

Exploring the Use of Alternative Approaches and Tools in Teaching Public Administration: Issues, Concerns and Directions

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Abstract

Innovative models and approaches in teaching public administration are being explored today in order to make public administration and governance education more relevant to public administration students who come from diverse backgrounds. The traditional instructional pedagogies would include the teacher-centered lecture discussions and direct instructions but with the advent of technology and the cyberspace, more doors are now open for public administration teaching. Higher education institutions now use the “open university” scheme where there are no more geographic boundaries that exist in teaching and learning public administration. For instance, to cater the needs of local government officials in the Philippines; a Local Governance University (*LogU*) is being introduced – an e-capacity building facility to ensure continuing education of elected and appointed local officials in the Philippines; to promote issues in local governance; to engage local government officials in policy discussions and citizens in local governance practices; and to facilitate the professionalization of local governance. As such, *LogU* uses various modes such as the ladderized program, i.e. Diploma/Masters of Public Administration/Management; lecture series; and online training programs. In particular, the ladderized program is a capacity development intervention for elected local officials (local legislators) and appointive professional staff that puts high value on :i) strategic engagement of and capacity building for key actors of local institutions to strengthen decentralization and development, i.e., schools of public administration, the youth and the young local legislators, and public administration practitioners; ii) operationalizing the “town and gown” principle by strategically pushing the principle further through human capital investment with emphasis on developing the future leaders of the country – national and local; and iii) long-term sustainability. The paper’s conceptualization is influenced by the concept of the “town and gown” approach: the school (*gown*) in order to be fully relevant and responsive should be able to meet the academic needs of the geographic area (*town*) where it operates. To entice local government officials to go back to schools especially those who do not have a degree but are currently an official of the local government, another approach introduced by the Commission on Higher Education is the *Expanded Tertiary Education Equivalency and Accreditation Program (ETEEAP)*— a comprehensive educational assessment program at the tertiary level that recognizes, accredits and gives equivalencies to knowledge, skills, attitudes and values gained by individuals from relevant work. It is implemented through deputized higher education institute particularly those members of the Association of Schools of Public Administration in the Philippines (ASPAP) that shall award the appropriate college degree.

It is within this context that paper explores the possibility of using various alternative approaches to stimulate creativity and innovation in the delivery of PA courses and the enhancement of teaching/delivery of specialized public administration courses for local government officials and identify the major issues and challenges in employing such tools and approaches in preparing tomorrow’s PA faculty as creative and innovative teachers.

