**Students' Experiences on Technical Vocational and Livelihood Program
Assessment in Senior High School**

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ABSTRACT

This study is all about the experience of students who are taking the assessment of Technical Vocational and Livelihood in University of Immaculate Conception. The researchers examine the students of TVL about how far they will take this program and to know their limits. The purpose of this study is to inspect the grade 12 students who are under in these assessments because they are the ones who understand the affects and enhances of the skills they needed to learn. The problem of this study is to know how assessment can affect their learning if the teacher gives them an easy task or a difficult. This study is conducted to provide and decipher questions if the assessments provided are effective enough and would lead to a job-ready future for the students. In conclusion of the study, there are certain factors affecting the experiences of TVL students in program assessment.

Keywords: Technical Vocational and Livelihood, Assessment, Experiences

INTRODUCTION

Background of the Study

Continual changes in employed living have meant that academic organizations have had to evolve current methods to assure their students' capability. In modern academic discourse, it has been asserted that the conventional structure of formal education in schools was not sufficient to manage with contemporary teaching oppositions (Hakkarainen et al. 2004; Lehtinen, 2008; Tynjälä & Gijbels, 2012). Because of this, less conventional components such as project and portfolio exertion have progressively been presented into formal learning (Heikkinen et al. 2012). Furthermore, the enlargement of practical training intervals have been seen as advisable, as a result that these will guide more pertinent, systematic, and negotiable learning that will provide students a more integrated experience (Harris et al. 2003). In Finland, a purposeful step regarding the incorporation of casual learning domain in education was taken by the vocational education and training (VET) system at the inception of the period.

Workplace learning was a principal attribute in school based vocational education training (Ministry of Knowledge, 2006). Nevertheless, various approaches to the composite area of workplace learning called for an improvement of the notion as it linked to this study. Students' experiences with workplace learning vary according to the different types of tasks at work. Each secondary school made its accordance with relative work in the emplacement (Ministry of Knowledge, 2006). The variety of agreements relates to the number of learners attending the work in the same time, also the extent of time (Sandal et al. 2014). To be aligned with international quality, the Philippine Basic Education Curriculum requires to affix two years of senior high school to the contemporary four-year secondary education, and another year for kindergarten. This essential was incorporated and instruction by Republic Act 10533 known as the 'Enhanced Basic Education Act of 2013' (Jocelyn Kong, 2015).

Velasco (2012), in reference to the K-12 curriculum, vocalized about hope and change for the nation. According to her, since the civilization puts premium and pedagogy, it is only right that the governmental administration reinforced the program completely.

The Department of Education (2011) expounded that those who were not disposed to go to college and want to pursue technical-vocational courses or entrepreneurial fields stand to benefit from K-12 as well.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to examine the following experiences among the Grade 12 Technical Vocational and Livelihood students in University of the Immaculate Conception under the program evaluation. One of these is to understand how assessments affect and enhance an individual's skills.

Since assessments determine the extent to which a specific course is achieving its learning goals (Marchese, 1987; Palomba & Banta, 1999), the researchers aim that this study would suffice not only the understanding of how do SHS students performed within the assessments according to the program but also to know how far these evaluations had helped them examine their strengths and weaknesses for their future.

Research Questions

The researchers aim to obtain significance among students' expertise and assessments in about to their program. Through the semi-structured interview, researchers have constructed inquiries that will be answered by the respondents. These are the following:

1. What are the experiences of TVL students in taking assessments?
2. How do these assessments affect their learning?

Theoretical Lens

An educational program's principal goal is to facilitate student learning. Assessments were intrinsically linked to student education and performance in education programs. In this paper, the researchers presented some views on the theoretical basis of understanding and its evaluation in cooperative education. There are a number of theoretical views that were explored in an attempt at understanding and characterizing investment learning (Eames & Cates, 2011; Van Gyn & Grove-White, 2011). These range from behavioral ideas to theories of cognitive development to more recent socio-cultural views of learning.

Behaviorism. A behavioral view of learning is about the influence and modification of human behavior in the external environment (Mowrer & Klein, 1989). Shepard (2000) argued that the atomized, deconstructed, behaviourist approach to education led to the separation of instruction and formal (summative) evaluation. This 'building block' approach

to learning has focused on the student performance subcomponents rather than on performance as a whole (Jones, 1999) and, in the case of work-based learning, ignoring the contextual complexities of a practice (Eames & Cates, 2011; Van Gyn & GroveWhite, 2011).

Cognitive Views of Learning. Bruner (1990) argued that "the central concept of human psychology means the processes and transactions involved in the construction of meanings" (p. 33). There are several implications for the evaluation of cooperative education of these constructivist views of learning. First, the starting points of each student were probably all different; each student has different levels of previous work and experiences. The evaluation must, therefore, recognize that each student learns different things from his or her job placement, each being of potential value and merit. Second, attention must be paid to preparing students for their placement in ways enables them to draw on and link their existing knowledge schemes to the possible recommendation for a working environment. An evaluation needs to find ways to examine their reactions to both the intellectual and emotional experiences they had. Third, assessment should include ways in which student can link their previous experiences and knowledge (e.g., theories developed in the classroom environment) to workplace practices. Fourth, procedural and conditional knowledge of the student must be emphasized. Finally, when preparing students for their placement and subsequently evaluating their learning, it is advisable to allow both verbal and imaginable learning expressions. Winter (2003) says that evaluation practices need to recognize that learning "is a gradual process, so students need time to digest their learning and make sense of it" (p. 120).

Experiential Learning. Principles of the theory of experience were often associated with cooperative education and internships; this alliance was considered a natural fit for the experimental component of these programs. John Dewey (1938) viewed experiences as an essential part of learning; that we learn best when the phenomena under examination were actually experienced, creating the familiar term 'learning by doing'. Genry (1990) noted that 'students must be involved in the process. Experiential learning is active rather than passive' (p. 13). In other words, the experience of each student opened new ways to look at things that provide new knowledge for viewing succeeding experiences.

Review of Related Literature

In exploring this study, we can see how students develop their skills in taking this track with proper training and equipment to use in developing their knowledge, in this chapter presents a brief review of related literature and studies that are related in both national and local.

Workplace Training

Lucas, Cooper, Ward and Cave (2009) mentioned that the students could also develop the highest sense of subject related career opportunities from a career development perspective, which it may result from completing a degree in their field. Canter (2000) identifies the role of a workplace in helping them to grow their skills for being employment, while Calway and Murphy (2002) they suggest a greater level success among the student in both securing their employment on graduation and compared to non-placement students, progress in their careers. Piquart et al. (2003), suggest that increased knowledge and understanding of the industry helps to facilitate the progress from education to employment. Industry work also helps the students to develop the skills needed in the industry for example, interpersonal communication and team-working and to appreciate the realities of an organization's work. Importantly, the opportunity to learn is given to able to practice and test their abilities. Students with expertise they also learn to self-assess their skills and have their confidence in their ability to be able to perform the task that they are expected to accomplish in the future. In other words, they improve their self-efficacy for tasks that they can expect accomplish in the world of work.

As cited by Misko and Priest (2009), according to their study that students will consider it important if they have received their industry-relevant training that takes attention of current workplace practices and technology. To this end, developers can explore how their courses can incorporate students' workplace opportunities and other ways to ensure that students have realistic experiences and current knowledge when they move into the labor market. Students also do not want broad-brush approaches to the content of the subject and would prefer more depth and detail in the presented material. They want courses that will meet the students' needs and apply it from what they have learned and regularly they are opposed to repeat things that they have learned. To ensure that the content is examined in a sufficient depth, a review of what is covered by a course

is needed and not makes the students to do it again in advanced courses that they have learned.

In addition to Sofian (2008), this study was attempted to know whether in participating a supervised work experience by vocational trainees compelling for the gain of a higher level of employability skills was compared to the trainees who were not involved in such an experience. Students can apply their skills in workplace with higher awareness so adjusting to company's culture willingly. Through experience in work students can come with the real place of work such in dealing with workplace problem and use their skill in it.

Also, APL or school-based assessment has been studied globally in different position and to huge amount in relative studies based on designation of the organization of APL in various countries (Per Andersson & Stenlund, 2012; Harris, Breier, & Wihak, 2011). Number of studies focus on departmental position and the political history for APL, e.g. with regards to lifelong learning, employability, and in relation to economic, social and cultural purposes (Andersen & Laugesen, 2012; Halttunen, Koivisto, & Billett, 2014, p. 3-15). 'Previous Learning' is defined in various ways (Billett, Bound, & Lin, 2014). According to Bohlinger (2013), the use of formal requirements as the standard to raise specific problems: 'The main basis for identifying restriction and capabilities is based on the presumption that qualifications are understanding and expertise that can be equitably described and are useful. In dissimilarity, the notion of expertise surrounds many various facets, between their skills and capacities, but also the sense of individual characteristics, motivation, and determination (p. 288). (Cooper and Harris, 2013) managed this discussion with regards to higher level of education and pointed out, "while understanding is earned from life and work expertise may be as significant as formal, academic learning, these two forms of knowledge are not the same (p. 448).

Job-Ready Assessments

As well as Gilmore and Smith (2008), promoting children's learning is the greatest aim of universities and assessment. Students undergo a majorly wide scope of assessment throughout their educational years, from early childhood through primary and intermediate schools into secondary school and beyond. Some evaluation has been recognized by students as such; other evaluations are closely relevant to learning

expertise that some would not be visible, and students are unconscious that they were being evaluated.

According to (Carlo Magno & Tristan Posang, 2016), assessments have been conducted in Senior High School. Assessments vary from different levels and range from start to finish of cycle from classroom level to international level of evaluation. Each degree of assessment is portrayed in terms of exercise, objective, how it translates into students' knowledge, and responsibility from the classroom to authority. These levels of assessments involve deployment of students in senior high school tracks, classroom-based assessment, evaluation of attained capabilities, and involvement in the global convention of capabilities, collegiate readiness, and career assessment.

As discussed by Hartl (2009) International Fund for Agricultural Development TVET has suffered from a focus on basic and especially primary education, which led to the neglect of post-basic education and training and their non-inclusion in the UN Millennium Development Goals. Recently, there has been a renewed interest in training and skills development because of increased evidence that a minimalist approach to microfinance for poverty reduction and enterprise development did not lead to sustainable growth. The paper argues that many training interventions do not cater for the specific needs of women who are under-represented in formal training programs and often directed towards typical female occupations. The programmers explore how these target the poor and most vulnerable and to what extent gender differences in content and transition to labor markets have been taken into account. (Bennell 2007) - Public and private providers of education and training poorly serve rural youth especially in when comparing opportunities available to urban youth. The extent of 'urban bias' in technical vocational in provision publicly funded education and training services in mostly low-income developing countries. (UNESCO 2008) Education has also a lower level of priority compared to other short term pressing needs such as maximizing the household income. In developing countries are classified as illiterate but using some of the knowledge that you can have by studying technical vocational course you might get a chance to help yourselves or family. (Oketch 2007) -shifted to those comrades who are actually demanding skilled labor of various types thus advocating them in centered and needs driven approach to vocational training. This seems to concur with the discussion in many sharing agencies and academics in linking skills by the development of poverty reduction. It was whether to vocational the system or not.

Also reported by Dzigbede (2009), in this study tell us that Miller (1985) believed that in TVET has a workplace heritage orientation to a workplace and assurance of employment and this serves as a proof of the success of the program in TVET. It involves that students in TVET they should be ready to work and in addition the advantage in economics they need in plant training for enhancing their related skills to challenge with other organization for producing new technology.

Efficiency of Skills

As cited by Sargent, Allen, Frahm and Morris (2009), The Coaching Training Program exists for Training Assistants will be trained to become an efficient coach, what types of actions they need to execute to increase their efficiency, and ways to Communicate to develop and motivate student teams that they facilitate. We are heavily interested in helping teaching assistants enhance their feedback skills.

Furthermore, cited by Struyven, Dochy and Janssens (2008) if understudies are considered to be "particularly important in a procedure of progress and institution life "instead of "possible recipients of progress" (Fullan, 2001, p. 151), including understudies when contemplating change and understanding instructive advancement comes in normal. Truth be told, amid the procedure of progress, understudies may endure comparative sentiments of vulnerability and uncertainty at the begin and delights of authority, achievement, what's more, scholarly development when change has demonstrated to work. In this appreciation, understudy instructors in educator preparing programs are fascinating subjects. On one hand, they are understudies during the time spent change while encountering new showing strategies or appraisal modes; then again, they are to serve the capacity of instructors actualizing change practically speaking and cited by Stivers and Phillips (2008) The accreditation agencies are suggesting that educators should shift their focus from what to students learn. This usage was important to bring the university into consistence with new appraisal figure and to keep up accreditation with the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business International in Technical Vocational Standards: A nested hierarchy of approaches (Hutchings 2005). This paper presents a nested hierarchy, these approaches encompass: a approach in which students knowledge of standards is acquired in ad hoc and serendipitous ways; an 'explicit' approach focusing on the explicit articulation of standards; a 'social constructivist' approach where active use and application of standards develops

understanding; and finally, a 'community of practice' approach that centers on how students and teachers are absorbed into and become part of the academic practices for technical community. We propose three practical ways in which such a community approach within the assessment environment may be prompted and enhanced through the use of: social learning space, both physical and virtual; social learning, technical learning and collaborative assessment practices within developing student to enhance intelligence. Exploring the national student survey in TVL: Assessment and feedback issues The Higher Education Academy, Centre for Research into Quality of assessment, (2008) It asks all fulltime and part-time undergraduate students registered at participating institutions about their learning experiences during their final year of study by using to those technically sources it makes easier and faster. It has highlighted that students are notably less positive about assessment and feedback on their assignments than about other aspects of their learning experience.

In addition, Saxon, Levine-Brown and Boylan (2008) accurate assessment, effective academic advising, and appropriate placement are critical components of successful developmental education programs (Boylan, 2002; McCabe, 2000; Morante, 1989). Assessment is necessary in order to determine what student skills need to be developed. Advising is necessary to ensure that students know what assessment results mean and why they need to be placed in specific courses. Unfortunately, practically all assessment done in universities is cognitive. Comprehension assessment measures how much students may know about a particular subject at the time of testing. The results are usually reported as raw scores or percentiles indicating where students' skills fall along a continuum of all those on whom the comprehension assessment instrument has been norm. Although the information from such instruments is generally valid, reliable, and effective for placement, it does not address all of the factors that might contribute to student success. For instance, few efforts are made to assess students' affective characteristics such as motivation, attitudes toward learning, autonomy, or anxiety. According to a recent study by Gerlaugh, Thompson, Boylan, and Davis (2007), although almost all community colleges assess students' enlightenment skills, only 7% of them assess students' affective characteristics.

Another, Hirschfeld (2008) cited that students were frequently assessed in schools and its silence predictable has a dominant conception of assessment that should be make a student accountable. Zeidner (1992) offer a Junior high and Senior High School

Students four purposes of assessment. (Student arousing to get and interest and motivation evaluating quantity of teaching and administrative purposes.) Assessment is any act of interpretation of information about Student performance, collected through any of a multitude of means. Research into the conceptions teacher that have learn about purposes of assessment has identified four major purpose; that is assessment improve teaching and learning that makes students accountable for learning and to be relevant to education. At least three of those conceptions were similar to those held by teachers (Brown 2004a Brown, G.T.L. 2004a. Teachers' conceptions of assessment: Implications for policy and professional development. *Assessment in Education: Policy, Principles and Practice*, However, there was little evidence available of how students' conceptions of assessment might interact with academic performance, a matter investigated in this study. The speculation that assessment makes students obligated full positively on achievement while the three other conceptions (i.e., assessment makes schools accountable, assessment is enjoyable, and assessment is ignored) had negative loadings on achievement. These findings are dependable with self-regulation and formative assessment theories, such that students who perceive of assessment as a means of taking responsibility for their learning (i.e., assessment makes me accountable) will demonstrate increased educational outcomes.

In the same way, according to Doyle (2009) many educators who work closely with study abroad programs could conjure up a litany of testimonials about the dramatic impact of study abroad. It is often difficult to move beyond vaguely descriptive accounts to reliable data that shows how this experience has influenced the growth of intercultural sensitivity and awareness among students. King and Baxter Magolda (2005) recognized this lack of information: "Unfortunately, the development of theory Multicultural competence was limited by a strong reliance on the assessment of attitudes as a competence proxy "(p. 572, *Holistic Assessment and the Study Abroad Experience*).

Finally, Bevitt (2015) the impact of pioneering assessment on student experience in higher education is a disregarded research topic. This represents an important gap in the literature-given debate around the marketization of higher education, international focus on student satisfaction measurement tools and political calls to put students at the heart of higher education. In this paper reports on qualitative findings from a research project examining the impact of assessment preferences and familiarity on student attainment and experience. It argues that innovation is defined by the student, shaped by

miscellaneous assessment experiences and preferences, and therefore its impact is difficult to predict. It proposes that future innovations must explore assessment choice components which allow students to shape their own assessments. Cultural change and staff development will be required to achieve this. To be accepted, assessment for student experience must be viewed as a courtly layer within a complex multi-perspective model of assessment, which also embraces assessment of learning, assessment for learning and assessment for lifelong learning. Further research is required to build a meta-theory of assessment to enhance the alliance between these alternative approaches and minimize the pressure between them.

METHOD

This chapter presents the methods that have been used in this study to explore the experiences of students on Technical Vocational and Livelihood program assessment.

Research Design

In this study, researchers utilized qualitative research design particularly phenomenological study approach. The purpose of the phenomenological approach was to illuminate the specific situation and to identify the phenomena by how the actors perceive them (Stan Lester, 2000). The researchers employed phenomenological approach to evaluate experiences among the senior high school students in University of Immaculate Conception who had undergone the assessments in the Technical Vocational and Livelihood (TVL) program. Through this, researchers were able to identify the different factors that affect or motivated them throughout the assessment. Also, they have chosen this study approach to explore stories from different experiences and gather data about how these assessments enhanced the participants' skills and for the coming generation.

Sampling Method

Choosing participants had involved a sampling technique. The researchers have utilized the Snowball Sampling Technique. The method results in a study sample by referring to people who share or know about others who have certain characteristics of research interest (Patrick Beirnacki & Dan Waldrof, p. 141, 1981).

Participants

One of the researchers had purposively referred three participants aged 16-18 years old who had voluntarily give their consent to participate in In-Depth Interview (IDI). These three comes from the Home Economics/Cookery (H.E) strand under the Technical Vocational and Livelihood program and all have taken part in the In-Depth Interview.

The involvement criteria has included senior high school participant that has already undergone TVL assessments who fitted the demand age gap of the study while the exclusion was the impotence of the participant to respond the research method due to an ailment. The participants have been referred since they have experienced and had perception on program assessment and how these did helped them in their chosen field. In conclusion, researchers expected that they had supplied a meaningful description and validated data based on the respondents' experiences. Interview session with the participants has been done inside the school premise. Research has been conducted specifically at the University of the Immaculate Conception, Bonifacio Street, Davao City between 3 to 4 PM. Researchers have given them snacks as their recompense and for their convenience.

Research Instrument

The analysis of questions was defined by the researchers in phenomenological review in TVL strand. It would go through first with assessment and affirmation process, conducted by the validators. The investigation would be pilot approved after the validation. The qualitative phenomenological study was consulted and has been recorded for authenticity functions by instrument which was utilized. The interrogation was recorded and examined in English. It has lent them by applying language conveniently in order for them to openly express their selves without ambiguity or confusion.

Data Collecting Method

The Researcher needs face to face interactions in personal interview appointment for the date to be composed. In (1988) according to Ferreria et al. Interviewing is the most important data collection of instrument. The problems to be explained was prepared to be preceding to that interview and it was consulted by semi-structured in a line-up of questions and concern to be discussed by the prepared and by the antecedent interview. The interview delivered semi-structured for discerning clarification and further consultation

of essential appropriate issues that appear during the consultations where mandatory questions were clarified to suit accurate participants face to face individual consultation approved the researcher to study the non-verbal conversations and feedbacks which verified to be applicable in the analysis of data. The interviews were recorded and later transcribed. In (1975) Bogdan and Taylor listed acknowledgment and understanding as part of the basic fundamental of unstructured interviewing.

Data Analysis Method

The results were used with the thematic agreeable analysis method. Ezzy (2000), the method describes data analysis as a way of examining data by constructing it into divisions on the basis of themes, concepts or similar features. The operation employed was mainly designed to reduce and categorize large quantities of data. It uses more meaningful units that can interpret (Singleton, 1997). In developing the themes in steps that were informed by Marshall and Rossman (1989) in De Vos (1998) was included the following steps.

Organizing Data:

The duplicated data was repetitively gathered through for the analyst to be familiar with the analysis.

Generating categories, themes, and patterns:

This was a stage that needs analytical mind thinking and creativity. Analyst identified the most important themes, recurring ideas, and patterns of belief, then facilitated with integration of the results. The steps of division involved noting patterns in the analysis participants. Patterns, themes, and categories were becoming unveiled.

Testing emergent hypothesis:

The class and patterns between them became a seeming data; the analysis then evaluated the reliability of those hypotheses developed and testing them by against the data. It involves evaluation of the data for their adequacy in information, credibility, usefulness and centrality of them.

Searching for alternative answers:

The prospective participants were classified; the analysis approached them and invited to participate the investigation. It was presented with data sheet and informed them

about the right to refuse in cooperation. They admit about their right to participate voluntarily. They were not required to disclose their identifying details. They were presented with consents for the participation and audio recordings to their signed contract.

Trustworthiness of the Study

A more focused discussion on the quality of qualitative content analysis results was also necessary, especially since several articles on the validity and reliability of content analysis (Neuendorf, 2011; Potter & Levine-Donnerstein, 1999; Rourke & Anderson, 2004). The objective of trustworthiness in a qualitative survey was to support the argument that the findings of the survey were "worthy to pay attention" (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The authors suggested four trustworthiness assessment alternatives that were, credibility, reliability, consistency, and transferability. From the establishment perspective, researchers' credibility must ensure that those involved in research were identified and accurately described. To set up credibility of the study, researchers have drawn out engagement within the field and triangulated information from diverse sources. Dependability refers to the data stability over time and under various conditions. The researchers were responsible for describing the changes in the Focus Group Discussion and how they had affected the research approach to the study. In order to achieve dependability in this study, the participant validation of the study was carried out with the teachers and everyone in authority to verify the study results. Confirmability refers to objectivity, which was, the congruence potential between two or more independent data people about precision, relevance, and significance. In order to achieve confirmability of the study, researchers used recording notes to take, transcribe and translate data into English language. Transferability means the possibility of extrapolation. It depends on the reasoning that findings has been transmitted or generalized to settings or groups. To extend the transferability of discoveries, researchers provided the sample location and depiction of the study. The purpose of the study has been explained to the participant and ensured that their identity was respected. In addition, researchers ensured that the risks were fairly distributed and that they benefit. The final criterion, authenticity, refers to the extent that researchers showed a range of realities fairly and faithfully (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Polit & Beck, 2012).

Ethical Consideration

Silverman (2007) states that any form of consultation with the ethical guidelines if a professional association can be clarified through ethical consideration, to carry out the study, a letter of request will be submitted to the principal, noted by research adviser and school coordinator, then approved by the principal. Prescribed in the letter of proposal for research before the data is collected, ethical issues concerning confidentiality, consent, access and protection of human participants will be addressed accordingly. Berg's research (2009) stated that the most important principle is that the researchers should not put the participants to harm or anything in the same manner. The researchers had built trust in the research participants through anonymity and confidentiality within the limits of the law. For the continuation of the Data gathering, the researchers should receive both verbal and written informed consent on the research topic. Should the researchers have collected the signed consent will be the beginning of the focus group discussion.

Role of the Researchers

In this study, the researchers ought to ease the research procedure in order to accomplish smooth and constant progress. The researchers were also to give forth and aim to eradicate biases throughout the study. They also have expounded the records acquired from FGD, read and re-read it for the presentation to have a uniform value. The researchers had figured out and code the data gathered. Their outcome and decision were filtered and have been systematically compressed it to its brief form. They ought to do every single responsibility in collecting and expounding the data collected from a variation of written texts, triangulate it and to determine to accept or dissonance the conclusion. They had integrated and created the structural themes to convert the data into a universal truth to make it decent and rational. Through this, the researchers were able to know and determine the lived experiences of the respondents.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter has been formulated to answer the research question keeping the literature review and research findings from the interviews in consideration.

Research Question 1: *What are the experiences of TVL students in taking assessments?*

All of the participants mentioned that most of the time, their assessments were given by group. This type of assessment aimed to promote the pedagogical approach called collaborative learning. Participants believed that this type of assessment allows them to help each other to learn to achieve common goals. They reported several advantages of this learning method: promoting students' social skills necessary to work cooperatively with others; teaching students to function as members of a team; and increasing students' responsibility for their own learning and the learning of the group. However, the participants who were working in small groups believed this would impact negatively on their learning. For instance, they often do not work productively, repeat old information, waste time, or become confrontational.

Presented in the following are the themes and sub-themes generated after data analysis. The themes are given as headlines in bold and the sub-themes are marked in italics. Also presented after the table, containing the summary of themes and sub-themes are the discussion about the results of the research question.

The first theme to emerge was shared dependency. Participant surged about their dependence on group members for their grade and how they had to *trust* that each student would do the work they were assigned to do.

"You are trusting them that they have done the assigned work to have everything you need to know but if unfortunately, they leave something out...you are losing out because you are trusting that that's everything when it's not." (Participant A)

Participants mentioned about *feeling personal pressure* within the group; especially if they viewed themselves to be of a different academic standard to other group members. Participants were worried about the impact they had on the group mark and felt accountable for other student grades. As a result of this binary dependent relationship, participants experienced a range of negative emotions such as exhaustion, stress, and frustration.

“Let’s say I am not the strongest member of a group...I feel that others will be looking back at me if the assessment score is too low...I felt guilty, dragged them down or something...it might not always be the case, but I always have that fear...what if I am not good enough for the group.” (Participant B)

Lack of controllability

The participants articulated a sense of loss of control over their learning, own grade and future when a group mark was awarded. The participants viewed that they had *less control over their own learning* when functioning in a group. This was attributed to each being allocated a specific area or segment to work with. Despite the accessibility of face-to-face group sessions for the participants to feedback the knowledge they had acquired, they still focused only on their specific segment and paid little attention to other group members’ area of assignment. There was consensus among the participants that they learned more when working individually because they felt they had better control over what material they considered important to investigate to develop their own knowledge base. The expanse of collaborative learning was also viewed as impacting on the scope of student learning.

“I learn less... because I am sticking only to my topic and they cover the rest... I just only concentrate on my part... and kind of dismiss... their part.” (Participant A)

“I prefer being able to look at the piece myself and decide what I think is important to me, for my future development.” (Participant C)

Participants also spoke about having *less control over their own grade* and not knowing what grade to expect when working collaboratively.

“If I do an individual assignment...I would have my expectations of what grade I get...in a group, I am never really sure.” (Participant B)

Some participants experienced receiving a lower grade for group assignments compared to individual pieces of academic work. Explanations for this were attributed on other group members exerting less effort or operating differently to contribute to the group project.

“If there are people who are underperforming, then, the grades will come down because the work is not being put in.” (Participant C)

Other participants believed they were more likely to pass an activity with a group evaluation but getting a high grade was more difficult. They also realized their grades were affected when groups were evaluated alongside each other; particularly if the assignment was to deliver a group presentation.

“The teachers will be less likely to fail a whole group...so I am less likely to fail but at the same time I am less likely to get a really good grade.” (Participant B)

The participants spoke about the different learning qualities and styles of group members' work; highlighting that often-perceived weaker group members' labor had to be compensated for. This compensation usually took the form of some group members exerting more effort or checking and correcting works submitted by other group members to ensure it conformed to a superior standard.

“Some might...try to compensate for those who are underperforming...they might try to do more to cover for them and just give up on them.” (Participant A)

Participants' attitudes changed as they transitioned throughout the program. Early in the program, the participants expressed the value of skills they gained from engaging in group work such as communication, confidence building, learning how to work in a team, and self-development opportunities.

“I have to learn to get on with people and to be able to work with people whether my personalities clash or not.” (Participant A)

The participants reported that their perspectives changed as they advanced to six months to one year of the program when grades began to make a difference. As a consequence, they felt that group grades were unfitting at these junctures in their program of study because of the *potential impact on their future*. They also believed that if they

received a lower grade due to a group mark, it would imprint a greater impression on them than if they received a lower grade due to their own individual work.

“When you know it is yourself...okay, this is the result of my work...if you worked to the greatest efforts for others’ grades...and you are looking at that one group grade...it would stamp over me...it would be very hard to look at that piece of paper for the rest of your life and say if it was not for that group work.” (Participant B)

Challenges of co-dependency

Dependent relationships can cause conflict within groups; thus, it was not surprising that participants spoke about conflicts that arose within groups and how these were handled, or not. Participants conveyed that *how clashes were dealt* depending on whether the group was composed of friends or strangers.

When a conflict arose between two or more group members, where the group constituted friends, other group members tended to just let them sort it out and not get involved.

“If it’s kind of two people in the group have a dissimilarity of ideas ... nobody else in the group really cares...they kind of just stay out of it...it is basically who’s more impulsive.” (Participant A)

Participants dialogued about their *preference for being assigned to groups rather than choosing their own group members* because it removed the pressure of having to choose friends as group members.

“They ask to be in my group and I cannot say no to my friends ... I can’t be like no you’re not allowed in my group...you might fail me.” (Participant A)

While some of the participants felt it was easier to work within a group if all members knew each other, others believed that knowing group members was an added source of conflict. They mentioned about how their judgment of their friends’ effort ethic could change if they worked in groups together. Moreover, it was easy for work to be deferred

when working with friends due to external commitments or for group members to take on extra work to avoid confrontation with friends.

“If I pick my friends as my group mates, they feel relaxed during the activity.”
(Participant B)

While participants expressed their preference to be assigned to groups and spoke about the challenges of working in groups with friends, there seemed to be a dichotomy in thinking because they stated they still preferred working with their friends over strangers. This was because the participants found it harder to coordinate group meetings and experienced greater difficulty depending on people they did not know.

“It is harder when you do not know the people you are grouped with. You cannot easily contact them or mingle with them because you do not know how they will react after you approach them.” (Participant C)

Presented in Table 1 are the themes and sub-themes generated after the analysis of interview extracts.

Table 1. Themes and sub-themes of research question number 1

Themes	Sub-themes
Shared dependency	Trust
	Feeling personal pressure
Lack of controllability	Less control over learning
	Less control over grade
	Potential impact on future
Challenges of co-dependency	Dealing with clashes
	Preference of group mates

Successful cooperative learning has two essential sides -individual responsibility and positive interdependence (Le, Janssen, & Wubbels, 2018). Positive interdependence involves the group knowing they need each other to achieve success and individual responsibility refers to each group member being accountable for their own participation within the group. Participants in this study raised issues of dependency; with negative interdependence featuring more strongly than positive interdependence. The participants

had previous experiences where not all group members participated wholly in group work. Where a group grade was awarded, these raised negative emotions resulting in an aversion towards group work.

Vuopala, Hyvonen, and Jarvela (2015) found out that where the students once approached group work with enthusiasm, the more experiences they had of receiving group grades, the less eager they became and instead felt anxiety and ambivalence towards the project. In theory, group goals and individual accountability should motivate students to work together for the benefit of the group. However, this is often not the case. Scager, Boonstra, Peeters, Vulperhorst, and Wiegant (2016) extracted that when students are depending on other group members, who neglect to engage with the group, they approach the project cautiously because they do not trust their group-colleagues to deliver on the final project. This behavior does not foster true collaborative learning but rather individual learning in the guise of a group; with some group members shouldering extra workload in order to achieve their own individual goals such as the grade they want (Le et al., 2018).

While theoretically, student learning should be maximized as all group members take a specific topic and feedback to the group; thereby facilitating shared learning, the participants in this study reported learning less from their peers than if working individually. These findings are consistent with previous studies which found that student learning is not always enhanced through collaborative working. When working in groups, students are dependent on each other to fully research topics and feedback to the group. The divided workload often results in students learning one particular feature of a topic in detail, but merely gaining superficial knowledge of other facets of the topic researched by other group members (Laal & Laal, 2012; Vuopala, Hyvo, & Jarvela, 2015). Lack of participation by some group members can affect student learning because when certain group members neglect to perform the work required the rest of the group misses learning opportunities. Difficulties with group work logistics – organizing meetings, dividing up work - contributes further to student workload and consumes time that could be spent learning (Barkley, Cross, & Major, 2014). Reasons given by students, in this study, for lack of participation included time constraints, work and personal commitments; added to an already heavy workload. Previous studies cite similar reasons for limited/non-participation (Chong & Kong, 2012; Gress, Fior, Hadwin, & Winne, 2010); however the

outcome is frequently that certain group members assume extra workload because their grade is dependent on it. This becomes a source of conflict within the group, leading to dissatisfaction with group work and causes once motivated students to lose interest and lower their standards because they either deem the extra effort required by them unfair or they become wary of contributing to the grade of group members who fail to participate (Jarvela et al., 2015; Laal & Ghodsi, 2012).

Conclusion

Through the results and discussion, the researchers have concluded that there are certain factors affecting the experiences of TVL students in program assessment. First, trust and personal pressure. Since assessments are presented or assigned through grouping, students are likely to depend on their group mates that a certain task would be successful however, this might also lead to personal pressure that he/she would drag down the group. Second is the lack control of learning, grade and the potential impact on future. To sum up these three, a student in a group work does not have the control towards his/her learning and the grade he/she wants to achieve. Because of this, a student might get a feeling of regret that if not for that group, it would end the way it should be. Lastly, dealing with clashes and preference of group. These are heavy factors that cover the preceding factors. Therefore, group works plays a heavy role in the experience of students that might determine each strengths and weakness in the circle.

Recommendation

To thoroughly understand the variety of experiences among the TVL students in taking assessments, the following recommendations are proposed:

- Teachers should lessen the amount of group activities if needed to encourage the independence of students and in order for them to discover their individual competencies.
- Students must value the importance of sportsmanship when working in a group to avoid conflict and for the benefit of the group
- Future study should not limit the participants into three to fully decipher how assessments affect the experiences of students that can be utilized in the long run.

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