

Teachers' Experiences in the Implementation of the Modular Learning Modality

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Abstract

This research aims to describe the teachers' lived experiences during the modular distance learning modality implementation on selected schools from the three (3) districts of Bohol in the academic year 2021-2022. The study used descriptive phenomenology that utilized a semi-structured interview. The purposive sampling among 15 selected teachers was the study's key informant. It utilizes Colaizzi's (1978) strategy in interpreting and analyzing the data. The study revealed that the overlapping of workloads and the equipment functionality were two the most common problems the teachers encountered during the modular learning modality implementation. They need human resources and well-functioning equipment to aid them in their work. The teacher had difficulty transporting modules in remote areas, resulting in some late claiming, and submitting the learning modules. Based on the findings, it was concluded that teachers had experienced various issues and challenges in modular distance learning modalities. It is further suggested that teachers are encouraged to request help from volunteer teachers to aid their workloads.

Keywords: modular learning; teachers' experiences

1. Introduction

Despite the calls for an academic freeze, the Department of Education has implemented the Distance Learning Modalities (DLDM) for the school year 2020-2021 as an innovative approach to ensure that learning remains unhampered. The DepEd still believes that education should not be compromised. As educators in Basic Education, the researchers' purpose is to investigate the lived experiences of the public teachers during this new normal and may enlighten the teachers on how to face and find approaches to the challenges encountered during modular learning modalities. In this context, the researchers were motivated to study the teacher's experiences in the implementation of the modular learning modality.

2. Literature Review

During the academic year 2020-2021, the COVID-19 pandemic caused a huge interruption in education. Due to a disruption, instructors were forced to move to and implement distance learning, with their adaptable knowledge serving as their most valuable component. It is accurate to say that the modular education mandated for instructors in 2020 was the most perplexing circumstance any educator had ever faced.

Constructivism, as a paradigm for teaching process, asserts that individuals construct meaning or extend their learning and that real life is defined by their interactions (Elliott, 2018). Educators learn through each

lesson they teach, their interactions with students, parents, administrators, experts, and colleagues and their reflections on class activities, assignments, and assessments. For an educator, learning occurs due to daily experiences and interactions in the classroom. According to Dewey (1938), "no experience is pedagogical unless it tends both to the understanding of more facts and to the engaging of further concepts and also to an improved, more composed foundation of them" (p. 82). Bruner (1985) concurs that learning and acquiring knowledge need some organizational experience.

Despite the COVID health emergency, the Department of Education is committed and dedicated to providing unhindered access to the necessary educational services to the learners and to the public, in accordance with the Philippines constitutional mandate as declared in Sec. 2, paragraph 1 of the Article 14 of the 1987 Philippine Constitution.

Following the DepEd Order No. 012, s. 2020, Enhanced Basic Education Act of 2013 is the adoption of the Basic Education Learning Continuity Plan (BE-LCP) for the starting academic year of 2020-2021 considering the Public Health Emergency of COVID-19. The Department of Education will utilize a varied learning system to make sure the continual learning provision opportunities of the learners while also ensuring the health and the safety of both parties. Whereas, it can be executed through distance, blended, and home school learning.

The Department of Education has publicized flexible learning and material ff. its legal directive, specifically, Department of Education Order No. 21, series of 2019, or the K-12 Basic Education Program Policy Guidelines. It cites Flexible Learning Options or the FLOs, which incorporates alternatives and their corresponding resources for learning flexible to the needs within the context taking note the of learners' diversity.

3. Objectives of the Study

This research aims to study teachers' lived experiences in the implementation of the modular distance learning modality.

What are the experiences encountered by the teachers in the implementation of modular learning modality in terms of module-writing, reproduction, distribution and retrieval, assessment, module-checking, and parents' involvement?

4. Methodology

A descriptive phenomenological design was used to determine the experiences of teachers in the implementation of the modular learning modality. The study was conducted at the following schools in the Division of Bohol, Philippines: Dimiao Central Elementary School, Bentig-Calunasan Elementary School, Minol Elementary School, Cortes Central Elementary School, and San Miguel Central Elementary School. These schools are under the Department of Education.

The study utilized a semi-structured interview schedule. The tool contains an open-ended question and has no probing questions, thus has been pilot-tested by Department of Education – elementary teachers outside of the population but falls within the criteria of the study. The researchers first send a letter to the Division Superintendent of Bohol requesting permission to conduct the study. The data gathered was analyzed utilizing

the Colaizzi's strategy 1978 that follows Husserl's method is a strong approach for researchers to uncover, interpret, and characterize sources' lived experiences. For the data saturation, the researchers have tried to interview other teachers outside the population, however, still got the same response. For the coding of the data, the researchers used descriptive coding wherein it involves reading through qualitative data, and coding passages according to topic. This research passed the Ethical Review Board of Holy Name University.

5. Results and Discussion

Lack of Experience in Preparing Modules. The majority of the participants in this study have no experience in writing a module; however, some only check for errors, and some are editors making sure the copyright law is observed and abided. A participant of the study is also relieved from the tasks, however, still had some editing taking note of the learners' need and the localization of content of modules. Most participants stated that they only download modules soft-copy. For some, they have difficulty in downloading as there has no stable internet connectivity. However, for those who have experience writing a module, the participants did not experience any challenges.

Lack of Funds. There is the Maintenance and Other Operating Expenses (MOOE), which the government provides to the all-public schools. Most of the participants rely on the budget given by the government through MOOE; however, some participants did solicit and accepted donations due to the insufficient budget of the MOOE. Some resorted to using their money to suffice the need to have a module for a learner, repair the equipment, and buy new equipment like printers and laptops, which is essential in producing modules. Other than that, some participants share a printer with another subject teacher. If production is not enough to accommodate the self-learning learning modules, they use books as an alternative.

Malfunctioning Equipment. There were concerns like the functionality of the equipment. However, it is shouldered by the school. On the other hand, some participants use their money to purchase and repair the equipment. Sharing of printers is also present in some of the participant's school. There is also an experience wherein compatibility of equipment is also present. Half of the participants experienced malfunctioning equipment like printers, xerox copiers, and the like.

Module Sorting: Time Consuming. Fortunate enough, most of the participants have no problem in fulfilling the one is to one ratio of a module to a learner. On the other hand, using books as an alternative for modules if there won't be enough modules reproduced. Sorting, reviewing, and collating of modules is time-consuming and tiring. Using of personal money to accommodate the needs of the learners is also present to some participants.

Not Following of Distribution-Retrieval Schedule. Most participants experienced parents/guardians who doesn't follow the schedule in the distribution and retrieval of modules due to external factors having late claiming and returning the learning modules. If parents/guardians cannot claim the self-learning modules, some of the participants do home visitation while bringing the unclaimed modules. Aside from that, there is a communication barrier between teacher and parent.

Difficulty in Writing Summative Test. Some participants do not find it challenging in the summative test writing during the assessment process. Others seem to have a downloadable test provided by their district, and some make it individually. Most participants find it difficult to formulate questions that align with the competencies. Thus, it consumes time and resources.

No Problem in Checking the Summative Tests. Some participants shared that it is time-consuming, and it adds workload for them that a participant has to hire an assistant to help the check the summative test and the module. Most participants shared that they do not have a problem checking because some of the subjects are integrated into one summative test. Despite other learners having their parents/guardians answer the summative test, there are also learners with unanswered items or not answered items.

Giving of Supplementary Activities to Low Performing Students. In intervening the results, majority of the participants give intervention activities for low scores for learners. Some do home visitation to check on the learner and contact parents/guardians for follow-up. A participant seems firm that results are not deemed reliable to reflect learners' knowledge.

Delayed in Checking Modules and Time Constraint. Some participants took the importance of learning activity answer sheets to be organized to be easier to check in the module checking. Most participants have delayed checking the modules due to overlapping workloads, activities, workshops, and seminars. Thus, it is time-consuming. A participant also hired someone to help check the self-learning modules.

Involvement of Parents/Guardians in Answering the Module and Summative Tests. Some participants remind the parents/guardians to only guide the learners in answering their self-learning modules in module learning. Though reminded by the teachers, there were instances that the parents/guardians still answer the modules intended for the learners, which was experienced by half of the participants. In addition, half of the participants also experienced incomplete or even left unanswered modules. In checking the summative test, the participants share that some parents/guardians answer the said test, visible in their penmanship.

6. Conclusion

Teachers have gone through a period of transition and change in their teaching and learning processes since the implementation of Modular Distant Learning (MDL) in Bohol, as distance learning has replaced traditional in person learning. Teachers faced difficulties such as a lack of experience in preparing modules, a lack of funds, malfunctioning equipment, time-consuming module sorting, failure to follow the Distribution-Retrieval Schedule, difficulty in writing summative tests, delays in checking modules, and a time constraint. Despite their difficulties, teachers attempt to provide Supplementary Activities to low-performing students.

The parents/guardians assisted the students in answering the Module and Summative Tests. Despite the country's education system's abrupt transition, teachers adapt and invent new ways to provide education to all children. Teachers from DepEd Bohol demonstrated steadfast devotion and determination to support and meet the learning needs of the students, as evidenced by their personal experiences, since they believe that "every kid should have access to quality education" in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic.

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