

“allot more time and make it a bigger venue and if possible invite some other professors especially the staff and editors of the school paper. “

“seminar-lecture should be implemented not just in our time but also on other block because they missed the opportunity of learning things to other people. “

“may be held on a better room that can occupy not only 1 block of students but the block with the same major”

“as the organizers of the seminar could really look for a bigger audience for the benefits of others, look for a larger venue so that the seminar could become more presentable”

“really need have a bigger venue so that the other students can learn too.”

The respondents consider the activity to be a big activity. As such, they envision a bigger venue which could accommodate more participants.

Philippine higher education classes still have the classroom set up. The findings recommend an auditorium type of classroom which could accommodate larger size classes with same subjects which could be merged and facilitated through a semina type.

The use of audio-visual presentation is also important among learners:

“It is better if the organizers do something in the presentation of the speaker”

“the speaker don’t have any instructional materials employed- Im a visual learner”

“presentation should have been more visual rather than auditory”

“...copy of the powerpoint presentation”

Therefore , it is recommende that the organizers would secure the copies of the presentation both in the hard and soft copy so they could test such prior to the presentation and or provide the audience of the copies.

Also, **sitting arrangement** is essential among the participants.

“Much better if the position of the students are circled.”

As such, it is important that the organizers of the program would look into the physical arrangement of the venue so that the audience will not only be comfortable but learning would be more accessible to them.

Conclusion

The study revealed that the respondents were not fully aware of seminar-workshop as strategy in teaching. The common notion that a seminar-worshop is done in a bigger venue with a large number of participants could be sensed on their responses. Hence, their concept of seminar-workshop would always be grand and in big venues with large number of audience.

On the other hand, the responses disclosed that seminar-workshop was effective and beneficial among the learners. They did not only gain professional and academic benefits but also personal attributes. In addition, their social relation and values were formed through the program.

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Appendix 1:

Overall Narrative Evaluation Report

Argumentation And Debate: The Seminar-Workshop Series

TITLE OF THE SEMINAR

INSTRUCTIONS: Answer the following questions as comprehensive as possible

1. What are your initial impressions towards the seminar-workshop strategy?
2. How did you find the seminar at the end? (What were your impressions of the seminar conducted?)
3. What are your assessments about the talk? Do you find it comprehensive and effective?
4. What are your suggestions to further improve the mini-seminar lecture?
5. (only for those who are done with the seminar)What were your feelings towards your facility of the event as the committee? What personal insights did you gain from it?