

Readings in Philippine History: Course Review, Best Practices, and Challenges among Higher Education Institutions



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ABSTRACT. History is essential in the curriculum. The Readings in Philippine History (RPH) syllabus and instruction should be advanced. However, curricular changes and the pandemic affected the instruction. Thus, this study reviewed the course specification and syllabus of RPH among higher education institutions in Kabankalan City, Philippines. Anchored on the CHED recommended syllabus in RPH, the study reviewed the course and determined the areas for improvement. Likewise, it identified the best practices and challenges. Using a descriptive design and employing purposive and stratified sampling, 269 external reviewers, teachers, and students reviewed the study. The mean, frequency count, rank, and percentage distribution were employed in data analysis. Generally, the course adheres to the standard. However, the main issue is students' learning readiness and the misalignment of teachers' specialization. Thus, a strong foundation on Philippine History among the students is necessary to ensure quality. Also, the retention of qualified teachers is essential in advancing the instruction.

1.0. Introduction

History is essential in the curriculum for an in-depth understanding of society (Santos, 2016). In the Philippines, RPH is a new general education course [GEC] at the college level, responsive to the K-12 transition program (Licuanan, 2017). This course elucidates Philippine history from primary sources in varying times, interpretations, and analyses (Commission on Higher Education [CHED], 2013). It also aims to foster professionals in understanding people and society (Ancho, 2019).

However, this change in the curriculum comes with challenges that result from the integration of 3-unit mandated courses into one chapter. Also, secondary schools do not have a basic history subject that prepares the students for the RPH course (Department of Education [DepEd], 2014; Domingo, 2021). Finally, the course instruction is also challenged due to the pandemic and distance learning (Toquero, 2021). Hence, these compromise the instruction of the RPH course.

With these conditions, there is a need for RPH course review to continuously improve its instruction vis-à-vis the offering of quality education (CHED, 2012). Correspondingly, course review is vitally important in stabilizing the quality assurance (QA) of instruction, especially among higher educational institutions (Tobi & Duque, 2015). When the course and instruction are quality assured, the learners maximize their potentials bearing in them the learning of the subject towards social transformation (Villegas et al., 2021). In teaching history, QA of instruction is critically essential because of the high progressive nature of the discipline where new emerging events and current issues on the subject transpire (Domingo, 2021; Torres et al., 2021). Thus, there is a need to review the RPH syllabus and instruction to ensure its quality course advancement (Toquero, 2021).

Moreover, using the prescribed CHED RPH syllabus, this study was done. This syllabus presents Philippine History from varied perspectives and analyses. Also, this elucidates the essentials of valid and reliable historical sources, research, and evaluation of the historical data in developing among learners the critical thinking and the in-depth understanding of Philippine History. Elaborately, this RPH course is different from the old Philippine History syllabus since the former presents history as a subject for criticism and research while the latter deals with history in a chronological sequence of events (CHED, 2013). On the one hand, the history curriculum among secondary schools only highlights Asian and world history, where the absence of Philippine history loses the course's emphasis (Domingo, 2021). This is why in-depth criticism and research on Philippine history at the college level



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becomes more challenging and demanding (Villegas et al., 2021). Therefore, this encouraged further studies on course review of the RPH syllabus and its teaching to improve the delivery of instruction.

In the Philippines, there were studies conducted on Philippine History among first-year students (Santos, 2016), integration of gaming concepts (Sanchez et al., 2020), curricular enhancement (Villegas et al., 2021), and history as a tool to proliferate misinformation (Domingo, 2021). Incidentally, there are also studies regarding course review in courses like natural sciences and mathematics (Roman, 2019), communication (Eustaquio & Tandoc, 2020), understanding the self, and personal development (Arandia et al., 2020). However, there is a dearth of literature regarding the course review in RPH and its consequential best practices and challenges in teaching. This is the gap which this study would like to fill in.

Thus, this study aimed to review the RPH course syllabi among higher education institutions in Kabankalan City, Philippines, in terms of course specification, which includes the description, outcomes, requirements, and references. Also, the syllabus was reviewed in terms of a clerical error, sequencing of topics, contents, additional topics, redundancy of topics, time allocation, and teaching methodology and assessment using the CHED recommended RPH syllabus. Likewise, it identified the areas for improvement in the syllabus. Further, it determined the best practices and challenges in teaching the RPH course. Lastly, the findings may serve as an empirical reference for course developers in enhancing the RPH course in general, given that most components of the prescribed syllabus are standardized and are beyond the control of the schools. Also, these findings may serve as a basis in redesigning the RPH syllabi of HEIs, particularly on the components which can be enhanced, such as requirements, references, and teaching strategies.

2.0. Framework of the Study

This study was anchored on the Quality Assurance Policy Standard in adherence to CHED Memorandum Order (CMO) number 46, series of 2012. This memorandum order aims to establish a purposive, distinct, and culture of quality among HEIs in the delivery of instruction vis-à-vis the advancement of excellent Philippine education. Part of this memorandum mandates HEIs of the country to produce values-oriented and morally upright graduates, critical and analytical thinkers, problem solvers, and competent individuals who can survive the course of life. It also envisions producing academically, behaviorally, technologically, and technically skilled graduates in the global milieu. Lastly, it aims to improve the life of Filipinos through quality education. With these mandatory provisions of the memorandum, HEIs are called to revisit their course instruction.

Accordingly, reviews of course teaching and degree programs among HEIs are imperative (CHED, 2012). Pertinent to the instruction of the RPH course, a review of its syllabus along with the best practices and teaching challenges are necessary to ensure the encouragement of this QA policy standard and call for quality Philippine education. In view of this, course review is vitally essential among higher education in upholding the quality and integrity of the course teaching and learning considering the shift of instruction in the educational landscape brought by the pandemic and the emergence of historical revisionism (Tobi & Duque, 2015).

The CHED prescribed RPH syllabus was used and reviewed in this study to materialize the call for quality course instruction. The syllabus was taken from CMO No. 20, s. of 2013. Elaborately, this RPH syllabus presents Philippine History from the lens of eyewitnesses in varying interpretations and analyses. This includes discussions on historical sources like primary and secondary sources, historical research, appraisal of historical data, and practical activities to successfully advance the RPH instruction. It also contains the course description, outcomes, requirements, references, and suggested teaching methodology and assessment by the CHED in advancing the course (CHED, 2013).

Moreover, to quantitatively determine whether the review of the RPH course passed or not, the internationally accepted quality threshold of 85% by Gibson and Dunning (2012) for educational course review was employed. This threshold was based on the assumption that a course subject for review should yield a score of 85% and beyond to be recognized and acknowledged as quality.

In the context of this study, the RPH course syllabi of four responding HEIs of Kabankalan City, Philippines, were reviewed. The best practices and challenges in teaching the course were also determined. The syllabi of these four HEIs are based on the CHED prescribed syllabus in CMO No. 20, s. of 2013 (CHED, 2013). These intentions adhered to the Quality Assurance Policy Standard of CHED as provided by CMO No. 46, s. of 2012, which aims to establish quality course instruction among

HEIs, particularly in RPH. Hence, these syllabi were reviewed by external reviewers in the fields of history, agrarian reform, taxation, and constitution, along with the internal reviewers who were the RPH teachers and students.

In advancing the course review, areas of the syllabi of these HEIs were looked into, namely: Course specification and course syllabus. In terms of course specification, sub-areas like course description, outcomes, requirements, and references were reviewed. On the one hand, sub-areas of course syllabus such as clerical error, sequencing of topics, contents, additional topics, redundancy of topics, time allocation, and teaching methodology and assessment were also reviewed. Lastly, best practices and challenges in teaching the course were also identified.

3.0. Methods

The study utilized a quantitative design, particularly the descriptive approach. A statistical measurement of the set of variables was the core of this design. It also described the trends, attitudes, and opinions on these variables being measured and their respective associations (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). Contextually, this approach was used to review the RPH course, identify the areas for improvement, and determine the teaching best practices and challenges.

The respondents were 4 external reviewers, 11 teachers, and 254 students of the HEIs of Kabankalan City, Philippines, during the academic year 2020-2021. The external reviewers and teachers were determined through purposive sampling. At the same time, students were identified using stratified sampling, Raosoft online calculator, and the fishbowl technique. These external reviewers were purposively taken from experts in history, agrarian reform, taxation, and the constitution. Meanwhile, the teachers were composed of instructors of RPH course among these HEIs. On the one hand, the students were RPH learners, which were proportionally sampled into the strata of these educational institutions.

The validated and reliability-tested researcher-made course review form was utilized to review and identify the areas for improvement in two domains, namely: specification and syllabus. The sub-areas of course specifications that were reviewed were description, outcomes, requirements, and references. For the course syllabus, the areas reviewed were clerical error, sequencing of topics, contents, additional topics, redundancy of topics, time-allocation, and teaching methodology and assessment.

Correspondingly, the course review form was responded to by either yes or no, along with the reviewers' recommendations for improvement. The form was subjected to three social science and curriculum development specialists to establish the validity of the instrument. Using Good and Scates (1972), it yielded a valid result of 4.70. To test its reliability, a pilot administration was done to a non-responding institution that is not part of the actual reviewers, with a sample of 2 teachers and 28 students. The gathered data were computed using Kuder-Richardson formula 20 [KR20=0.789], yielding a reliable score. In terms of best practices and challenges, checklists were employed.

During the actual conduct of the instrument, the researcher sent a soft copy of the instrument to the email addresses of external reviewers. External reviewers were limited to the course review form only. On the other hand, the teachers and students were given the option to answer the questionnaire in a document or online format. Documents were sent through their email addresses, and the online format utilized an online survey platform. The questionnaire of teachers and students covered the course review, best practices, and challenges. Thereafter, the data were downloaded and subjected to analysis.

In data analysis, all responses of the diverse set of reviewers were taken to establish the general results and not about the differences of their respective reviews. The areas included in the course review, particularly the yes or no answers and the areas for improvement, were treated using mean, frequency count, and percentage distribution. On the one hand, frequency count, rank, and percentage distribution were used to analyze the best practices and challenges.

4.0. Results and Discussion

Course Review on Readings in Philippine History

Course review evaluated the course based on the quality of implementation from various perspectives (Torres et al., 2021). The review of the RPH course syllabus was based on the QA of

instruction (CHED, 2012). Accordingly, the globally accepted quality threshold of 85% in course syllabus review was used (Gibson & Dunning, 2012).

Tables 1A and 1B present the course review results on specification and syllabus. Generally, the course was rated 90.62%, within the threshold. Regarding the main areas, both passed the standard with a course specification rating of 91.32% and a course syllabus rating of 89.92%. In course specification, the course description (93.53%), course outcomes (95.29%), and course requirements (91.45%) and references (85.00%) were all rated within the threshold. In the course syllabus, the clerical error (95.54%), contents (92.32%), additional topics (94.92%), sequencing of topics (85.13%), redundancy of topics (86.62%), time allocation (85.32%), and teaching methodology and assessment (89.59%) passed the quality rating (Gibson & Dunning, 2012).

Table 1A. Review of Readings in Philippine History Course Specification

Course Specification	Yes		No	
	f	%	f	%
<i>1.0 The course description...</i>				
1.1 is clearly written and can easily be located.	253	94.05	16	5.95
1.2 states the brief summary of the course.	248	92.19	21	7.81
1.3 is understandable.	254	94.42	15	5.58
	<i>M=</i>	<i>93.55</i>	<i>M=</i>	<i>6.45</i>
<i>2.0 The course outcomes...</i>				
2.1 are clearly written and can easily be located.	257	95.54	12	4.46
2.2 present the expected skills and knowledge.	256	95.17	13	4.83
2.3 are measurable and attainable.	256	95.17	13	4.83
	<i>M=</i>	<i>95.29</i>	<i>M=</i>	<i>4.71</i>
<i>3.0 The course requirements...</i>				
3.1 are clearly written and can easily be located.	254	94.42	15	5.58
3.2 are realistic, measurable, and attainable.	227	84.39	42	15.61
3.3 are aligned with the course outcomes.	257	95.54	12	4.46
	<i>M=</i>	<i>91.45</i>	<i>M=</i>	<i>8.55</i>
<i>4.0 The references...</i>				
4.1 are clearly written and can easily be located.	247	91.82	22	8.18
4.2 are up-to-date and adequate.	219	81.41	50	18.59
4.3 are accessible either online or in the library.	220	81.78	49	18.22
	<i>M=</i>	<i>85.00</i>	<i>M=</i>	<i>15.00</i>
	<i>Sub-Mean</i>	<i>91.32</i>	<i>Sub-Mean</i>	<i>8.68</i>

Course Review as a Whole

Generally, the overall results revealed that the RPH syllabi among HEIs adhered to the standard (Gibson & Dunning, 2012). The rating was attributed to the routine CHED monitoring, which influenced the syllabus adherence, as supported by Tobi and Duque (2015). Voluntary accreditations also caused the syllabus to be in place (CHED, 2013). Meanwhile, since QA is continuous, enhancement is needed in the RPH syllabus (Tobi & Duque, 2015). This is necessary since quality education is dependent on continuous improvement. In fact, regularly checked and improved syllabi are more effective (Arandia et al., 2020). With these findings, these schools are encouraged to conduct regular syllabus evaluations to ensure the quality of instruction.

Course Specification

Course specification introduced RPH in the course description, outcomes, requirements, and references. The results revealed that the course and requisites are substantially introduced and consistent with the internationally accepted standard (Gibson & Dunning, 2012).

Course Description. The rating revealed that the RPH course descriptions of the four HEIs are clear and concise in terms of presentation. However, some were rated negatively, manifesting that both students and teachers find it hard to grasp the course description due to its elaborative presentation. This conforms to Arandia et al. (2020) and Gannon (2018), affirming that simplified course descriptions are needed for easy familiarization.

Course Outcomes. The result positively signified that the subject's learning outcomes of the syllabi of these HEIs are specific, measurable, attainable, and clear. However, some course outcomes are not flexible for a distance learning approach. These findings conform to the study of Torres et al. (2021), that course outcomes should be feasible to the students' learning modality to promote

Table 1B. Review of Readings in Philippine History Course Syllabus

Course Syllabus	Yes		No	
	f	%	f	%
<i>1.0 Clerical error (The syllabus...)</i>				
1.1 is free of clerical or typographical errors.	253	94.05	18	5.95
1.2 manifests good proofreading of its contents.	261	97.03	8	2.97
	<i>M=</i>	<i>95.54</i>	<i>M=</i>	<i>4.46</i>
<i>2.0 Sequencing of Topics</i>				
2.1 The topics are arranged in an orderly manner.	229	85.13	40	14.87
<i>3.0 The contents...</i>				
3.1 contain the necessary parts of the syllabus.	257	95.54	12	4.46
3.2 are clearly arranged in a user-friendly manner.	234	86.99	35	13.01
3.3 are aligned with all the parts of the syllabus.	254	94.42	15	5.58
	<i>M=</i>	<i>92.32</i>	<i>M=</i>	<i>7.68</i>
<i>4.0 The additional topics...</i>				
4.1 are clearly indicated and labeled.	255	94.80	14	5.20
4.2 are aligned with the expected outcomes.	253	94.05	16	5.95
4.3 are attainable in the given period.	258	95.91	11	4.09
	<i>M=</i>	<i>94.92</i>	<i>M=</i>	<i>5.08</i>
<i>5.0 Redundancy of topics</i>				
5.1 Syllabus is free from the repetition of topics.	233	86.62	36	13.38
<i>6.0 Time allocation</i>				
6.1 Syllabus contains time allocation per topic.	234	86.99	35	13.01
6.2 Time allocation per topic is sufficient.	225	83.64	44	16.36
	<i>M=</i>	<i>85.31</i>	<i>M=</i>	<i>14.69</i>
<i>7.0 The teaching methodology and assessments...</i>				
7.1 are clearly provided in the course syllabus.	262	97.40	7	2.60
7.2 are aligned with the course outcomes.	233	86.62	36	13.38
7.3 are relevant, innovative, and achievable.	228	84.76	41	15.24
	<i>M=</i>	<i>89.59</i>	<i>M=</i>	<i>10.41</i>
	<i>Sub-Mean</i>	<i>89.92</i>	<i>Sub-Mean</i>	<i>10.08</i>
	<i>Overall</i>	<i>90.62</i>	<i>Overall</i>	<i>9.38</i>

inclusive teaching and learning. Hence, this encourages the schools to enhance their syllabus by incorporating inclusive course outcomes.

Course Requirements. The result indicated that the requirements are clearly written and aligned to the syllabi's course outcomes. Nevertheless, these requirements were less realistic, measurable, and attainable amid distance learning. In distance learning, requirements are expected to be achievable to ensure the learners' accomplishment of the task (Toquero, 2021). Thus, this implies revisiting the requirements in the syllabus considering the current learning modality.

References. The average rating signified that the references indicated in these syllabi reviewed need more attention and improvement. This might be affected by the CHED's suggested books which were fairly accessible and available in the library. Also, historical facts increase over time, making history progressive (Santos, 2016). Meanwhile, good history sources in the library contribute to teaching success (He-wen, 2007). However, most of the suggested references are inaccessible among the libraries of the HEIs. Thus, the institutions should revisit their library system. In addition, this also encourages partnership between the teachers and the library in terms of course development.

Areas for Improvement on Course Specification

Table 2 presents the areas for improvement on the course specification of RPH. There are still areas to be improved based on the reviewers' observations.

Course Description. The reviewers recommended that the description needs to be responsive to the students and their degree programs. Also, additional topics pertinent to the course should be mentioned. It was also emphasized that the contentions of the course should be well established and discussed for the students to learn independently, considering the distance learning modality. This recommendation is explained in the study of Toquero (2021), which upholds that proper discussion propels independence in distance learning. Thus, course developers are encouraged to consider the syllabus' regular review.

Course Outcomes. The recommendations focused on the responsiveness and attainability of the outcomes. He-wen (2007) perceived that the learners become guided when outcomes are well introduced. Meanwhile, Gannon (2018) believed that diverse activities are essential to ensure instructional inclusivity. Further, evaluation and feedback are necessary to see if the outcomes are met, as Torres et al. (2021) argued. These could be attributed to the pandemic situation affecting the achievement of course outcomes. Hence, these encourage the institutions to ensure the achievement of outcomes to maintain quality learning.

Course Requirements. The reviewers suggested updating the requirements amid the distance learning and students' degree program. Transparency of evaluation rubrics is also recommended. Torres et al. (2021) claim that the students perform the task better if requirements are provided with rubrics. Additionally, requirements should be flexible considering the program and distance learning amid the pandemic. Thus, these institutions are encouraged to set the requirements with rubrics and be considerate in distance learning.

References. References are suggested to be reliable and aligned with the topics. They should also be revisited and updated. Inocian (2015) confirmed that the regular inventory of these references is an effective strategy to ensure their accessibility for students and teachers' use vis-à-vis the achievement of quality instruction. Hence, this implies the need to conduct an inventory of references in the library to ensure the effectiveness of the syllabus.

Table 2. Areas for improvement in the Course Specification

Course Specification	f	%
1.0. Course description		
1.1. The course description should be simplified and specified.	213	80.38
1.2. The course description should be contextualized communicated, and aligned to the students' degree programs.	115	43.40
1.3. The additional topics should be mentioned in the course description.	33	12.45
2.0. Course outcomes		
2.1. The outcomes should be made practical, communicated, and properly discussed.	218	82.26
2.2. The outcomes should be inclusive to all students.	98	36.98
2.3. The attainment of outcomes should be reviewed regularly.	42	15.85
3.0. Course requirements		
3.1. The requirements should be updated in the context of distance learning.	210	79.25
3.2. The requirements should be more relevant to the student's degree program.	105	39.62
3.3. The rubrics for evaluating the requirements should be presented along with the course syllabus.	77	29.06
4.0. References		
4.1. The references should be recent, reliable, and accessible online and in the library.	211	79.62
4.2. The references should be arranged in alignment with the corresponding topics.	157	59.25
4.3. There should be a common format of referencing.	48	18.11

Course Syllabus

The course syllabus presented the pedagogical alignment with the standards of CHED. The results showed that the syllabus and its areas adhered to the standards of CHED (2013) and the threshold set by Gibson and Dunning (2012).

Clerical Error. Positively, the result revealed the rarity of clerical errors in the syllabi of four HEIs. The reviewers agreed that the syllabus manifested good proofreading. This shows that these educational institutions had technically constructed their syllabi. However, some reviewers noticed clerical errors. He-wen (2007) emphasized the value of academic documents, which should be free of errors to avoid ambiguity and erroneous interpretations. This result encourages a stringent institutional QA system to address clerical errors in school documents like the course syllabi.

Sequencing of Topics. It is noteworthy that the sequencing of topics follows a logical progression. This finding is influenced by the schools' adherence to CHED standards (2013). Ancho (2019) perceived that adherence to standards like CHED is essential to ensure institutional and instructional quality. However, some reviewers noticed that distance learning affected the structured sequencing of topics. Hence, it is encouraged that the institutions continue basing their academic policies on the conditions of CHED to guarantee the proper sequencing of topics.

Contents. Positively, the rating revealed that the course contents of the syllabi of these HEIs include the necessary parts. On the contrary, the contents need enhancement to be user-friendly. Gannon (2018) believes that the syllabus' contents should be organized for the users to be clearly guided. Thus, course developers should consider revisiting the contents of the prescribed syllabus to enhance the quality of the course.

Additional Topics. The rating positively revealed that additional topics are clear, properly aligned, and time-bounded. This is because the additional topics provided by CHED (2013) are mandatory. However, the respondents believed that additional topics should be contextualized in the current and local issues. This is also argued by Royal et al. (2014), Villegas et al. (2021), and Rafael (2006). Thus, additional topics should be harmoniously maintained to correspond with the general design of the course.

Redundancy of Topics. It was positively found out that there was an absence of redundancy of topics in the course syllabi of these HEIs. This was attributed to the CHED's curriculum map, which guides topical arrangement (CHED, 2013). This signified that the institutions adhered to the requirements set by CHED. On the one hand, the reviewers affirmed that several topics in RPH are already discussed in other GECs. Thus, an enhancement in the syllabus is necessary to monitor that the redundancy of topics is mitigated.

Time Allocation. This aspect is seen to be less sufficient by the reviewers. This can be attributed to the students who hardly adjust their time amid distance learning (Torres et al., 2021). This is, nevertheless, favorable to those in an asynchronous modality because lessons can be read or viewed at the student's pace without the need for a structured system (Toquero 2021). Thus, an enhanced syllabus in RPH is encouraged to emphasize proper time allocation in guiding the students regardless of learning modality.

Teaching Methodology and Assessment. The rating positively revealed that the institutions were adjusting their strategy amid distance learning. However, some reviewers perceived that the assessment tasks were not applicable. The course syllabus should be regularly checked to see if the teaching and assessment complement the learning mode (Ancho, 2019). Most importantly, the findings justify the need to train the teachers on innovative instructions.

Areas for Improvement on Course Syllabus

Table 3 presents the areas for improvement on the RPH syllabus. Evidently, these are the aspects that need improvement from reviewers' perspectives.

Clerical Error. Respondents suggested that a third-party reviewer should check the syllabus to avoid clerical errors. Also, it should include page numbers. These recommendations necessitate a rigorous QA system (Tobi & Duque, 2015). It has been proven that HEIs practicing QA improve their syllabus (Ancho, 2019). Hence, this lays grounds for improving QA among HEIs on this matter to mitigate clerical errors.

Sequencing of Topics. The reviewers suggested that the syllabus should discuss local history as a preliminary topic. The topics should also be arranged thematically. This conforms to Villegas et al. (2021), arguing that localizing and thematizing the topics address the lack of prior knowledge on Philippine History. Hence, course developers are encouraged to consider revisiting the sequencing of topics to harmonize the lessons.

Contents. The contents are recommended to be user-friendly and explained to the students. If course contents are well explained, there is a higher probability of academic success since students will have a shared responsibility to the success of the course's instruction, which is parallel to the study of Roman (2019). Thus, it is tenable to compel course orientation among these educational institutions prior to the start of the classes.

Additional Topics. The syllabus should relate the lessons to the local contexts and students' degree programs in additional topics. This recommendation is also supported by Villegas et al. (2021). Also, salient discussions should be made to develop learning delivery. Moreover, Cayot (2018) upheld those degree-specific topics positively impact learning in an outcomes-based set-up. Thus, to go above the basic requirements of CHED, institutions are encouraged to design the course relevant to the student's degree program.

Redundancy of Topics. Respondents recommended that the most essential readings should only be included to avoid redundancy, which conforms to the findings of Toquero (2021). Also, topics may be integrated. Redundancy of topics is a challenge in the instruction since it poses unnecessary repetition in teaching the course (Royal et al., 2014). Nevertheless, CHED provided a curriculum map to do away with redundancy (CHED, 2013). Hence, course developers need to maximize curriculum maps in course planning.

Time Allocation. Reviewers recommended that time allocation be followed yet be made flexible and explicitly written in the syllabus. Students' competencies are affected by time allocation (Royal,

2014). Also, Eustaquio and Tandoc (2020) affirmed that teachers need proper time allocation to avoid an overload of information. Hence, teachers need to adopt time flexibility without compromising the course design.

Teaching Methodology and Assessment. Lastly, the reviewers recommend that schools explore other options to better motivate the students' interests. This necessitates diversified strategies and assessment tasks (Inocian, 2015). Substantially, the institutions need to provide teacher training in making distance learning materials, which conforms to the discussions of Torres et al. (2021). Nevertheless, although residential lectures are irreplaceable, the teachers should be adaptive.

Table 3. Areas for improvement in the Course Syllabus

Course Syllabus	f	%
1.0. Clerical error		
1.1 The syllabus should be checked first by a third-party reviewer before approval.	63	23.77
1.2 The syllabus should have page numbers to make it reader-friendly.	16	6.04
2.0. Sequencing of topics		
2.1 Local history should be incorporated and discussed during the first weeks of meetings.	61	23.02
2.2 Topics should be arranged by theme and by relevance.	23	8.68
3.0. Contents		
3.1. The heads and teachers should review and explain the importance of the syllabus contents.	88	33.21
3.2. The syllabus should have a student-friendly version that only highlights the pertinent parts of the syllabus.	54	20.38
4.0. Additional topics		
4.1. The incorporation and application of history to the students' degree programs should be considered an additional topic.	154	58.11
4.2. Salient discussions should be made with the mandated topics to not consume most of the course's time.	53	20.00
4.3. Additional topics should be relevant to the local context.	33	12.45
5.0. Redundancy of topics		
5.1. The course should only include the most accessible and most essential readings.	99	37.36
5.2. Topics within similar historical periods should be integrated.	94	35.47
6.0. Time allocation		
6.1. Time allocation should be followed and flexible to distance learning.	162	61.13
6.2. Time allocation should be explicitly written in the syllabus.	37	13.96
6.3. Adequate time should be allotted for students' cooperative and self-paced learning.	25	9.43
7.0. Teaching methodology and assessment		
7.1. The school should strategize other instructional options that will effectively stimulate the students' interest.	132	49.81
7.2. Assessment tasks should be diverse in order to motivate students.	104	39.25
7.3. Asynchronous and Synchronous video lectures should be done	97	36.60
7.4. The institution should provide training for teachers in the making of quality recorded video lectures, modules, and worksheets.	45	16.98

Best Practices in Teaching Readings in Philippine History

Table 4 presents the best practices in teaching RPH. The best practices which were positively rated were in terms of connecting the lessons to current issues, use of multimedia analysis, gaming and simulations, online video streaming, the use of historical movies, online surveys and interviews, benchmarking and comparison of government systems, online teleconferencing, virtual tours, debates, and online instructional partnership. Meanwhile, the least rated practices were book reading reports and inviting resource speakers and experts to aid instruction.

The connecting of the lessons to current issues could be attributed to the nature of the subject, which is normally associated with the current events and issues (Rafael, 2006; CHED, 2013). In support, Roman (2019) perceived that the students best understand the lessons when associated with current issues. In addition, Royal et al. (2014) supported that the connection of history with the current events and issues highly motivates them to participate in the discussion. Hence, these imply the need for these schools to encourage their teachers to incorporate the current issues of the country in their pedagogical instruction to motivate their learners to participate.

Relative to the use of multimedia analysis, this could be ascribed to the emerging technological advancement which is expected to be integrated into 21st-century instruction among HEIs (Sanchez et al., 2020). In fact, the use of multimedia in teaching is indicated in the CHED recommended syllabus as one of the suggested strategies (CHED, 2013). Further, it is a potent strategy in the accomplishment of Outcomes-Based Education (OBE) (CHED, 2012; Cayot, 2018). With this, it encourages the HEIs to continuously incorporate the use of multimedia in the instruction of RPH to stimulate the learners' interest in the course.

With regards to the use of gaming and simulations in instruction, this could be influenced by the teachers' innovative teaching strategies to motivate the students to participate in an interactive RPH discussion. Further, considering the nature of the subject, the students find this more interesting when activities are in the form of games or simulations (Sanchez et al., 2020). In support, gamification of history was found by Sanchez et al. (2020) as an innovative way of teaching the course. Thus, this implies the HEIs to highly consider the use of this pedagogical technique to best encourage students to participate.

Pertinent to the use of online videos and films, this is attributed to students' interest and exposure to visuals like streaming platforms in and outside of the school (Royal et al., 2014). In other words, the learners find it more interesting to learn the subject when they are presented with videos. In fact, Inocian (2015) supported that aside from entertainment, the use of video is proven to be effective in teaching the subject. Thus, this implies for HEIs to encourage their teachers to utilize quality videos in their RPH instruction to elicit interest among learners.

Regarding the use of surveys and interviews, these HEIs found these as best teaching practices since research is mostly demanded among learners nowadays vis-à-vis the 21st-century instruction (CHED, 2013; Inocian, 2015). This was positively rated since these strategies can be done online incomparable of the traditional face-to-face data gathering. In fact, Toquero (2021) believes that online data gathering is proven to be an effective and convenient alternative to personal interviews and on-site surveys considering the pandemic. With this, it implies HEIs to utilize the use of online data gathering in conducting RPH researches among students.

Benchmarking of government systems was found to be a potent RPH teaching practice. This could be influenced by the demands of the New GEC framework, which encourages instruction to be internationalized (CHED, 2013; Villegas et al., 2021). In support, Gannon (2018) argued that if benchmarking is well integrated into history, this will promote effective research skills among learners, which will give them a reference for interactive discussion. This will also develop global citizenship among learners, as expected in 21st-century education (Arandia et al., 2020). Hence, this encourages HEIs to incorporate benchmarking as one of the effective teaching strategies to stimulate interactive discussions among students.

With regards to the use of online instructional platforms, the rating could be influenced by the pandemic. This limits the teachers and learners from conducting on-site field trips, tours, and visits. With this, they resorted to using available online platforms to accomplish the expected competencies (Toquero, 2021). Meanwhile, the use of online instructional platforms could be ascribed to the general design of OBE, which encourages independent learning (Cayot, 2018). With this, it implies the HEIs to highly consider the online instructional platforms as a potent strategy in advancing the RPH course.

In terms of the use of debates and taking a stand on issues, this could be attributed to the basic design of the new GEC, which requires higher-order thinking skills in RPH teaching (Eustaquio & Tandoc, 2020; CHED, 2013). In support, Inocian (2015) perceived that debate on current and relevant issues is a good indicator that the higher-order thinking design in RPH instruction is implemented. With this, it encourages HEIs to promote higher-order thinking skills among students to develop their critical thinking in terms of the RPH instruction.

Regarding the use of instructional partnership as one of the best teaching practices, this could be influenced by the emergence of virtual teleconferencing, which is mostly utilized in this current teaching modality (Inocian, 2015; Torres et al., 2021). Toquero (2021) agrees that technology nowadays is essential in teaching since this allows resources persons to share their knowledge without being physically present. In other words, the learners are given the opportunities to hear lectures and discussions of prominent experts in the field from other schools at the comfort of their homes. Thus, this implies the need for these HEIs to provide more opportunities for instructional partnership, considering the availability of virtual platforms.

On the one hand, in terms of the use of book reading reports as the least of these teaching practices, this could be ascribed to the students' limitation of the use of the library amid pandemic (Toquero, 2021). Aside from this, Domingo (2021) found that learners nowadays rely mostly on unverified online historical sources like videos and memes. However, reading is essential in the understanding of Philippine History, and they cannot go away with this. In other words, this is vitally important for students to learn historical facts (CHED, 2013). With this, it implies the need for HEIs to encourage their students to love reading to ensure also the quality learning of the RPH course.

Lastly, with regards to inviting resource speakers to aid instruction, the rating of this least teaching practice is influenced by the common understanding of the students that when somebody is invited to do the talk, it entails monetary contributions (Toquero, 2021; Villegas et al., 2021). However, the rating encourages these schools to promote the invitation of experts in the fields to sufficiently provide the learners with the necessary knowledge regarding RPH. This subject requires the expertise of those in the field. In support, Domingo (2021) argued that learning of RPH is more objective when discussed by course experts. With this, it encourages HEIs to promote the essentials of inviting prominent speakers to aid the students' learning of the course.

Table 4. Best Practices in Teaching Readings in Philippine History

	Best Practices	f	%
1	Connecting the lessons to the current Philippine issues	234	88.64
2	The use of photo and video analysis in instruction	228	86.04
3	Gaming and simulations as instructional approaches to maximize class participation	216	81.51
4	The use of video clippings to aid the instruction like YouTube, etc.	202	76.23
5	The use of historical movies to support the instruction and stimulate the students' interests	199	75.10
6	Utilizing online surveys and interviews in gathering historical data.	198	74.72
7	Benchmarking and comparison of the Philippine historical experiences and government system with other countries	185	69.81
8	The use of online platforms for instruction, historical tours, and visits	150	56.60
9	Debate and taking a stand on controversial Philippine issues	149	56.23
10	Online local and international partnership on history discussions	122	46.04
11	The use of book reading reports on History	77	29.06
12	Inviting resource speakers and experts as guest lecturers to aid the instruction	55	20.75

Challenges in Teaching Readings in Philippine History

Table 5 presents the challenges encountered in teaching RPH. The top challenges were on students' insufficient prior knowledge of Philippine history, narrow discussion of mandated topics, teachers' misalignment of expertise with history, instruction that is limited to memorization, inadequate allocation of time, irregular evaluation, and poor communication of syllabus. These matters negatively affected the instruction of the course. Meanwhile, the least challenges were inadequacy, outdatedness, and inaccessibility of references, poor delivery of instruction, and improper sequencing of topics, which all positively affected the delivery of the course.

Top Challenges. The learners' inadequate prior knowledge in history is due to the absence of a grade level dedicated to Philippine History among secondary schools (DepEd, 2014). Respondents recommended that although holistic approaches in Philippine studies are included in the high school curriculum, a study on the fundamentals of Philippine History should be given light, which is supported by the findings of Domingo (2021). Thus, teacher readiness and enthusiasm are vital to ensure the learners' academic success (Eustaquio & Tandoc, 2020). On the students' end, it implies remediation at the college level to help them achieve competence towards the course.

Regarding the narrow discussion of mandated topics, this issue was ascribed to the teachers' lack of training and resources (Domingo, 2021). Besides, these topics require a qualified inclination in law, political science, and economics, as also claimed by Inocian (2015). Hence, it implies the need to upscale the capacity of those teaching the RPH course giving premium to these fields of expertise.

Teachers of RPH who specialize in disciplines outside social sciences have the absolute disadvantage in teaching history, as upheld by Eustaquio and Tandoc (2020). Thus, alignment of teachers' specialization propels teaching efficacy. However, qualified teachers in private schools normally transfer to public schools for better compensation (Bual & Madrigal, 2021; Banusing & Bual, 2021). Accordingly, this exodus of teachers from private institutions compromises the continuity of teaching and learning (Ancho, 2019; Bual & Madrigal, 2018). Hence, this implies a need for these institutions to hire qualified RPH teachers and ensure their retention.

Meanwhile, memorization as a downside issue in instruction is due to its dominance in the teaching of history for many years (Inocian, 2015). However, memorization of factual events and details is an inevitable facet of teaching history. This is perceived by Domingo (2021) as the best way to proliferate misinformation in the digital space nowadays. Thus, teachers need to innovate their teaching method without compromising the essentials of memorization in learning Philippine history.

The inadequate time allocation is affected by the time constraint brought by distance learning and its flexible character. This is consistent with the findings of Toquero (2021) which perceives time allocation as an important element in distance learning. Nonetheless, the teachers are encouraged to adhere to the given time frame by embracing and innovating self-directed teaching strategies.

Apparently, the irregular evaluation of the course delivery can be attributed to the work overload of academic heads that compromises the appraisal of course delivery (Ancho, 2019). Also, there is a dearth of training for the academic heads on course evaluation (Gibson & Dunning, 2012). This explains the need for the HELs to have a stringent QA system in order to maintain instructional quality.

The poor communication of the syllabus could be influenced by the poor observance of syllabus orientation and the challenges in facilitating it virtually (Toquero, 2021). If students understand the syllabus well, they create shared accountability in the pursuit of the course (Hewen, 2007). Thus, it is encouraged among these schools to have the first part of the learning plan dedicated to the syllabus introduction.

Least Challenges. Despite the numerous findings above, there were challenges that were least prevalent among the respondents. Primarily, it was found out that the use of online resources and printed library resources positively affected the teaching of RPH courses because they are available online (CHED, 2013). This explains why this is not considered a prevalent issue. However, students who are in purely modular learning have accessibility issues on the references provided. This disparity is probably affected by an insufficient feedback mechanism on library services and resources (Villegas et al., 2021). Thus, academic heads and teachers are encouraged to consider the library resources in the course enhancement.

Meanwhile, the poor delivery of instruction as a less prevailing challenge is attributed to the sufficient opportunity for training and capacity building among teachers in relation to RPH instruction. However, it is noteworthy that the routine structure of discussion, poor flexibility of teachers, and declining interest in academic subjects commenced other challenges in instruction (Toquero, 2021). Further, as distance learning continues, new issues, trends, and innovations may arise. Thus, this learning modality should remain open for research and development.

Lastly, the improper implementation of the syllabus as the least considered challenge is related to the prerogative given to both students and teachers to adjust the sequence of the course at their own pace. Despite its downsides, distance learning has mitigated the improper implementation of the course sequence, which conforms to the study of Toquero (2021). Thus, both students and teachers can take advantage of technology in planning and implementing the syllabus.

Table 5. Challenges in Teaching Readings in Philippine History

Challenges		f	%
1	The students lack enough prior knowledge of Philippine History lessons.	233	87.92
2	The discussion of mandated topics (constitution, agrarian reform, and taxation) is too narrow and does not cover their main contexts.	179	67.55
3	The teachers' specialization is not vertically aligned to history/social science.	159	60.00
4	The delivery of instruction is more on memorization and not through historical research.	145	54.72
5	The allocated time for the course and lessons is insufficient.	139	52.45
6	The teachers are irregularly evaluated in the delivery of the course.	112	42.26
7	The course syllabus is not properly introduced to the students.	102	38.49
8	The references used in teaching the course are inadequate, outdated, and inaccessible online or in the library.	78	29.43
9	The delivery of instruction does not stimulate the students' interest to participate.	68	25.66
10	The sequence provided in the course syllabus is not properly implemented.	62	23.40

Generally, the course review results affirm that the RPH course has a quality that meets the globally accepted standard (Gibson & Dunning, 2012). However, results present that the foremost issue is not on the course but on the lack of students' fundamental knowledge in Philippine history and the misalignment of teachers' field of specialization (Eustaquio & Tandoc, 2020; Inocian, 2015).

Generally, the enhanced syllabus addresses the areas for improvement in the aspect of references and teaching methodology, and assessment (Torres et al., 2021; Toquero, 2021). Meanwhile, the student's readiness to engage in critical evaluation of historical sources is encouraged to be addressed in basic education (Domingo, 2021; Inocian, 2015). Additionally, it is necessary among institutions to hire teachers with aligned specialization to uplift the quality of instruction (Bual & Madrigal, 2021).

Furthermore, the best practices mainly involved concerns covering instructional strategies (Cayot, 2018; Roman, 2019). This entails that the teachers were able to innovate despite the pandemic (Torres et al., 2021; Toquero, 2021). Finally, if the issues reflected in this study are addressed properly, the efficacy of the course will be ensured, the syllabus will be effectively enhanced, and instruction will be advanced (Tobi & Duque, 2015).

5.0. Conclusion

Generally, the review on the RPH course passed the quality threshold. The top challenges were found to be the students' insufficient knowledge on Philippine history, the narrow discussion of the mandated topics, and the misalignment of teachers' expertise. Meanwhile, the top best practices in teaching and learning were connecting the lessons to the current social issues and the use of technology and multimedia tools in teaching.

In conclusion, the quality delivery of instruction is fundamental in the understanding of the RPH course among HEIs in Kabankalan City, Philippines. With this, quality syllabus and competent teachers are also crucial in its successful advancement. In addition, this also implies the need for these schools to ensure the students' readiness in learning the RPH course to guarantee the full grasp of the lesson and the success of the instructional process. Hence, proper orientation of the syllabus is encouraged. This helps the students see the relevance of history to their degree program and social issues. Besides, the alignment of the syllabus based on the recommendations is vitally essential. Further, by addressing the top challenges and the least of the best teaching practices, this will lead to an effective enhancement of the course syllabus and quality delivery of instruction. Also, the expansion and continuous integration of the best teaching practices are necessary in sustainably advancing the RPH course.

It is recommended that the course developers may address the issues regarding the course design in RPH by considering the results and findings of this study. Specifically, course developers may allocate a time where fundamental facts and events in Philippine history will be discussed thoroughly to address the knowledge gap. In the institutional level, the administrators may use this study as a foundation for revisiting their existing QA system. Further, the institutions' human resource policy may be revisited to uphold the retention of qualified and competent teachers in history. Meanwhile, the teachers may learn flexibility in teaching the course considering the various program demands. Lastly, the future researchers may consider this study in reviewing other courses in different contexts and conditions. The validation of the claims of this study in terms of the best practices and challenges is also encouraged to strengthen and improve the course's delivery of instruction among higher education institutions.

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