

# Teachers' And Students' Experiences In Using Printed Modules In Distance Learning Under The New Normal: A Documentation Study

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## Abstract

In general, this study was conducted to identify teachers' and students' experiences by both students and teachers in using Printed Modules in Distance Learning Modality. A total of 112 teachers and students served as respondents to the study. A survey questionnaire via Google Forms was utilized in gathering the relevant data needed for this study. Descriptive statistics were utilized to analyze the data gathered. The Majority (86% ) of the students, said that they are having difficulty in answering their modules. One factor is that they do not have enough time to answer such modules ( 69% ). The majority of them (72%) believed that they can answer their modules on their own. Besides, 88% of students responded that they can easily approach their teachers and ask them whenever they have questions. From the teachers' perspective, the problem is about some errors that can be found in the module, wherein 67% of the respondents have noticed it. The problem that teachers have encountered in printed modular distance learning is the ability of students to follow instructions. Most of the teachers (92%) said that their students are having difficulty following the instruction in their modules. Finally, the big struggle according to the teacher-respondents in the said modality is the communication problem 100% said that they are having difficulty contacting both the parents and the students.

**Keywords:** experiences, issues, challenges, implementation, printed, modular, distance learning, new normal, education, documentation

## Introduction

It was January when the Philippines recorded the first positive case of Coronavirus Disease 2019 or COVID-19 inside the country. The following month of the same year, local transmission of the said virus happened. That's why on March 2020, the Philippine government decided to implement a Community Quarantine in the National Capital Region (NCR) but, eventually, Enhanced Community Quarantine (ECQ) was also

implemented in other regions in the Philippines. Due to the quarantine, all classes in both basic, as well as higher education institutions, got suspended. It was then the start of what we call the "New Normal", wherein the way we live became different.

The pandemic that we are experiencing until this time brought about by COVID-19 changed a lot of things in our country, including the educative process, especially the mode of delivery. As one of the health and safety protocols

to limit the spread of the said virus, traditional face-to-face learning inside the classroom and other on-campus activities for the academic year 2020-2021 were suspended in all educational institutions all over the Philippines.

Due to the said situation, in basic education, the Department of Education (DepEd), a governing body that is assigned to supervise basic elementary and secondary education in the Philippines, suggested Distance Learning through different Learning Delivery Modalities to continue education amidst the health crisis. These Learning Delivery Modalities are: (a) Modular Distance Learning, with two options, Printed Modular and Digital Modular, (b) Online Distance Learning with Synchronous and Asynchronous type on online classes, (c) Radio and TV-based Instruction, and (d) Blended Learning which has the combination of two or more types of distance learning.

Based on the results of the survey conducted by DepEd through the Learner's Enrolment and Survey Form (LESF) which was filled out by all parents who enrolled their children in school for the school year 2020-2021, the most preferred options that students chose for distance learning are modular learning followed by online classes. The result of the survey was presented in a press briefing that happened last July 2020 led by the said department and it turned out that 3.8 million learners wanted printed materials as a mode of instruction, while around 2 million learners wanted to learn online.

Today, with the supervision of the DepEd, schools in elementary and secondary all over the country are continuing their educative process through the implementation of different learning modalities, but mostly, under the Printed Modular Distance Learning modality.

## Objectives of the Study

The general objective of this study is to determine the teacher's and students' experiences in using printed modules in distance learning modality during the COVID-19 pandemic at Central Azucarera de Tarlac High School Annex.

Specifically, the researcher aims to:

1. Identify the experiences of students in using printed modules in the distance learning approach in learning.
2. Identify the experiences of teachers in using the printed module in distance teaching-learning modality.
3. Propose interventions to improve printed modular distance learning in the school.

## Time and Place of the Study

The study was conducted at Central Azucarera de Tarlac High School Annex (CATHS Annex) which is situated in Tarlac City. The school is a stand-alone junior school offering grades 7-10 and it is under the Tarlac City Schools Division. Teachers and students from the said junior high school were the respondents of the study. They were asked about the issues and challenges they have encountered in the implementation of printed modular distance learning in the new normal education, which is the actual modality in the school.

The research was conducted at the start of the fourth grading period based on the Department of Education's calendar for the school year 2020-2021.

## Review of Literature and Studies

Most countries around the world have temporarily closed educational institutions to contain the spread of the virus and reduce infections (Tria, 2020). Face-to-face engagement inside the classroom of students and teachers and other activities within the school has also been suspended. At present, the Philippines is in the process of adapting to the new normal educative process, and continuous innovations of teachers as well as the active involvement of school stakeholders are the driving force for its success. For the continuity of education and to still attain the Department of Education's mission and vision are to provide quality education for every Filipino learner, DepEd implemented different learning modalities, one of them being Modular Distance Learning.

Distance Learning refers to a learning delivery modality, where learning takes place between the teacher and the learners who are geographically remote from each other during instruction. This modality has three types: Modular Distance Learning (MDL), Online Distance Learning (ODL), and TV/ Radio-Based Instruction. (Quinones, 2020).

Among different modalities, Modular Learning is the most popular type of Distance Learning. Modular learning is in two forms, Printed Modules, and Digital Modules. Printed modules refer to learning packets such as worksheets, activity sheets, and self-learning materials. While, Digital modules or e-modules means, the modules are saved in flash drives, CDs, and OTGs. To be able to access the content of these learning materials, laptops, computers, or tablets are needed. The e-copy of the learning modules like interactive and inclusive e-books, courseware, and other offline content formats are provided. For the Printed Modular Learning Delivery modality, the teachers prepare the

learning materials, weekly study guides and other resources for modular distance learning and these materials shall be accompanied by quality-assured instructional packets wherein the parent/guardians or para-teachers shall meet with the teacher and receive instructions and the learning materials to be accomplished by the learner for the week.

(Codamon, 2020)

In the Philippines, Modular Distance Learning Modality is currently in use by all public schools as a result of the survey conducted by the DepEd. Learning through printed and digital modules emerged as the most preferred distance learning method for parents with children who are enrolled this academic year (Bernardo, 2020). This is also in consideration of the learners in areas where the internet is not accessible for online learning.

Modular learning is a form of distance learning that uses Self-Learning Modules (SLM) based on the Most Essential Learning Competencies (MELCS) provided by DepEd. The modules include sections on motivation and assessment that serve as a complete guide to both teachers' and students' desired competencies (FlipScience, 2020).

The use of modules encourages independent study. One of the benefits of using modules for instruction is the acquisition of better self-study or learning skills among students. Students engage themselves in learning the concepts presented in the module. They develop a sense of responsibility in accomplishing the tasks provided in the module. With little or no assistance from others, the learners progress on their own. They are learning how to learn; they are empowered. Other advantages of modular instruction include more choice and self-pacing for students; more variety and flexibility for teachers and staff; and increased adaptability of instructional materials. (Nardo, M.T.B, 2017; Pe Dangle & Sumaoang, 2020).

The teacher takes the responsibility of monitoring the progress of the learners. The learners may ask assistance from the teacher via e-mail, telephone, text message/instant messaging among others. Where possible, the teacher shall do home visits to learners needing remediation or assistance (Llego, n.d.). Printed Modules will be delivered to students, parents, or guardians by the teachers or through Local Government Officials.

The main purpose of this study is to find out the issues and challenges encountered by both teachers and students in the implementation of Printed Modular Distance Learning during the COVID-19 Pandemic. Additionally, this study aims to ascertain interventions of every educational institution to cope with these challenges, as well as, the government in assisting students and teachers who are having difficulty in this new normal education.

### **Research Methodology**

This study used the descriptive design in determining the issues and challenges encountered by both students and teachers in the implementation of Printed Modular Distance Learning Modality. The opinions, and recommendations of students and teachers were gathered through a survey, particularly by using questionnaires with open-ended questions. All twelve (12) school teachers and one hundred (100) students in the said school were chosen as respondents of the study.

For the methods of data analysis, descriptive statistical tools were used in this study.

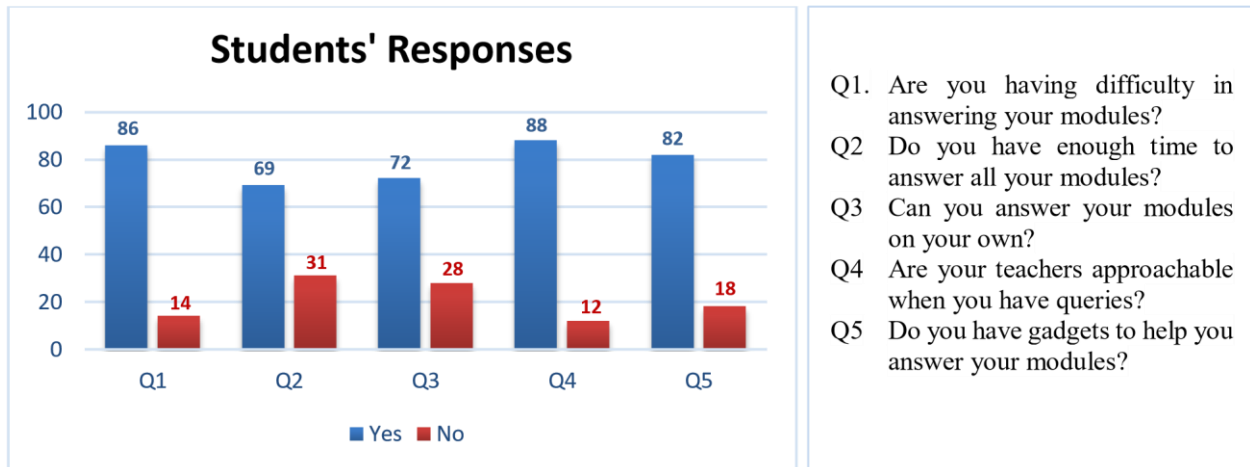
### **Results and Discussion**

#### **Students' experiences in using learning modules, to teachers and ownership of gadgets**

From Figure 1, it can be understood that most of the students are experiencing difficulty in the printed modular learning modality. 86% of the respondents had a hard time answering their modules. Most of them do not have enough time to accomplish all their modules within a given period. 69% of them said it. Weekly, students received 8 modules in all learning areas and 1 additional module for Homeroom Guidance and each module consists of 5-6 activities. The subjects that they are having the greatest struggle answering with are Mathematics and English. In Mathematics, some students said the reason why they are having difficulty is that most of the Math problems given in the modules are difficult to solve yet there is no detailed explanation provided. In English, students said they are having difficulty understanding the content of the modules, they also find it hard to answer activities that require them to write an essay. On the other hand, most of the students, 72% of them to be exact, said that they can answer their modules on their own, while 28% still need assistance from others to answer their modules. In any type of distance learning, communication between teachers and students is very important, hence 88% of the student respondents said that the teachers were very much approachable whenever they have queries regarding the lessons. The majority (82%) of the learners have gadgets that could be useful in learning and answering their modules.

Additionally, the main issues and challenges that the learners have experienced in the printed modular distance learning are self-studying, poor internet connection, insufficient time to answer all the modules due to the high number of activities, difficulty understanding the instruction in the activities, some part of the printed materials are blurry, distractions such as noise, and lack of focus. The majority (82%) of the student respondents owned gadgets.

Figure 1. Students' experiences in utilizing learning modules, to teachers and ownership of gadgets



### Teachers' responses on distributed modules to students

From Figure 2, 83% of teachers responded that the Department of Education (DepEd) provides modules to be utilized by all learners. However, according to them, the delivery of the modules to the schools was sometimes late on the schedule. Some of them even said that the modules given by DepEd were usually incomplete, thus they still need to reproduce the modules to complete them before the distribution. Meanwhile, the remaining 17% are teachers in Technology and Education (TLE) subject, they responded that the division office does not provide the modules for their subject. It is because the modules needed for the said subject are based on the course offerings of the school, thus printing and reproduction of TLE modules are conducted in the school itself, but the soft copy of the module to be printed was already available in the division office. In printing and reproduction of modules, the teacher said that sometimes, the bond paper and inks are provided by the division office, but the supply was not enough. They were also given a set of printers to be used, but there are times that the printers are not functioning well, hence they are having

difficulty in printing and mass reproduction of modules.

Speaking of the modules, 67% of the teacher-respondents stated that they noticed some errors in the said printed materials, although these errors are only minimal and they were permitted to revise the modules or activities in the modules with mistakes.

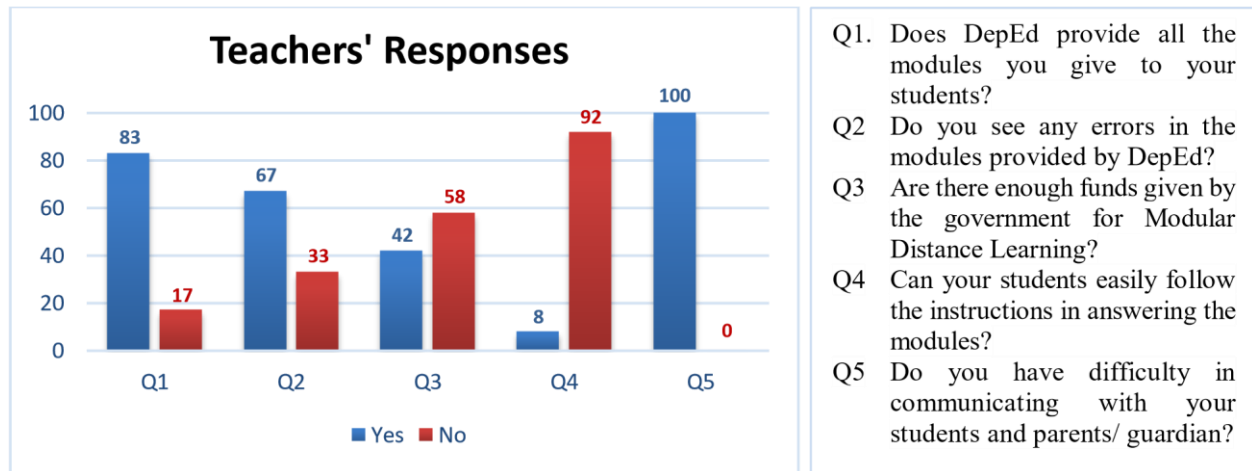
Following instructions is also an issue in modular distance learning. 92% of the teachers said so. But the major problem in this new modality according to teachers is communication. All (100%) teacher-respondents said that they are struggling when it comes to communicating with their students as well as with the student's parents/guardians. This is because some students as well as parents/guardians do not have cellular phones or other gadgets to be used. While some, cannot afford to buy a load allowance all the time. But the worst case is that some students and parents as well, are not responding whenever the teacher is trying to communicate with them, the messages are just being left unread.

Other than the above-mentioned issues and challenges, teachers also experienced difficulties when it comes to the distribution and retrieval of the modules. Since students are restricted to go outside, their parents/ guardian are

the ones who are getting their modules, but most of the time, the latter were not able to get the modules on the given schedule, thus, students also submit their modules late, resulting to the delay of work on the part of teachers. There are also

times that student submits their modules with incomplete answers or worst, even without answers at all. Parents' support and participation were identified by the teacher as a challenge in this new modality.

Figure 2. Teachers' responses on distributed modules to students



## Conclusion

Based on the discussion of the results of the study, the following conclusions were realized:

For students, too much number of activities in the module in each subject is one of the main issues they have encountered in the implementation of Printed Modular Distance Learning

Students are also concerned about the time allotment to answer their modules. They believed that they do not have enough time to work on and finish all the modules within a week, considering that they have 8 subjects plus an additional module for Homeroom Guidance with 5-6 activities per subject module.

Difficulty in answering the modules is also an issue in printed modular distance learning.

As per the students, some contents of the modules are vague and hard to

understand. Thus, they are having a hard time answering them.

The most common challenge that teachers have experienced is a concern with communication. They have encountered communication problems with both students and their parents/guardians. Teachers find it difficult to contact them due to some circumstances such as lack of load allowance to reply. But the worst case scenario here is that messages of the teachers were just left unread or being "seen", but there's no response at all by the learners.

Another issue is the ability of the students to follow instructions. Teachers have mentioned that their students are having difficulty when it comes to following

directions/ instructions in answering their modules.

Distribution and retrieval of modules have also been identified as a challenge for teachers in this new normal education. Most of the students are not able to get or give back their modules on time.

### **Recommendation**

Based on the results of the survey which was conducted specifically for this study, the following are offered as recommendations:

1. Reducing the number of activities in the modules should be considered. The DepEd should implement policy guidelines regarding such matters. It should be done to have a standard and lesser number of activities per module per subject.
2. As suggested by the students, they should also be given enough time to finish their modules. Also, the teacher's leniency in the submission of students' outputs must be emphasized.
3. To make the module easy to understand for learners, do not put so many details on it. As much as possible, take out unnecessary data and put only the needed information as indicated on the Most Essential Learning Competencies, so that mastery will be attained.
4. Communication through call and text requires load allowance and there is a fact that not everyone affords to have a load all the time. Thus, social media, particularly Facebook messenger is the most commonly used mode of communication nowadays since we have what we called "free data" that allows us to use such even without a load. Therefore, teachers are recommended to

be active online most of the time. But if the communication problem persists, Home Visitation is recommended as a mechanism to have a dialogue with both students and parents/guardians, but of course, it must follow the health and safety protocols set by the authorities.

5. Simplification of instructions/ directions in the module must also be done. Moreover, lessons and activities to be included in the modules must be appropriate to the needs of the learners.
6. When it comes to the distribution and retrieval of learning modules, support and assistance from external stakeholders, especially, from the community leaders such as the barangay chairman and councilors, are very much needed.

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