

Chapter 4

A Holistic Approach to Improving Students' University Experience: Exploring Philosophical Orientation, Transformational Teaching Methods, and Flexible Learning

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ABSTRACT

This chapter explored the philosophical orientation, transformational instruction practices, flexible learning, and students' university experience. It utilized a phenomenological transcendental design with ten participants. The various sections in this chapter reveal that to stay competitive and relevant in the ever-evolving field of education, it is imperative that our faculty continually acquire new skills, upgrade existing ones, and engage in professional development. An effective approach to achieve this is by fostering a technology-infused collaborative environment, as such environments have been proven to enhance student learning. For our teachers' philosophical orientation, a particular focus can be placed on existentialism as a philosophy for study. By utilizing a qualitative phenomenological method, we can

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delve into the personal and profound experiences of learners, thereby uncovering humanism and exploring the perspective of the respondents in-depth.

INTRODUCTION

In response to the global pandemic, schools have undergone significant changes in management and teaching methods. Along with these changes, leadership styles such as transactional, charismatic, transformational, and interactive have gained prominence in educational management worldwide. Embracing this shift, Laguna State Polytechnic University has implemented the Flexible Teaching and Learning Model. This model aims to deliver quality and equitable education during these challenging times. The LSPU Learning Continuity Plan, approved by the Board of Regents, guides the university in the opening of classes for the First Semester AY 2020-2021.

Moreover, it is crucial to value the experience and perspectives of students, as they are the ones directly affected by the abrupt changes in the learning environment (Hijazi, 2020). Both universities and students recognize the significance of student experience and satisfaction. It is the ethical responsibility of universities to deliver education and research of the highest quality and standards, meeting the needs of society (Sahin, 2015). Students, being the primary stakeholders of universities, hold the authority in shaping their own experience and understanding of higher education. It is their voices and judgments that define their personal encounters. Hence, students assume a pivotal role in the management of universities by offering feedback on the aspects they deem most essential and their overall satisfaction.

By fostering and promoting engaged partnerships with students, institutions can improve teaching, course design, assessments, and quality processes which produce the best outcomes for students (Alexander, 2020).

Thus, in this chapter, the researcher prioritized how transformational instructional practices, and the instructor's philosophical orientation, influence students' university experiences. Universities and stakeholders care about student satisfaction and experience. Therefore, we can say that flexibility is of special significance and has become the core of university reform: 1) Focus on greater accessibility: Universities must be flexible enough to attract and recruit more new student groups; 2) Focus on individual students so that they can learn when they want it, what they want, and the way they want it. Shifting the focus from teachers to students is believed to help meet these needs, thereby improving teaching for a wider range of students. But despite these milestones, the students' experiences in the conduct of flexible learning were not given enough emphasis. Although they were able to learn effectively and efficiency despite of the sudden migration to flexible learning, their human experi-

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