



THE WAY OF AN INNOVATION

Bernadette S. Pablo

Prof. Pablo was the UP Integrated School Assistant Principal for Academic Programs (85-87) and Principal (87-90).

The Mandate for the Work Program

Twenty-one years ago the UP Integrated School conceptualized an integrated K-10 curriculum to complement the new democratized admissions policy of the school. The goal of the program was to prepare the graduates for any of the following options: a) admission to college or university; b) admission to vocational or technical school; and c) job-entry training.

From a basically college preparatory program catering to a highly select group of students, the UP Integrated School (then called the University High School) shifted to a work-oriented program pursuant to the curricular redirection mandated by P.D. No. 6 in 1972, the Revised Secondary Program of 1973, and Department Order No. 40 in 1975 entitled "Implementing the Presidential Directive on Curricular Changes to Equip Secondary Students with Skills for Gainful Employment." Principles were provided to guide implementation of the Order, but operationalizing the concept was left to the schools and the community.

Challenged by the fact that most of the schools were at a loss as to how a work-oriented program could be implemented in basic education, the UPIS faculty worked on the concept in a month-long faculty seminar-workshop in April 1976. The result was the original model of the present UPIS curriculum. It consisted of a required set of core courses, an electives program and the work program at Grade 10.

An ad hoc committee took over the planning of the implementation details until AY 1981-82. The different departments took care of preparing the syllabi for the electives and the work program components related to their disciplines.

This article traces briefly the

development and implementation of the UPIS Work Program from 1976 up to the present, highlighting some of the factors that may explain the gap between the original concept and the actual implementation of the program.

The Concept and the Implementation

The Grade 10 Program was designed to integrate all previous learning from Kindergarten to Grade 10 in a multi-disciplinary, experience-centered, work-oriented program with the following goals:

1. To develop personal and social effectiveness by
 - a. developing the ability to adjust to new situations,
 - b. developing techniques of getting along with people, and
 - c. assuming responsibility for the welfare of the group
2. To develop positive attitudes toward work
3. To develop good work habits
4. To explore occupational options currently available in the country
5. To develop readiness and prerequisite skills for job entry training
6. To develop marketable skills

The Strands of the Work Program

In the original concept, the program was to include an on-campus and an off-campus strand. The first would make use primarily of school facilities and equipment and learning stations within the UP campus. The other would involve linking up with potential community sites.

The on-campus strand has seven components three of which consist of several sections. In the absence of a

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separate department to administer the work program, the different components were assigned to the related disciplines. The departments take care of managing the work program by assigning a faculty member to serve as learning coordinator.

The Communication Arts (English, Music and Art) and (Filipino) Departments are responsible for the Media Center; the Practical Arts Department for the Practical Arts Center and Cafeteria Management; the Health and PE Department for the Center for Recreational Activities; the Science Department for the Science Learning Center; the Social Studies Department for the Community Development Component. The Office of the Assistant Principal for Academic Programs takes care of the Assistance Component. Over the years only four components were offered on a regular basis - the Assistance Component, the Print Section and later on a combined AV-Print Section of the Media Center, the Science Learning Center and the Drafting and Design Section of the Practical Arts Center.

The Off-Campus Strand was not implemented due primarily to the lack of a support system and some legal technicalities. At the outset, the University allowed the curricular experiment on condition that it would not entail additional budgetary outlay. The UPIS had to make do with available resources thus limiting the possibilities of the work program.

It did not have the necessary communication and transportation facilities to track the whereabouts of the students and to ferry them from the school to the learning sites and back. There was the need to provide insurance for the students,

too. There was difficulty establishing linkages with business and industrial establishments to provide some hands-on experiences in the workplace because the Grade 10 students were minors. Aside from a preliminary survey in 1978 of potential learning sites in the working place of some Grade 10 parents, no networking was pursued by the school.

Credit Load for the Work Program

In the first three years of implementation, the students spent 15 hours a week or three hours a day for one semester in the work program, equivalent to a credit of three units. Starting AY 1981-82, the time allotted to the work program was reduced to 10 hours a week, or two hours daily. The credit units were reduced accordingly to only two units. Finally, starting AY 1985-86 the time allotment was further reduced to six hours a week equivalent to one credit unit.

The reduction in time allotment and equivalent credit units was due to several reasons. Firstly, there was feedback that there were not enough learning activities to sustain the student's interest and to keep them meaningfully occupied. This was partly due to a lack of supplies, tools and equipment for the hands-on activities. In the AV Section of the Media Center, for instance, the students had to provide their own tool kits and materials and in the Print Section some of the students had to bring their own typewriters.

Then with the pressure from the students, parents and even some of the faculty to change some of the academic electives into required courses, the credit units for the work program had to be reduced.

The Electives Program: Prerequisites to the Program

In the original concept, electives were primarily intended to prepare the students for the work program. The UPIS Curriculum provided for five credit units of electives, equivalent to ten semestral courses. Eight of these elective courses

Table 1. A Summary of Credit Units for Students and Load Credits for Learning Coordinator

AY	Time Allotment	Credit Units for Students	Unit Load for Faculty
1979-1980	15 hrs/wk	3	10
1981-82 to 1984-85	10 hrs/wk	2	7.5
1985-86 to date	6 hrs/wk	1	4



were prerequisites to the work program, four for the on-campus strand and another four for the off-campus strand. The remaining two courses could be taken by a student for enrichment or remediation, as the case may be.

For example, a student who chooses to go to the Print Section should have taken Development Journalism or Peryodismong Filipino and related elective such as Creative Writing, Typing and Photography.

In the implementation, the original plan was modified. Electives were offered in lieu of the off-campus work program and many of the students (some of them due to parental pressure) chose to enroll in college preparatory courses. With the reduction of credit units for the work program, the number of prerequisite electives was reduced to one or two.

Evaluation of the Work Program Implementation

Based on student perception, a comparison of the extent of achievement of the work program goals from 1979-1982 and from 1995-1997 showed that the goals were more than moderately achieved. A similar perception was revealed in a study done in 1986 with the learning coordinators as respondents. The most impressive gain of the Program is the development of positive attitude towards work among the students. The detailed reports of these formative evaluations are available at the UPIS Office of Research, Development and Publication.

The numerical values represent averages obtained during the period on a five-point scale: 1 means not at all achieved, 3 means moderately achieved and 5 means fully achieved.

Both the students and the learning coordinators, however, cited as a weakness of the program, the inadequate physical plant and the lack of equipment, facilities and supplies. As a result, the hands-on activities were rather limited and not as challenging as some of the students expected. Both in terms of enrollment and student feedback, it seems that the assistance component has been the most

successful. It is probably due to the fact that the students are placed in real work stations in the UPIS where they are given hands-on experience. Then for a day or two towards the end of the term, they are sent out to workplaces outside the school (usually their parent's) for a taste of the real world of work.

The learning coordinators cited the "lack of support/acceptance of the concept from the UPIS community, including students, teachers and parents" as another ranking problem. Some parents, alumni and faculty do not see the sense of offering a work-oriented program in an academic community and in a school where almost all its graduates aspire to enter the University.

It has also been observed that the work program components which did not have a strong academic orientation could not be offered for lack of enrollees. This was true of the Performing Arts Section of the Media Center; the Home Mechanics, Automotive and Electronic Sections of the Practical Arts Center; Cafeteria Management and the Center for Recreational Activities. Many parents encouraged their children to enroll in college preparatory electives instead of in courses of a vocational or technical nature.

Another problem cited by the learning coordinators was the lack of a faculty development program specifically for learning coordinators. Evaluation of the learning coordinators by the students showed that the coordinators were a key factor in the implementation the work program.

In a faculty conference on the

Table 2. A Comparison of the Extent of Achievement of Goals of the Work Program Components

Table with 5 columns: Work Program Components, 1979-1982 (No., Ave.), and 1995-1997 (No., Ave.). Rows include AV Print, Assistance Component, Science Learning, and Practical Arts.



evaluation of the UPIS Curriculum held in April 1985, the Departments were asked to recommend what course of action to take on the Grade 10 Work Program. Two departments recommended to make it optional, two suggested reducing the time allotment to six hours a week and the credit unit to only one. Still another suggested giving it a 1/2 credit unit. Only the Department of Practical Arts suggested improving its implementation to "approximate conditions in and standards of the labor market."

The decision to gradually reduce the size of the UP Integrated School stymied any further development of the work program. The UPIS Curriculum was meant to be a comprehensive program that would cater to the wide range of abilities of its clientele. It was for this reason that it had to increase enrollment. Since a minimum enrollment of at least 15 students was set as a condition for opening an elective course or a work program component, the school had to have a big enough number of students to offer a wide selection of courses. At present the work program is being offered only in the second semester

because there are not enough students.

The mandate for the work program in basic education remains. The Basic Education Act of 1993 provides for a curriculum "that will expose every student to both vocational and academic subjects," (65% academic, 35% vocational) in the first two years. Similarly, the Education Commission recommended the inclusion of work education components in the comprehensive high school set-up and whenever possible, opportunities for apprenticeship.

Evaluation results point to some kind of ambivalent attitude towards the Work Program although there is enough feedback from the students, parents, teachers and graduates to justify the continuance of the Program. But twenty-one years has been a long time. There is a need to review the present work program in the light of the following: a) the mandated reduction of the UPIS enrollment; b) the absence of a legal basis to implement an apprenticeship program for minors; and c) the lack of a support system for the proper implementation of a work program.



Health Humor

More daffy definitions inadvertently made by students*

- For fainting: rub the person's chest, or if a lady, rub her arm above the hand instead.
- For fractures: to see if the limb is broken, wiggle it gently back and forth.
- For dog bite: put the dog away for several days. If he has not recovered, then kill it.
- For nosebleed: put the nose much lower than the body.
- To remove dust from the eye, pull the eye down over the nose.
- For asphyxiation: apply artificial respiration until the patient is dead.
- Before giving a blood transfusion, find out if the blood is affirmative or negative.

*<http://www.dakota.net/~pwinn/humor/education.html>