Distance Learning Landscape in Bulan Districts

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Abstract— Modular Learning Delivery is one of the prime modes of education delivery in the world today as imposed by the new normal trend in the society. Every aspect of learning is now faced with the fact that attending school via physical classroom today is not possible. Most especially, English teachers in the new normal setting face the new challenge of adapting and adopting different distance education teaching strategies to fit in today's education setting. This study determined the modular learning delivery of English teachers in distance learning landscape in Bulan, Sorsogon during the school year 2020-2021. It utilized a descriptive-qualitative research designs. Audio-recorded interviews were transcribed and underwent conventional content analysis to identify categorical themes to achieve the goal of this research. It was found that some strategies used by English teachers to implement distance learning are modular teaching, home-based reading intervention, creating social media accounts, home visits, conducting limited face-to-face to low risk areas, training parents to be para-teachers and learning support system with sub-categories, namely: scaffolding, feedback and counselling. The challenges they encountered include health conditions of the teachers, weather condition, issues on printed modules, home situations and parents' educational background, expenses on reproducing, distributing and retrieval of the printed modules, and teachers' lack of training in the conduct of the distance learning delivery modality. There are relevant and significant practices to apply different strategies to implement language learning amidst pandemic. Teachers have to be skilful in choosing the right strategies to use and consider some relevant factors will affect language learning. Challenges are likewise encountered and teachers may address them appropriately to overcome the burdens that they confront in conducting modular learning and ensure a success in the learning continuity that the DepEd is aiming for Filipino learners. Further researches on the different issues prevailing the education system in the country today may be conducted.

Keywords— Distance Learning Landscape; Modular Learning Delivery; Strategies Used by English Teachers, Challenges Encountered

INTRODUCTION

Researches today embody the multi-facets concerns of every country on the actions they are undertaking to mitigate the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. In one-year time, the world was able to record 152.5M COVID-19 cases and 3M deaths [1]. Two obvious actions are the strict enactment of 'Stay at home' and 'Avoid contact with people' because the disease can easily be transmitted through physical contact arising from day-to-day activities in the work, school and community. Home is the safest place to stay while the pandemic is at the height of its attack because no absolute cure has been discovered yet. While this pandemic continues to restrict people's movement, the education sector is undergoing a drastic change in the modes by which teaching and learning should be undertaken. From the traditional classroom, learning is now taking place at a distance setting where modules and learning activity sheets (LAS thereafter) are the primary tools for learning to continue even in the midst of the pandemic.

Modular Learning Delivery is one of the prime modes of education delivery in the world today as imposed by the new normal trend in the society. Every aspect of learning is now faced with the fact that attending school via physical classroom today is not possible. Most especially, English teachers in the new normal setting face the new challenge of adapting and adopting different distance education teaching strategies to fit in today's education setting. Students can benefit from the flexibility that comes with distance learning, and for students who do not have the time or money to attend traditional schools, distance learning can provide a path to their education [2].

Distance language learners require new kinds of skills, motivation and commitment to work effectively in a learning setting that is largely new and unfamiliar to them, and which is likely to have a direct impact on their development and use of learning strategies [3]. Teachers on the other hand have a big role to play in guiding students to understand the process of these learning strategies. With the absence of usual physical classroom where teachers freely implement the most appropriate teaching strategies to their lessons, this time is a different setup. Learners are independently facing the activities they need to comply in their learning modules and LAS. Parents are the immediate persons that

learners can call for help while teachers cannot leave their learners alone in the process of answering their modules and LAS. In this way, teachers need to guarantee that the learning materials can really represent their physical presence during this new normal way of teaching and learning.

In the Philippines, three months when the pandemic has been declared the by World Health Organization (WHO), and subsequent to the Memorandum DM-CI-2020-00162 as executed by the Office of the President that no face-to-face classes shall be held until the vaccine for COVID-19 becomes available, the Distance Learning Delivery Modalities (DLDM) shall be implemented this S.Y. 2020-2021, the Department of Education (DepEd) enforced the nationwide execution of DepEd Order No. 012, s. 2020, also known as "Adoption of the Basic Education Learning Continuity Plan for School Year 2020-2021 in Light of the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency" on June 19, 2020. This order contained the system of the Basic Education Learning Continuity Plan (BE-LCP), "a package of education interventions that will respond to basic education challenges brought about the COVID-19." Subsequently, all educational initiatives today are bounded by this order especially how to deliver education in this time of crisis without risking the health and safety of everyone. The basic idea is for learning to continue regardless of crisis.

By this Order, Curriculum Guides have been simplified into now called "Most Essential Learning Competencies (MELC)" that contains the most essential skills to be learned by the learners. It is understood that distance learning on an emergency situation cannot maximize learning; thus, the skills to be taught are simplified and included in the modules and LAS circulating schools today. As DepEd Secretary Leonor Magtolis Briones says, "It is our task to produce young people who are prepared to deal with the world. It is our task to prepare them for the real world ". Nevertheless, "denying children an opportunity to put even a first step on the education ladder puts them on a course for a lifetime of disadvantage" [4]. Therefore, learning has to continue.

Because of this, undisrupted opportunities of learning despite the COVID-19 pandemic are served through flexible learning and other alternative delivery mechanisms. The MELC serves a guide for teachers to develop in developing their respective Learning Continuity Plans [5]. Among a variety of options available within this educational format, distance learning typically allows learners to study at their own pace, at their own chosen time, and using available materials designed for their learning modality. But among the options given, modular and LAS are the modes prevalent to Sorsogon Province today because there are no facilities available yet in schools and in homes to make technology a primary mode of learning.

Within the Bulan District, modules and LAS are two primary tools for distance learning delivery. Aside from the materials coming from the DepEd Central Office, there are also materials that are teacher-made. Teachers spend time to prepare, make, print, distribute and retrieve these materials. Teachers likewise monitor their learners' compliance to these materials. However, during the answering of the modules, learners are left on their own with only parents and guardians at their sides to give them assistance. But not all parents and guardians are capable of extending help especially when the issue in answering the materials has become too technical for them to deal with.

The modular and LAS are implemented through appropriate teaching strategies. For English teachers, the goal is for language learning to continue, engage learners in the activities that will contribute to enhance their language proficiency and develop academic language for success with grade-level content. The school and the home have greater responsibilities. The teacher and the parents have both equal responsibilities to share to maximize learning even in the confinement of one's home. A need to carefully and diligently analyze the factors that may affect the modular learning delivery of English teachers among their learners which will give a picture of the distance learning landscape in Bulan, Sorsogon. Since this educational system is new, abrupt and subsequent to the prevailing public health emergency, findings of this study may be a significant to improve the setup since no one can determine when this pandemic will end. Thus, this study was conducted.

This study determined the modular learning delivery of English teachers in distance learning landscape in Bulan, Sorsogon during the school year 2020-2021. Specifically, it seeks to answer the following questions:

1. What are the strategies of English teachers in distance learning during COVID 19 pandemic?
2. What are the challenges met by English teachers in the Distance learning modality?

MATERIALS AND METHOD

This study determined the modular learning delivery of English teachers in distance learning landscape in Bulan, Sorsogon during the school year 2020-2021. It utilized a descriptive- qualitative research designs. Audio-recorded interviews were transcribed and

underwent conventional content analysis to identify categorical themes to achieve the goal of this research.

Participants

There were nine Grade 6 teachers who were purposively chosen to undergo the interview sessions and they were treated as informants.

Instruments

The main instruments used in gathering data were the transcriptions of the nine audio-recorded interview sessions conducted.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Strategies of English teachers in distance learning during COVID 19 pandemic

There were identified strategies utilized by English teachers to adapt to the present learning situation in the education system of the country. Because, face-to-face classes are not allowed at this time of pandemic, the distance learning modalities are highly encouraged by the DepEd nationwide. These strategies were revealed to be part of pedagogical practices as well as experiences of the teachers so that learning can still continue even when learners are confined in their homes and even the country is in the midst of the pandemic. The following categorical themes were determined during the conventional content analysis of the transcription.

Modular Teaching. Modular Teaching is a kind of teaching strategy encouraged by DepEd as a response to the new learning modality needed amidst pandemic. It is a type of teaching arrangement intended for learners who do not have internet connectivity at home such as learners from Bulan Districts. These are printed materials from Deped and most often made by teachers. Teachers and parents do some arrangements (the time and the place) on how these modules are to be delivered and retrieved by the teachers. They must comply with the existing IATF Guidelines for the minimum health protocols. Most often, for coastal areas in Bulan Districts, teachers do an extended effort by bringing these printed materials right at the doorsteps of their learners' homes. Sometimes, they meet in schools for those residing near the schools.

With printed modular teaching, learners are independently learning – their pace, preferences, time and level. Teacher 1 said that modular learning is self-learning. Students are left on their own when answering the module compared to the traditional classroom where teachers are physically present and ready to assist learners when doing their school activities. But modular learning is a different thing. The module is designed in a simplified manner so that learners will not have

difficult time understanding the concepts and the skills being taught and contained in the module.

Modules are made by grade level and subject area. They came from DepEd Central Office. They are sent to the respective division offices for revisions to comply with the principles of contextualization and localization. One of these is the use of appropriate language especially with primary grades 1-3 that used Mother Tongue-Based Multi-Lingual Education (MTB-MLE) as language of instruction. In most cases, teachers make their own modules for exclusive use of their pupils especially when they see that the modules sent do not fit the level and interest of their learners. Teacher 2 also shared that she did not force the learners to complete the answer as long as they get the concept or the lesson would be enough for a learner to do.

Teacher 2 was asked about their satisfaction on the ready-made modules, she said that it was very convenient; however, there are things that teachers could not compromise such as the quality of learning that their learners can get from the module so they revise or do their own learning modules.

When teachers do their own modules, they keep in mind the organization by which they will present the lesson. This is similar to how lessons are presented in the traditional classroom with the physical presence of the teacher. To make the work easier for the teacher to do, they resort to activity sheets instead of making module. Teacher 3 said that they distributed the learning sheets they make instead of the ready-made modules.

Teachers take time to check the progress of learning of their learners. The performance of the learners is used as basis for teacher to decide for an appropriate intervention to do. Teacher 5 shared that whenever she felt that a certain learner was not progressing as expected, she would do a home visit and do some interventions such as interview and make a tutorial type of teaching. Teacher also talks to parents on how they can extend help to their children in the course of answering their modules or LAS. Teachers are already familiar with the learners. They know from the start what and how these learners will learn. These teachers mostly teach in small school and familiarizing with the learners in terms of intellectual ability is easy because they are few. With this, they can easily give the appropriate intervention to each individual learner.

The drastic change in the manner of teaching and learning has surprised the educational system of the country. The public basic education sector in the first place were all implementing teaching and learning

activities inside the traditional classroom with the physical presence of the teacher and the learners. Although technology has started to dominate the classroom, the engagement is not ready for distance learning that is required by the pandemic situations today. The quickest way to implement the Learning Continuity Plan (LCP) of the DepEd is through the Modular Learning, the most common strategy that teachers can undertake in a country when most schools and households are not ready for distance learning through technology.

It would imply that the very essence of modularization is that students are at center of the teaching-learning process. It calls for a classroom environment in which students are actively engaged in knowledge transmitter to a facilitator of student's learning. Not only that, modularization requires continuous follow-up and do assessment to keep track of student's progress throughout the modular learning.

This also implies that teachers need to be continually learning, refreshing and updating their skillset to progress with in the demands of this new learning delivery modality. Further, this imply that the realization of the DepEd goals, vision and mission will still be realized with the exerted efforts not only from the teacher but with the full support given by the parents and the students to the new learning modality in this time of pandemic. Being able to show positivity and great acceptance to this kind of strategic plan made by the DepEd to the distance learning delivery modality, proper education will be made possible and realizing the dream to produce quality graduates and good citizens of our country are at hand.

Most of the parents still prefer Modular Distance Learning over Online or Blended Learning for health and safety reasons of their children. Modular Learning was also the choice of parents who cannot afford for a reliable internet access or their places were not yet reached by this kind of internet service [6]. Likewise, some parents cannot afford to but gadget for educational use of their children during online classes. They also disclosed that some parents have difficulty understanding the contents of the modules when assisting their children to accomplish these modules. Time was also an issue to some parents as many of them have work and duties to do aside from assisting their children in their Modular Learning. Parents also complained about the overwhelming exercises contained in the module, and children's lack motivation and focus to finish their modules. Similarly, in the article of Bernardo (2020) learning through printed and digital

modules emerged as the most preferred distance learning method of parents who enrolled their children in the coming school year, based on a survey conducted by the Department of Education (DepEd) [7]. These issues are relevant for teachers to consider so that later on they can come up with relevant strategies that would address issues that will hamper in the Modular Learning of their learners.

Home-Based Reading Intervention. There are learners who find difficulty in reading, hence teachers bring the reading materials right at the doorstep of their learner's home. This is to make their learners read, do some reading activities and still enhance their reading comprehension. Some of these Home-Based Reading Interventions are teacher-made. Teachers give more time in home visitations to struggling learners who need guidance in reading to make them a good reader.

When Teacher 1 was asked about other difficulties they meet during the conduct of Modular Learning, she said that reading was one of the issues. Since Modular Learning needs reading all the time, learners must have appropriate level of comprehension. Unlike face-to-face classes where teacher can right away give guidance to identified learners with low comprehension, the Modular Learning does not give this advantage. So, teachers need to do strategies to enhance their reading skills and one of the possible ways that they can recommend is through Home-Based Reading Intervention.

Teacher 3 stated that such Home-Based Reading Intervention would promote the love for reading. With the distribution of these supplementary reading materials, learners may enhance their reading ability as well as interest. Even away from the traditional classroom, learners should feel their duties to read and this strategy is one way to help them improve reading habits. Even parents suggested, as shared by Teacher 8, that aside from modules, reading materials for leisure should also be distributed to learners so that they would not forget the habit of reading.

Teachers did their best to send different Home-Based Reading Materials to their learners aside from the modules and LAS that they require. But teachers are also careful about sending these so that learners would not be overwhelmed by the material, and that they still find reading pleasurable habit.

With this initiative in enhancing reading comprehension, every teacher is aiming to help their learners become functional readers. Making each student a reader is the primary concern of every teacher

nowadays due to the new learning modality where teachers and students do not have physical contact in the traditional classroom teaching and teachers seldom visit the students at home to teach.

The finding is supported by the study of Struyven, Dochy and Janssens (2010), in order for students to acquire these skills, schools need to be organized around the learner not the teacher, educational reforms have emphasized the concept of student-centeredness as one of its threads. Students-centered learning takes the idea of what is to be learned from what the teacher desires to teach and direct instruction to what students need to learn [8].

Distance learning, teachers can adapt many of the strategies they would use in the classroom to promote reading skills. With the distance learning, learners require to work on their own thus develop their independence [9]. Teachers need to adjust to the preferences of the learners and adopt ways to help them read especialy with instructional texts. She also added that the process of reading is an act of processing information and meaning. Teachers need to provide different strategic reading tools for learners to understand the texts such as vocabulary enhancement activities, activating prior knowledge, modelling success and monitroing students' progress.

Creating social media account. One efficient way of organizing individuals involved in learning such as parents and the learners themselves is through creating a social media account. Group chat, messenger, facebook group account and texting are the strategies being used to communicate, update and give feedbacks to the parents and learners. Teachers need this kind of support system from the parents and students to have an easy facilitation of the teaching-learning process. This is especially important during pick-up and retrieval of the printed modules as well as convenient way of raising concerns and issues on the home-based learning of the learners.

When Teacher 4 was asked about strategies they used to implement Distance Learning, she shared that creating group chats and other social media accounts according to group of individuals such as co-teachers, parents, learners and with their administrator. This is done as a means of monitoring submissions and learners' progress, giving updates, following up, convenient means of communicating with parents when needed, among others. So that group chats and social media accounts would be efficient, teachers have to be alert for any messages coming from parents and co-teachers.

Some teachers try to reach out with their learners through this social media accounts by conducting short classes because video calls and long calls can be hindered by slow internet connection being experienced in these places.

This means that the creation of group social media account can be very influential to the people in the educative process. This can relay messages and share informative learning concepts to the students through their parents. Parents and students are always updated of the educational issues and concerns. Likewise, they are informed, involved and engaged for every learning activity planned by the school amidst this pandemic.

It would imply that this time of pandemic, social media has been a widely adopted technology to support educational activities and have constant access in providing feedback and insight for better collaboration. Creating social media accounts of teachers and students as a form of communication in the teaching learning process will mean connection, creativity, involvement, engagement and learning.

In the survey of Dangle and Sumaong (2020), 79% of the parents do not have difficulties with the set schedule of the retrieval and submission of their children's modules [6]. Text, call, and social media particularly on Messenger are the platforms that are being used by the parents to communicate with the teachers of their children. Most of them responded that the teachers of their children are approachable. However, some parents said that some teachers do not respond immediately to their queries and sometimes, they cannot be reached because of low internet connection.

Home Visits. This is the effort done by the teacher to consistently visit the student at home and spare a bit of moment to conduct an ample time of teaching and follow-ups of their performance. With this thing done once or twice a week, the students will be monitored and be given guidance as to the know-how of their schooling in this new learning modality. Home visits are done simultaneously during distribution of the printed modules. They take the chance of personally communicating with the parents and their children about their modular learning.

Teacher 1 shared that aside from distribution of modules, they do home visits at the same time. This is done to take advantage of the chance when they personally meet the parents and their learners. It is a good chance to check on the progress of their learners in general manner. Teacher's presence is very important and significant to both parents and their children. Such

act can feel that learners are remembered and encouraged to learn because they can see their teachers visiting them at their homes. She said "ang oras opo tapos yung teacher din dapat makita din satin na nag grabe man an concern nato sakanira na magtaga kadto man kita. I mean Constant visitation, Home visitation, and monitoring talaga sa bata ninda." (Teachers should show concern among their learners through home visits, constant visits and monitoring can make a difference during this distance learning.)

This means that since traditional way of teaching is now temporarily unapplicable amidst this pandemic, home visitation is one of the main concerns of all the teachers to continuously deliver the kind of education that they want to offer for consideration and acceptance. Through this consistent home visitation - student's performance, their strengths and weaknesses, have been continuously checked and evaluated, hence constant feedback will also be fairly given to each learner.

It would imply that this kind of strategy is a valuable tool to unceasingly monitor and follow-up, catch-up with the parents and students at home, update and evaluate the learner's performance and give the right guidance needed by the student. This further imply that students will not be put in vain though teachers seldom visit them at home; they are properly guided, motivated and inspired to do the learning tasks given by the teacher due to the presence and ample time shared to them.

Limited face-to-face to the Low Risks Area. During conferences, teachers already suggested to their school heads that since their places are not identified as high risk to COVID-19, they could do limited face-to-face classes. However, such idea was not entertained because it was not within the minimum health standards and the IATF guidelines.

Teachers, when visiting the learners at home to the specific barangay, gathered students in one house those who are very near to each other and do some teaching and learning sessions and academic activities. A group of three to five students has been doing some learning tasks prepared and given by the teacher; the usual classroom set-up where observed, collaboratively both the teacher and students are doing the teaching-learning process – discussion, recitation, reading activities, comprehension check, etc. – have been temporarily experienced.

Traditional way of teaching can be done temporarily observing the right health protocols to a place where there is very low risk of COVID cases. This will mean students will get directly the learning from their teacher

and immediately be given feedback to their academic performances for that day. The teacher discusses some part of the module lesson and explains some difficult learning concepts which the students encounter at hand. It would imply that both the teacher and students will benefit from this kind of practice. The teacher will no longer feel the insecurities, doubtfulness and guilty that they are not able to impart correctly the right education to the students. Likewise, students will surely learn the competencies and skills for the teacher shares communicatively the needed lesson for the day's lesson.

Training Parents to be Para-teachers. Teachers meet those parents who can really help do the teaching to their children and they provide basic inputs or information on the basic skills in teaching and assessing their children, the learners. The teachers update and inform parents of their role as teacher-partner-facilitator in this time of pandemic to their children.

This means that parents can be of great help to teachers in educating the learners. When parents are given with proper support and right way of facilitating their children at home to study by themselves, surely students can independently do their learning tasks. Moreover, parent as teacher-facilitator at home can guide, assist and motivate their children to develop a study habit and acquire good and right learning concepts. It would imply as well that as parent becomes a partner in educating the learner, proper education can be possibly realized. The fulfillment of teacher's goal in delivering the education to everyone will ensure a better understanding and recollection of lesson content.

It was reported that DepEd will provide training and orientation for parents and guardians who will supervise children's studies at home [10]. Parents will also need to prepare as they take on a "bigger role" now that most students will learn their lessons from home. In Iloilo City, DOLE-RO No. 6 through the Antique Field Office (AFO) hired 699 interns under the Government Internship Program (GIP) to assist the Department of Education (DepEd) in implementing the Distance Learning Delivery Modalities in the Province of Antique for SY 2020-2021. The initiative was implemented to address the challenges of Covid 19 pandemic.

Learning Support System. In a Distance Learning, Learning Support System one type of initiative by the teachers where different learning resources can be given to actualize the purpose of Learning Continuity Plan of the DepEd. According to Garrison and Baynton (1987), learner support come in the form of resources that learners can access in order to carry out the learning

processes [11]. This initiative is indeed important to contribute to the success of learning even in the absence of physical classroom. Supplementary materials and strategies need to be extended to make learning successful for the learners.

Because of the absence of appropriate technology to implement blended mode of learning, teachers have limited strategies to do when it comes to learning support system. They do with what they have at hand and maximize these present resources that they have. In this discussion, there are strategies that were noted in the transcripts that belonged to Learning Support System, namely: Scaffolding, Feedback and Counselling. Learning support is another critical component of an effective learning environment and focuses on what the teacher can do to help learners beyond the formal delivery of content and skills development [12].

Scaffolding. Since physical contact is restricted, one possible way of extending scaffolding activities among learners is done during home visit. During the checking of the retrieved modules and LAS, teachers note the learners who have poor performance in the module. When they have schedule during module and LAS distribution, teachers find time to teach the child one-on-one and face-to-face. Sometimes, this is done through a short video call so that teachers can explain directly to the learner what should be done. But this is limited because of poor internet connection. This initiative is helping some learners when they meet difficulties with their modules; however, this is only done on a case-to-case basis when teachers do home visit and not as frequent compared to traditional classroom.

Teachers pay visit to learners especially those that do not have cellphones to do calls and texts about their concerns. Some teachers cannot replace the manner of teaching in the classroom with that of the modular learning when talking about quality of learning. They love teaching in the classroom more than the manner of teaching in distance learning. But they could not do what they see are appropriate scaffolding activities to the observed learning behaviour of their learners because they are limited by the existing guidelines on minimum health protocols.

Because modules coming from the DepEd Central Office are quite difficult to some learners, what teachers do was to simplify these modules and eventually come up with their own LAS. Simplifying lesson is a scaffolding initiative for teachers to do. They scrutinize every module before distribution, check for typographic errors and identify difficult content that are basis for

revisions to simplify them. Also, if these modules are quite advance in terms of skills being taught, the teacher would resort to LAS making to fill the gap of knowledge of the learners so that they can proceed with the modules given by the DepEd.

These are some of the scaffolding that teachers do at this time the mobility is restricted and that teaching in a physical classroom is far from reality yet. But in any situations that teachers are into, they tried their best to come up with what they can do to address prevailing problems at their hands. Scaffolding activities normally take the form of personal interventions and communication between an instructor and an individual or a group of students, in face-to-face contexts or online. They tend not to be pre-planned [12]. They are usually a means of individualising the learning, enabling student differences in learning to be better accommodated as they occur.

Feedback. Feedback is seen to be a sub-category of scaffolding but it was separated because feedback has equally similar role in the Learning Support System. In a Distance Learning, feedback comes through individual manner because the input that teachers get out of the learner's performance can come mostly as qualitative assessment, not a formal one just like what one can get in a formal classroom setting. This feedback is manifested in the learner's query sheets as shared by Teacher 6. It is used to by both the learner and their parents to give feedback about the activities that the learner had done.

The individual learning monitoring plan is used to monitor learner progress based on the given intervention strategies. It guides teachers in adjusting learning content and tasks based on the characteristics, cognitive ability, readiness, interest, and profile of the learner. The teachers, parents and students use the individual and group monitoring tool to help decide on the effectiveness of the learning modality adopted for the learner and the possible modifications/adjustments that should be provided to improve learners' performance.

Teachers also used self-monitoring tools. They also utilize group chats via social media accounts to communicate for the purpose of giving feedbacks. This is used conveniently by those living in places with good internet access. PTA meetings are also done with small crowd of parents in a big room accommodation. During the meeting different concerns on the performance of the learners in the modules are being relayed to parents. Parents, too, on the other hand, give their feedbacks on the modules that they receive, whether learners are in

difficulty answering these materials or they may have emotional, mental, physical burdens why learners could not proceed with their modular learning. But good feedbacks are also relayed to parents and teachers during these PTA meetings.

Counselling. Counselling is a personal approach to learners and to parents who have difficulties in the new system of teaching today, the modular learning. Counselling is done as a learning support system to show support to the learner at times of difficulties and confusions in the module or in their studies in general. Parents, most especially those who cannot teach their children have poor support over their children's distance learning. Teachers are there to help them out. Profiling is important information for teachers to acquire because they can identify among their learners who need special support and constant counselling at this time of pandemic thus distance learning. Teacher 2 shared: Tinatanong ko kung bakit anong nangyari May problema ba pinupuntahan ko sila sir. (I really asked them why, what happened? Any problem? I approached them and do counselling.)

Teachers have multi-roles to play in the learning process. They do not only involve themselves to their learners but as well as to their parents and family. This can be a holistic approach in counselling. Orienting oneself to family background of their learners is an important thing to do because teachers can understand the manner of approach and counselling that they can do.

Challenges met by the English Teachers in the Distance Learning Modality

This pandemic has opted the DepEd to implement Modular Distance Learning as an ultimate choice to the desire that every learner should not be neglected of their chance to learn even amidst pandemic. The Philippines is still along the way of constructing and reconstructing the system to be able to establish policies and practices right enough to elevate quality of education. This juncture points towards the discussion of the different challenges encountered and experienced by the teachers while they are in the actual battlefield of education system and the frontliner to actualize education at this time of health crisis.

Health Conditions of the Teachers. Some of the teachers interviewed were at the retirement age and complained about the physical demands of the distance learning. Far from the usual traditional classroom, teachers now need to be mobile to go from house to house of their learners to distribute, retrieve, follow up

and do other learning support intitiatives. This require them to be physically fit since those who are allowed to go out by the IATF guidelines are those individuals who are at an appropriate age and with no other diseases because those who have frail health are prone to COVID 19 infections. Teacher 1 shared that she is already a senior citizen and with arthritis, it is difficult for her to do some physical movement. This restrains teachers from doing related jobs for distance learning.

Also, when going out of their houses, teachers put their health at risk because of the highly infectious disease such as the COVID-19. They encounter different people and they do not have any idea when and how COVID-19 will infect them. They are exposed to opportunities to be infected by such disease. As such, teachers never forget to comply with the minimum health protocols in their classroom and schools. Parents visit them most often; they mingle with their fellow teachers and with their school heads; schools officials pay visits to schools today to follow up programs and projects. These are chances when COVId-19 can affect them. There were already reported cases and deaths due to COVID-19 to teachers in Sorsogon Province.

Everyone's health is at risk at this time of health crisis. Even the health of the learners is at risk whenever teachers pay visit to them. This is the reason why physical attendance to classroom is restricted by the government; but, learning has to continue. Apparently, distance learning needs to be implemented, and teachers and school heads need to move and risk their lives for the purpose of learning continuity.

In addition, it is not only physical health that needs to be given attention to but mental, emotional, social and spiritual being of every individual. This new normal is not the situation familiar to everyone. It restricts so many about people's usual activities that may contribute to holistic health. But because of lockdown protocols, the confinement of homes haunts the well-being of every individual especially of children who might have not understood well what the world is actually confronted with.

Narez (2020) emphasized that schools need to address learner's mental health because they are spending more time alone, more time away from friends and teachers thus from sports, music, academic competitions and more [13]. They are more exposed to the news than they were before the pandemic; some are watching parents or guardians struggle to make ends meet. These events can be stressful for everyone, especially teenagers, who are learning to navigate their own lives during these unusual

and unpredictable times. Stress and anxiety are some conditions that trigger physical changes in the body and are connected to mental illness, like a little snowball, which, as it rolls, gets larger and larger. Eventually, it can trigger an emotional avalanche. After a while, we see students struggling and in need of professional help. To prevent things from getting to this stage, members of the school community must work together and lean on one another for support.

Weather Condition. Weather conditions can hamper the implementation of distance learning even more than the classroom learning. Teachers need to travel to deliver the printed modules from one house to another especially with critical coastal places in Bulan District. Teacher 1 shared that weather can really be disturbing and dangerous to teachers. Teacher 6 also added that during the location of the barangay can impose real danger to teachers during retrieval and distribution of the modules. However, school administrators are vigilant to this phenomenon especially when their school is located at a critical area. They immediately cancel all appointments of delivery and distribution of module when the weather is bad and when no safe mode of transportation can bring teachers to these places. Weather conditions can really be disturbing and treated as a challenge in the implementation of distance learning.

Issues on Printed Modules. Printed module was the primary learning tools in today's distance learning education delivery. Since these are used on home-based studies, parents are the ones who noticed the errors and lapses in it. One issue is the level of contents and skills contained in the module. Overwhelming activities are also an issue in the modules distributed. Many parents complained that they could not understand the instruction and the lesson in the module much more their children. They observed that their children have difficult times answering the modules because the activities and the activities are difficult for them to understand. In this way, teachers revise the content of the module through LAS. If modules do not fit the learners, they tend to answer modules for compliance purposes only and not for learning. One teacher shared that modules are answered by the learners just for the sake of compliance and not really on their attempt to learn.

The use of language is also one big issue especially with subjects that must be taught in the local vernacular for primary grade level. Modules are written in other vernacular that is hard for the learners to understand. Teachers have to revise to apply the localization and contextualization of the modules to be used especially with elementary grade learners. Language is a tool for learning. When learners could not understand the language beings used, it might fail the kind of learning that is expected of them.

Oftentimes, printed modules are not interesting to learners. Learners want their modules and LAS to be colorful and attractive – more pictures and fewer texts. Teacher 1 said that learners are motivated to do their modules because of the pictures, graphs and diagrams in it that mostly contained in Araling Panlipunan, Science and MAPEH; while in English, texts are mostly used because they need to read. This made learners less attracted and they become lazy to answer their modules.

Home Situation and Parents' Educational Background. Sometimes parents encounter problems in teaching their children because they too need to be educated and need some help hence, they are illiterate. Not most of the parents have the capacity to help educate the learners; they find difficulty in dealing with the given modules because of the many activities presented and tasks to be done. Teacher 2 said that one influential factor is how parents extend assistance to their children in answering their modules and LAS. If the parents are not well-educated, they tend to leave their children alone in answering the modules. If children could not feel the support of their parents, they tend to leave the modules unanswered and they become less interested to learning.

One advantage of learners in answering the module is to have their parents at least graduate in the secondary level; they experience guidance and academic support. Their parents serve as their teacher. Their parents can provide enough knowledge and strategy so that their children can understand the lesson in the modules. Most often with the parents who leave in far-flung places do not reach secondary level.

They have difficulty assisting their children in their modules. Learners go to someone who can help them instead. They can be their sisters, brothers, counsins, and neighbors. But still, it makes a difference if parents themselves are the ones who assist their children in replace of their teachers.

Parents become the teacher-facilitators at home; they need to be given pieces of advice in dealing with the new trend in the present learning modality amidst this pandemic. Nevertheless, parents need an orientation on basic skills to educate their children, some methodologies to be used, before they motivate and influence their children how important this education to them.

Expenses on Reproducing, Distributing and Retrieval of the Printed Modules. The expense of reproducing and distributing the printed modules has already exhausted the funds available to schools and teachers for the purpose, forcing teachers to dip into their own pockets to provide the materials for their students. As explained by the Teacher 2, the module required to be at the ratio of 1:1 which require extra expenses to teachers. Some schools have meagre budget for printing, bond paper and ink. Schools have no enough printers to accommodate the piles of documents to be printed. Teachers have to resource for these expenses; they use their own money only to provide learners with one copy of modules or LAS for each. This means that it does not only entail a big amount of money but also great effort for the reproduction and distribution of printed modules. It would imply that there is an urgent need for them to tap the stakeholders. Teachers must possess initiative, resourcefulness and perseverance specifically in the production and distribution of modules.

Teacher's Lack of Training in Conduct of the Distance Learning Delivery Modality. The teachers feel helpless in dealing with the new learning modality because of the different methodologies to be used and teachers are not aware of using it amidst this pandemic. They are culturally shocked about the new situation and they cannot cope up and do something to enhance the performance of the learners. Teachers are craving for the series of trainings for them to be updated and able to respond to the demands of this new learning modality in this time of pandemic. This enables the teachers to improve and develop their manner of teaching in a modular way of learning.

This means that every teacher needs coaching on what kind of strategies and methodologies to be used where students do not physically come to school. Teachers are at stake on what and how to deal with the students, remember the individualities of every learner mean a package of approaches. It would imply that as teachers they need to update always with the latest trends on the varied methodologies to be applied for in the different situations encountered for by every person involved in the educative process. The Department of Education is still in the process of adapting to the new normal form of education. It would imply that educators must have a continuous innovation of their methodologies to cater the needs of learners in the new normal schooling amidst this pandemic.

The finding is supported by the study in addition, according to Merillat & Scheibmeier, 2016 that lack of training is another deterrent in teaching at a distance

[14]. Often, formal training in online course design and development is not a part of the institutional infrastructure [15]. A faculty member who designs and teaches a distance learning course must possess sufficient knowledge and skills to perform the job [16]. Research has shown that professional development opportunities that are optimized to ensure that all distance learning faculty members are trained to use the appropriate technologies can help ease these fears.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The results revealed that English Teachers in elementary level strive to make their teaching responsive to the pandemic situation of the country. In the midst of the struggles in the work and family, teachers were able to do their duties and responsibilities. They initiate different related strategies so that they can address the shortcomings that their learners experience along learning. Despite their deficiencies to address the challenges in teaching on modular learning system, they still manage to do their duties and responsibilities as English Teachers. Challenges are likewise encountered and teachers may address them appropriately to overcome the burdens that they confront in conducting modular learning and ensure a success in the learning continuity that the DepEd is aiming for Filipino learners. Further researches on the different issues prevailing the education system in the country today may be conducted.

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