



Developing a Curriculum for the Transition Program of Special Learners in the Philippines

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Abstract

This paper focuses on creating a curriculum development model and curriculum framework for the Transition Program designed for special learners with intellectual and physical disabilities. It explains the idea of a transition program in Philippine context, discusses the curriculum framework, and proposes a curriculum development model for creating a relevant and responsive transition program. The curriculum framework for the proposed Transition Program Curriculum includes five learning areas: (1) Livelihood, (2) Academic, (3) Enrichment, (4) Pre-vocational, and (5) Care. All these learning areas are designed to help and prepare Filipino learners with special education needs to be capable of engaging in entrepreneurship, pursuing further studies, or living functional lives. The curriculum development model for the Transition Program Curriculum follows a linear-cyclical procedure starting with deliberations, development of curriculum philosophy and framework, identification of programs and strategies, development of curriculum materials and instructional resources, development of assessment framework and evaluation tools, and development of curriculum policies that will guide the teachers in implementing the curriculum. This model can be used for the planning and development of special education curricula for the K to 12 basic education programs in the Philippines.

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Keywords: Transition program; curriculum development model; special learners

1. Introduction

The Republic of the Philippines recognizes the right of every citizen to receive quality education. As stated in Article 13 Section 11 of the 1987 Constitution of the Philippines, the state “shall protect and promote the rights of citizens to quality education at all levels and shall take appropriate steps to make such education available to all”. Further, it shall “provide adult citizens, disabled and out of school youth with training in civics, vocational efficiency and other skills.” For this purpose, the State shall “create a functional basic

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education system that will develop productive and responsible citizens equipped with the essential competencies, skills and values for both life-long learning and employment.” Article 3 of Presidential Decree (PD) 603 established the right of children to an education “commensurate with their abilities and for the development of their skills for the improvement of their capacity for service to themselves and their fellowmen.” Republic Act (RA) 7277, known as “Magna Carta for Disabled Persons”, underscored the State’s duty to disabled persons, the scope of which includes the delivery of adequate access to quality education and sufficient opportunities to develop their skills. These commitments of the state are accomplished through the Department of Education (DepEd), which is mandated to ensure that every Filipino learner with special education needs, regardless of age, and socio-economic status will have access to quality educational programs that will ensure his or her holistic development to become a functionally literate citizen.

The purpose of this study is to create a curriculum development model and develop a curriculum framework for a *Transition Program Curriculum* for public schools in the Philippines. The Transition Program is one of the important projects of the DepEd to respond to the needs of special learners in the country. Within the context of the K to 12 basic education program, the challenge is how to develop a good transition program curriculum and what type of programs should be offered. The curriculum development model presented in this paper is the first to be developed in the Philippines for special education.

For many years, Special Education (SPED) has been in existence in the Philippines and it has significantly improved the lives of special needs learners through the development and implementation of several programs designed to meet their unique needs. In collaboration with private schools, non-government organizations, and other government agencies, DepEd has carefully studied, planned and rolled out several Special Education curricula across the country in order to deliver quality and effective instruction for learners with special education needs. One of these programs is the Transition Program Curriculum

1.1. The idea of Transition Program for Special Learners

The Transition Program aims to help special learners become functional in spite of their disabilities. It aims to make them enjoy their daily lives, and empower them to become more useful and productive citizens. This program is not just a set of activities; it is an educational equity package that includes curriculum and policies that will support the education of special learners.

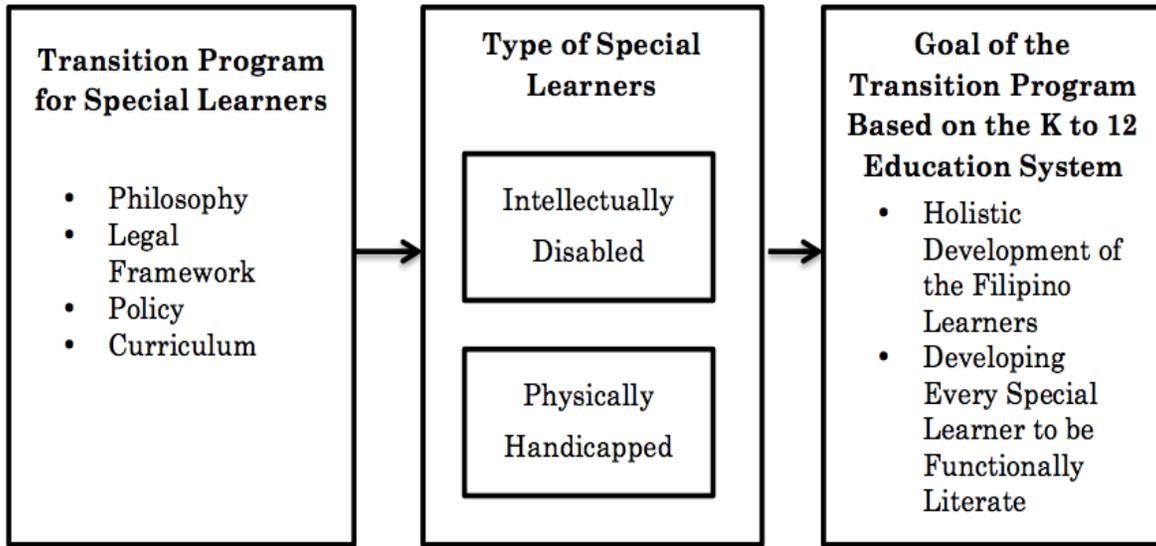


Figure 1. Conceptual framework for the transition program

As shown in *Figure 1*, the transition program includes the philosophy, legal framework, policies, and curriculum for special learners who are capable of being educated in either formal or non-formal learning systems. The philosophy component provides the overarching principles, commitment, and underlying values of the program. The educational policy component of this program ensures that there is an efficient system of support for the implementation of the program to ensure sustainability and continuity. The curriculum is a set of competencies, programs, and learning activities designed for all the learners under this program.

The transition program is designed for special learners that are *intellectually disabled* and those that are *physically handicapped*. It is designed to meet their special needs and respond to their specific interests. It is like a *care package* that will empower the learners in their transition from home to school, or from post-elementary or post-secondary to the world of work. In the transition program, the learners will also enjoy an education that will enable them to become functional in their everyday lives.

The National Council for Special Education (2014) identified several points where a transition program can be developed and implemented in the Republic of Ireland: (1) from pre-school to primary, (2) from primary to post-primary, (3) from post-primary to further or higher education, and (4) from education to adult life. Similarly, the Department of

Education of the province of Nova Scotia (2005) identified several types of transition programs based on four entry points: (1) home-to-school transition, (2) grade-to-grade transition, (3) school-to-school transition, and (4) school-to-community transition. These types of transition programs offer comprehensive curricular programs to respond to the transition needs of special learners.

Patton, Cronin, and Jairrels (1997) also identified several types of Transition Programs that are offered to learners with special education needs:

1. Functional Academic
2. Vocational Skills
3. Community Access Skills
4. Daily Living Skills
5. Financial Skills
6. Independent Living Skills
7. Transportation Skills
8. Social/Relational Skills
9. Self Determination Skills

All these types of Transition Programs aim to help learners with special education needs to function in their everyday lives. The goal of the transition program is always to capacitate the students and empower them to become functionally literate citizens like any other people in the society.

1.2. Transition Program in the Philippines

In the Philippines, the transition program was already part of the special education program of the Department of Education; however, it was focused only on adult learners with special needs. Transition program was viewed as a coordinated set of activities for a student designed within an outcome-oriented process that promotes movement from school to out-of-school activities.

Quijano (2007) presented the Philippine Model of Transition that focuses on enabling every special learner for community involvement and employment. The model envisions full participation, empowerment, and productivity of those enrolled in the program. The transition program includes 3 curriculum domains: (1) daily living skills, (2) personal and social skills, and (3) occupational guidance and preparation. This model necessitates the need for support from professionals and other key people in the community in order for the

individual with special needs to attain independent living. According to Gomez (2010), this model of transition program can also be used for children in conflict with the law (CICL).

The Transition Program in the Philippines could be expanded to many different possible points of entry that would extend the scope of transition program from young children to adults. These may include the following examples:

1. Transition to school life – may include children and adult special learners who would like to attend or who have been assessed to be ready for regular school under the inclusion program. This may also include students who would like to learn basic literacy programs under the Alternative Learning System.
2. Transition after post-secondary schooling – includes programs that will prepare special learners for vocational courses and on-the-job trainings. It may also include programs that will help students go to higher education if possible.
3. Transition from school to entrepreneurship – includes programs that will allow special learners to become entrepreneurs in their respective communities.
4. Transition from school to adult life – includes programs that will allow students to adjust and adapt to adult life.
5. Transition to Functional Life – includes learning of life skills that will allow the special learners to learn how to take care of themselves and develop some special skills that they can use everyday.

These entry points for students are important for planning an effective and efficient transition program that is truly relevant and responsive to the needs, interests, abilities, and aspirations of special learners. Transition at any point is an important program to empower special learners to experience normal lives.

The transition program aims to realize the aim of the K to 12 basic education program of producing holistically developed and functionally literate Filipino learners in the context of special education. This qualifies it as an organic part of the K to 12 curriculum by providing both academic and extra-curricular support systems to all special learners.

1.3. Looking at Curriculum Development Models to Develop a Model for Transition Program

Some classic curriculum development models are discussed to thresh out the basic principles in curriculum development process that could help in creating a curriculum development model for the development of a Transition Program Curriculum in the Philippines.

Ralph Tyler developed the first model of curriculum development in 1949. Tyler argued that curriculum development should be logical and systematic. His model presents a process of curriculum development that follows a sequential pattern starting from objectives to content, learning experiences, and evaluation. Tyler argued that to develop any curriculum, curriculum workers should respond to four basic questions: (1) what educational purposes should the school seek to attain? (2) what educational experiences are likely to attain these objectives? (3) how can these educational experiences be organized? and (4) how can we determine whether these purposes are being attained?

Nicholls and Nicholls (1978) presented an interrelated procedure for developing the curriculum. The model prescribes five logical and interdependent stages that are continuous curriculum development process. The model starts with a situational analysis in which curricular decisions are made, followed by the selection of objectives and the other succeeding phases. The model is highly prescriptive and dynamic. The inclusion of situational analysis as part of the model is a valuable principle in curriculum development. It enables the curriculum workers to understand better the context in which the curriculum is being developed. By starting with situational analysis, curriculum workers will be able to collect data and the needed information from various curriculum sources and influences that are prerequisites in formulating curriculum goals and objectives. Thus, if applied in college settings, faculty members need to conduct situational analysis before planning their syllabi and curriculum plans. This will make it possible for the curriculum to be more relevant and responsive to the needs of the students and the school.

Decker Walker developed a model for curriculum development and first published it in 1971. In his model, Walker was particularly interested on how curriculum workers actually do their task in curriculum development. As shown in his model, Walker identified three phases in curriculum development, which he termed *platform*, *deliberations*, and *design*. In the *Platform phase*, Walker suggested that curriculum workers bring with them their individual beliefs, knowledge, and values. They have their own ideas about how to do their task and they are prepared to discuss and argue about them. *Deliberation phase*, on the

other hand, involves identifying which facts are needed for means and ends, generating alternatives, and considering the consequences of these alternatives. This phase is also used in weighing alternative costs and consequences, and choosing the best alternative for the curriculum task they are about to do. The third step, which is the *Design phase*, involves planning, decision-making, and the actual development of the curriculum.

There are some principles that can be learned from these different models that are essential in creating a model for developing a transition program in the Philippines. For example, Pawilen (2012) identified several principles that are applicable in this study:

1. When developing a model for curriculum development, there is always the need for a clear and logical process.
2. Variables that are influential in developing a curriculum should be specified.
3. Models should reflect how educators plan and develop curriculum in any level.
4. Models should be based on a curriculum theory.
5. Each process in a model should specify areas where curriculum decisions are made; and
6. Each model should reflect the major phases of curriculum development: planning, design, implementation, and evaluation.

In the context of this study, it is necessary that the proposed curriculum development model for the transition program in the Philippines should reflect these principles. The curriculum development model for the Transition Program Curriculum should follow a logical process that describes the necessary tasks that teachers and administrators can follow. The curriculum development processes should be closely aligned with how the Department of Education develops various curricula.

1.3. Purpose of the Study

This study has two main purposes: (1) to create a curriculum development model that could be used for the development of a transition program curriculum, and (2) to develop a curriculum framework for the transition program curriculum for public schools in the Philippines. The study will also examine issues and problems encountered by schools and teachers in implementing the current transition curriculum. Further, it will identify important principles that should be considered in the development of the proposed transition program curriculum.

1.4. Significance of the Study

The study is useful in many ways. First, the proposed curriculum development model and curriculum framework will be used in the development of a new transition program curriculum in the Philippines. Other educators developing similar programs for Special Education may also adapt the model and the curriculum framework. Second, this study will shed some light on the state of transition programs for special education in the Philippines. Finally, the result of the study will improve the development and implementation of the transition program curriculum in the Philippines.

2. Method

This study is a descriptive research. It utilized data from the result of a series of roundtable discussions to plan and develop a relevant and responsive transition program for special education in the country. The study aims to answer the following questions:

1. What are the problems encountered by the schools and teachers in the implementation of the current transition program?
2. What are the important principles that should be considered in the development of the transition program?
3. What curriculum development model should be used in developing the transition program?
4. What is the proposed curriculum framework for the transition program?

The study is a product of a five-day planning and situational analysis on transition program in the country. This study was participated in by Fourteen (14) SPED teachers, Two (2) grade school Master Teachers, Three (3) Division Supervisors, Six (6) Regional Supervisors, and Three (3) School Heads who were involved in the implementation of the transition program and who are directly involved in the supervision of the transition program in different regions and provinces all over the country. All of them participated in big group and small group discussions where they shared their experiences and plans for the transition program in their schools, divisions, and regions. The results of the discussions and the experiences shared by the participants were recorded and discussed thematically based on the research questions.

3. Results

The result of the study is presented qualitatively based on the four research questions. The results of the discussion provided vital insights and principles that are valuable in the

development of a relevant and responsive curriculum for the transition program in the country.

3.1 What are the problems encountered by the schools and teachers in the implementation of the current transition program in the Philippines?

There were several issues and problems encountered by SPED Teachers and school officials on the implementation of the transition program. These are presented in Table 1 in hierarchical order.

Table 1: Problems Encountered by Schools on the Implementation of the Transition Program

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited facilities and resources • Lack of concrete policies and directions for the transition programs • Few approved teaching items for special education teachers • Limited curricular program offerings • Limited understanding of parents on the nature of the transition program
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The school officials and teachers observed that the existing transition curriculum is somehow overlapping with the existing Special Education Curriculum implemented in different SPED schools and centers in the country. They also observed that the same curriculum is offered to students every year. The participants proposed that a separate curriculum should be developed for the students enrolled under the transition program. The program should expand its existing academic and pre-vocational programs to include interests-based and needs-based programs.

It is also necessary to develop instructional materials and assessment tools for the program. This will guide the teachers and administrators in effectively implementing the curriculum. Likewise, it is imperative to provide training for SPED teachers and, if possible, the government should provide teaching items for teachers who will handle the existing programs. A curriculum policy should also be developed to help the administrators and teachers manage and carry out the transition program. The curriculum policy will guide administrators and teachers to effectively implement the transition program.

The current transition program is also limited to adult learners. With the implementation of the K-12 Education Program, the teachers and supervisors expressed their desire to expand the program from early-childhood to adulthood. This will ensure that all learners with special education needs, regardless of age, will have access to any transition program offered in different schools. Expanding the coverage of the transition

program will also allow more programs and learning areas to be offered to the learners based on their needs and interests.

Table 2: Problems Encountered by Teachers on the Implementation of the Transition Program

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- Limited instructional materials and resources
 - Limited training for special education teachers on the transition program
 - Lack of assessment tools
 - No provision for teaching assistants or shadow teacher
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Table 2 shows the problems encountered by the teachers of the transition program. The teachers are committed to do their best to implement the program. They see their job as a sacred duty to help every special learner. However, they need instructional materials, training, assessment tools, and teaching aids to help them carry out their tasks. In many schools, the transition program teachers are also the regular SPED teachers in the school. So, they teach in the regular SPED program in the morning, and teach in the transition program in the afternoon.

The teachers also expressed their concern to have a concrete admission and retention policy for the transition program. According to them, some parents considered the transition program as a venue for caregiving for their family members who are special learners. Some parents do not actively participate in the school activities involving family members of special learners. Sometimes, they are also not keen on attending parent-teachers' conferences to discuss the progress of the students. Ensuring greater cooperation and involvement of parents in the transition program is essential.

Amidst all these problems encountered, the supervisors and the teachers are grateful for the support they received from parents and some local government units (LGU). According to them, some parents and LGUs donated instructional materials that can be used for improving instruction. They also financed the improvement of the classrooms to make them more conducive for the learners with special needs. Certain LGUs also helped provide security for the schools, particularly for the students. These efforts are helpful in improving the delivery of the transition curriculum. Collaboration with different government and non-government agencies is necessary in the implementation of any special education program.

3.2. What are the important principles that should be considered in the development of a transition program curriculum?

There are principles that should be considered in the development of a relevant and responsive curriculum for a transition program in the country. Based on the result of the discussion, the teachers, principals, and supervisors expressed ideas that the development of the transition program curriculum should be grounded on the following principles that put emphasis on placing important value for all special learners:

- Every human being is important. They have the right to quality education, training, and care.
- All types of special learners in the Philippines should have access to various transition programs that will enable them to enjoy life and become functional, regardless of their disabilities.
- Each special learner enrolled in any transition program should have a meaningful life-long education experience.
- Every special learner is capable of learning, and has special abilities, skills, learning styles, and talents that need to be developed.
- The transition curriculum must offer various educational opportunities and programs based on the learner's interests, abilities, capacities, strengths, and special needs.
- Learning in the transition program must be outcomes-based and activity-cantered, leading to the development of important skills, abilities, talents, values, thinking skills, and life skills.
- The transition programs, standards, and competencies are developmental, learner-cantered, and goal-focused. It should also be relevant and responsive to the Philippine context.
- The transition programs and learning outcomes must promote greater collaboration and partnership between and among teachers, school, family, community, and industry to ensure that all relevant information are shared and the necessary resources are put in place to facilitate a successful transition.

- Every program, standard, and competency must be planned with all the necessary administrative and instructional support system in mind.
- The transition program should support and consider all existing legal frameworks concerning special learners.

These principles will guide the curriculum developers in the development and implementation of the proposed transition program curriculum for public schools in the Philippines.

3.3. What curriculum development model should be used in developing a Transition Program?

The result of the discussion on the process of developing a relevant transition program for the learners led to the development of a curriculum development model. This model was presented to the supervisors, school heads, and special education teachers who participated in the focused-group discussion and it will be used in the development of the curriculum for the whole transition program in the country.

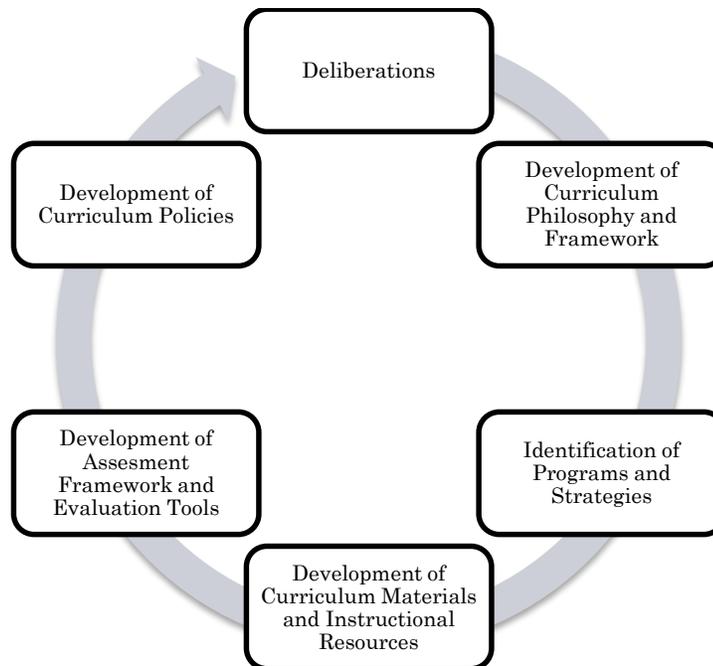


Figure 2. Curriculum development model for the transition program

As shown in Figure 2, the development of the transition program curriculum follows a dynamic curriculum development process. Like any curriculum development model, it is linear and cyclical in terms of processes and procedures, but it also allows the curriculum developers to start from any phase. This is in consideration of the fact that there are several transition programs being implemented in various schools in the country. These phases are:

1. **Deliberations** – include situational analysis whereby education leaders, teachers, and stakeholders will identify and discuss issues, problems, demands, and possibilities on the transition program for the special learners. This phase specifically includes the following:
 - a. **Understanding the Learners.** The people involved in this phase may also examine carefully the needs and nature of the special learners who will be the beneficiaries of the transition program.
 - b. **Examining Current Transition Programs.** This involves understanding the issues and evaluation results of existing transition programs.
 - c. **Analyzing the Function and Nature of a Transition Program.** The participants need to understand the nature and scope of a transition program for special learners.
 - d. **Analysis of Laws and Educational Policies.** It is important to analyze the requirements of the law and the prescriptions of existing education policies on special education.
 - e. **Understanding the Society.** This means understanding how the people view special learners and examining existing support system that the community provides to support the development of special learners.
2. **Development of Curriculum Philosophy and Framework** – involves the development of the curriculum design framework of the transition program after analyzing the result of the situational analysis or phase I. The curriculum design should reflect the K-12 curriculum. Curriculum design process will include the following activities:
 - a. **Development of a Curriculum Philosophy.** The curriculum philosophy embodies basic and vital values and beliefs that will serve as basis for designing, implementing, and evaluating the curriculum.
 - b. **Development of Curriculum Framework.** The curriculum framework reflects the curriculum philosophy and the essential curriculum contents

that should be included in the transition program. The framework should reflect the following principles:

- **Learner-centered.** It is relevant and responsive to the needs of the special learners.
 - **Competency-based.** The curriculum design may also include the development of curriculum standards and competencies that will develop the necessary skills for special learners to become functional.
3. **Identification of Programs and Strategies** – includes identification and development of specific programs and strategies for the transition program. It includes learning experiences and learning packages for the educational needs of the learners. The important activity under this phase is the development of curriculum standards and competencies for the different transition programs.
 4. **Development of Curriculum Materials and Instructional Resources** – is comprised of the development, selection, and production of curriculum materials and instructional resources that are needed in the implementation of the transition programs. This phase involves careful consideration of the following:
 - c. **Academic Skills Development** – takes into consideration the materials and resources that will help the learners develop their academic skills like reading, speaking, counting, and other skills that are relevant to them.
 - d. **Technical Skills Development** – looks into the materials and resources that will help the learners develop skills like baking, sewing, and other vocational and technical skills.
 - e. **Motor Skills Development** – includes the materials and resources that will help the learners in developing their motor skills.
 - f. **Personality Development** – takes account of materials and resources that will further enhance the personalities of the learners. This may include but is not limited to learning how to comb their hair, brush their teeth, etc.
 - g. **Social Development** – involves materials and resources that will help the learners interact with other people and in handling their emotions and behavior.
 5. **Evaluation** – consists of the following activities:
 - a. Development of assessment frameworks to evaluate the effectivity of the transition program; and

- b. Development of assessment tools to evaluate the progress of the learners.
6. **Development of Curriculum Policy** – covers the development of policies to ensure that there are organizational and administrative support systems for the transition program.
- a. **Selection and Retention of Learners.** It is necessary to develop policies for the selection and retention of students to guide teachers, administrators, and parents.
 - b. **Protection of the Learners.** It is important to ensure that the learners' rights, privacy, and dignity as human beings will be protected and respected.
 - c. **Training of Teachers and Staff.** It is important that the staff and teachers who will implement the transition program are well trained, skilful, and knowledgeable about special learners and in implementing transition programs. It is also desirable that their roles are clear to them.
 - d. **Designing the Learning Environment.** It is important that safety measures be guaranteed for all learners. It is also imperative to provide them a caring and loving atmosphere.
 - e. **Partnership with LGUs.** It is important to collaborate with the local government units to ensure that they provide safety measures to protect the learners and ascertain public and government support to the transition programs.
 - f. **Curriculum Implementation.** It includes selection of contents and utilization of instructional activities and materials that are relevant to the needs of the learners. It also includes guidelines in conducting activities for the learners.
 - h. **Curriculum Alignment.** This includes finding ways to develop equivalency system with the curriculum offered by the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA), and developing a system for aligning the transition program with the K-12 Curriculum.

The curriculum policies also include procedures and guidelines related to the planning and implementation processes, to quality assure the curriculum of the transition program. These curriculum policies will warrant the features and characteristics as well as the efficient continuity and sustainability of the program.

3.4. What is the Proposed Curriculum Framework for the Transition Program?

In this paper, curriculum is defined as a *set of learning activities designed to accomplish specific objectives*. Curriculum is also defined as a *series of learning outcomes that include standards and competencies*. The development of an ideal transition program will see more of these different learning activities designed to help special learners acquire important skills they need to become functional in everyday life. The standards and competencies will define the skills and the knowledge the learners need to perform their tasks daily.

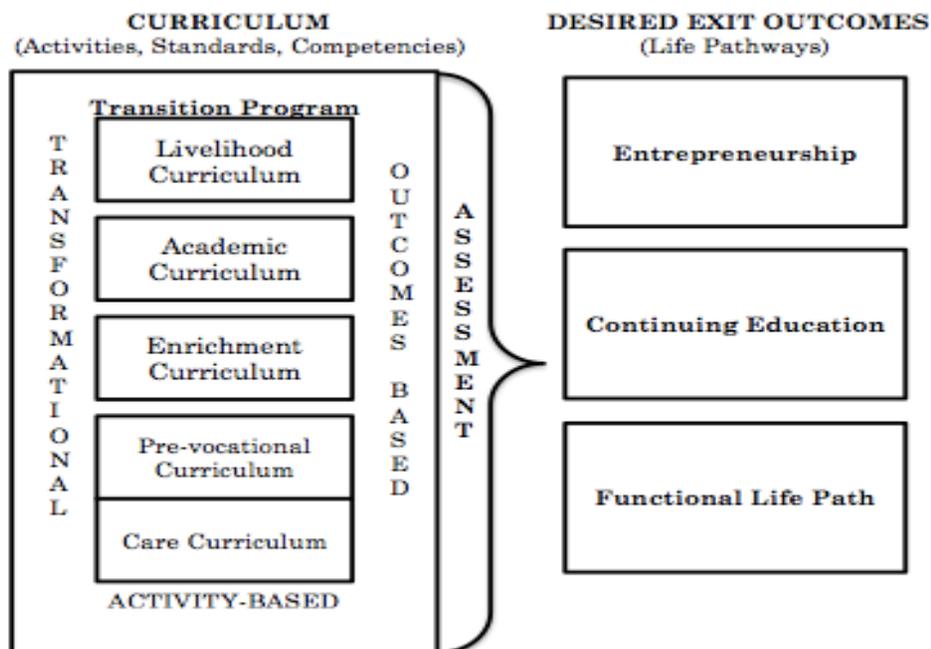


Figure 3. Curriculum framework for the transition program

Figure 3 shows the proposed curriculum framework of the Transition Program for the Department of Education as a result of a consultative workshop with different Special Education Teachers, School Heads, and Supervisors from different parts of the Philippines. Based on the framework, the transition program is composed of five learning areas that the students may choose from, namely:

- a. **Academic Curriculum** – is a set of courses regularly offered to special students who are capable of learning academic skills under inclusion or through the alternative learning system scheme. The students in this curriculum are either those who are physically impaired and/or intellectually challenged. The assumption is that these learners are capable of learning academic subjects.

- b. **Pre-vocational Curriculum** – is a set of pre-vocational and skills-based program that is offered to special learners. Some of these pre-vocational skills include job-hunting, preparing for job interviews, and preparing resume or bio-data. It also includes topics such as practicing proper work ethics, handling finances, and dealing with employers and co-employees, among others.
- c. **Livelihood Skills** – include activities and skills that will prepare students for several vocational programs like baking, producing candles, making decorations, among others. These livelihood programs are benchmarked with technical and pre-baccalaureate vocational programs to ensure coherence, alignment of curriculum to higher-level learning, and quality. Livelihood curriculum also includes skills-based activities that aim to develop further the skills and competencies of the learners with the possibility of helping them become entrepreneurs.
- d. **Enrichment Curriculum** – includes special interest activities or modules that will enable the learners to learn additional skills. These adds-on projects are offered to learners who are enrolled under the academic curriculum, but wish to learn additional skills like those under the pre-vocational curriculum.
- e. **Care Curriculum** – is a set of support activities to help the learners in their needs. This curriculum is offered to special learners who are not capable of learning under the academic or pre-vocational curriculum due to their disabilities. The care curriculum may include life skills or self-help skills such as improving gross motor skills, basic socialization, toilet training, cleaning the body, or proper way of eating and drinking.

These learning areas are different from each other, and each learning package may contain several modules or topics of interest; however, they can be seen as interdependent and purposively connected. For example, basic academic skills are a prerequisite to the pre-vocational package. One must finish or should be enrolled in the pre-vocational package in order to register in any of the enrichment courses offered. The courses under the enrichment-learning package should allow the learners to develop entrepreneurial and business skills. While taking an enrichment course, the learners may opt to take adds-on courses to harness further or learn another set of skills. The care curriculum is always an integral part of the whole transition program though it is mainly offered to students who may need additional special care depending on the severity of the learners' disabilities.

After the students have finished the transition program, an assessment will be given to examine or assess the readiness of the students to either take continuing education in college or through Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA) courses, or put up a business and be an entrepreneur, or stay at home and be functional. Though the curriculum is a Transition Program for special learners, it is imperative to

ensure the alignment of its academic curriculum to the K-12 curriculum. It is also important to align the curriculum standards and competencies to enable the learners to continue their studies with any TESDA course appropriate to their needs, abilities, and interests.

For those who would prefer to stay at home and be functional, or for those by any reason cannot proceed to continuing education or entrepreneurship, they may take *adds-on* courses or enroll in another pre-vocational course. The idea of the transition program curriculum is for every learner to be empowered as a functional human being in spite of his physical handicap or intellectual disability. The transition program curriculum aims to contribute to the total holistic development of every Filipino special learner.

4. Conclusion

The story of the Transition Program for Special Learners begins with a strong conviction and commitment that all human beings are entitled to quality education. This paper attempted to systematize the process for developing a transition program curriculum by creating a model for curriculum development. The model is dynamic and linear. It presented various curriculum activities and development of possible support systems that are important in the development and implementation of any type of transition program curriculum.

The curriculum development model in this paper presented a holistic and dynamic view of developing any transition curriculum for special learners. It presented the idea that any type of transition program should be part of a grand design of education for special learners. It attempted to systematize the process of curriculum development for special education. The curriculum development model for the Transition Program Curriculum follows a linear-cyclical procedure starting with (1) deliberations, (2) development of curriculum philosophy and framework, (3) identification of programs and strategies, (4) development of curriculum materials and instructional resources, (5) development of assessment framework and evaluation tools, and (7) development of curriculum policies that will guide the teachers in implementing the curriculum. Although the model was in designing a transition program curriculum at the national level, it could also be used in the context of regions, divisions, districts, or in local schools.

Curriculum development in the field of special education is quite different. The nature and needs of special learners demand that the process should be flexible for any possible curriculum change, revision, and variation. The process of curriculum

development does not stop with identifying programs and developing standards and competencies; it includes the process of developing curriculum materials and instructional resources. It also demands that part of the curriculum development process is the creation of curriculum policies and ensuring support structures for the implementation of the curriculum.

The curriculum framework for the proposed Transition Program Curriculum includes five learning areas: (1) Livelihood, (2) Academic, (3) Enrichment, (4) Pre-vocational, and (5) Care. All these learning areas are designed to help and prepare Filipino learners with special education needs to be capable of engaging in entrepreneurship, pursuing further studies, or living functional lives. This framework can be used for the planning and development of special education curricula for the K to 12 basic education programs in the Philippines.

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