

CHALLENGES OF TEACHERS IN TEACHING TECHNOLOGY AND LIVELIHOOD EDUCATION (TLE) USING MODULAR DISTANCE LEARNING (MDL) IN NEW NORMAL



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ABSTRACT

This action research examined the challenges teachers face when teaching Technology and Livelihood Education (TLE) using modular distance learning in the new normal. A review of the literature was completed concerning the areas of expertise of teachers and the history of modular distance learning. The research question for the study was: What are the participants' challenges in teaching and assessing students in a modular distance learning class of TLE in the new normal? And how do they cope with the challenges of teaching and assessing students in a modular distance learning class of TLE in the new normal? The research design for the study was phenomenological qualitative research in interpretive design. Interviews were completed. The data were disaggregated according to themes and patterns. The participants of the study consisted of eight (8) participants' experiences of TLE teachers on modular distance learning in the Department of Education in the Division of the City of Biñan. After data collection, the researcher found six (6) common themes. Each of these themes was discussed in terms of supporting or not supporting the review of literature. The majority of the findings of the study, supported by participants, served as authentic guidelines for the study. The fact that teachers in the study felt a need for more professional development and community involvement was a major contradiction in the findings.

INTRODUCTION

Education is a continuous process where an individual acquires and imparts knowledge and skills to another. Education helps eradicate and break the cycle of poverty and hunger, giving people the chance at better lives. In low-income, developing countries, there is a projected 10 percent increase in a person's future income for every additional year of education (World Vision, 2021).

The COVID-19 pandemic practically changed both the local and global arenas of educational systems. Countries are continuously looking for and developing different strategies on how to deliver quality education. Lockdowns and staying home became the main strategies to flatten the curve and control the transmission of the disease (Sintema, 2020). Reviews of existing Department of Education (DepEd) policies have led the researcher to believe that the COVID-19 health crisis has exacerbated the delivery of education to learners in terms of quality educational access. This health issue has profoundly affected every identifiable sector— education, health, public service, industry, among others. The impact is felt more acutely in education, particularly as children and adolescents (WHO, 2020) have fewer resources for well-being, mental health, and coping strategies than adults.

The Philippines' Department of Education (DepEd), to pursue its

mandate of delivering quality education while coping with the demands of health protocols implemented by the Inter-Agency Task Force on Emerging Diseases (IATF), adopted the modular distance learning (MDL) approach across all programs. This MDL approach puts the programs of vocational education, especially the teaching of Technology Livelihood Education (TLE) as provided for in Republic Act 10647, at a disadvantage. TLE contributes meaningfully to the solutions of the problems of society such as unemployment, poverty, and malnutrition (Doucet et al., 2020). The TLE learning process, whose terminal objective is to instill skills among learners, requires traditional teaching or the face-to-face method. The MDL approach created two main problems for TLE teachers: how to teach skills among learners through modular distance learning and, secondly, how to objectively evaluate the growth and performance of learners.

Technology and Livelihood Education is considered a relevant subject area because of its practical and business advantages in building up society as it promotes life skills and ingenuity. This pandemic relegated TLE teaching-learning processes to Education Modular Distance Learning, which, in my personal view, continues to be educationally disadvantaged despite various policy programming and reprogramming to improve teaching-learning conditions and accurate teachers' evaluations of the

performance of students. Modular distance learning poses challenges for TLE teachers and learners in teaching and in the conduct of assessment, including limitations on giving immediate feedback and the need to account for different contexts in designing, implementing, and grading assessment tasks. The grading system, which is divided into two parts, is as follows: written work is worth thirty percent (30%), and the performance task is worth seventy percent (70%) (DepEd, 2021). It is used to keep track of the progress of the students in achieving the learning standards and in the development of 21st century skills, to promote self-reflection and personal accountability among students, and to provide a basis for the profiling of student performance.

METHODOLOGY

This study focused on the challenges facing TLE teachers in modular distance learning in the new normal situation. This included the personal accounts of TLE teachers' experiences in teaching and assessing the work skills acquired by the students in all public secondary schools in the Division of Biñan City, Laguna. The 8 teacher-informants will be selected from selected TLE teachers from Jacobo Z. Gonzales Memorial National High School, Biñan Integrated National High School, Dela Paz National High School, St. Francis Integrated National High School, Binan City Science and Technology National High School, Biñan Secondary School of Applied Academics,

Southville 5A Integrated National High School, and Mamplasan National High School, which are targeted participants in this study. The study was conducted during the school year 2021–2022.

This paper draws inspiration from a qualitative inquiry that was conducted during the implementation of modular distance learning by DepEd. This study used the phenomenological method in an interpretive qualitative approach. This was anchored on the stance of focusing on understanding the phenomenon being explored (Creswell, 2007; Creswell, 2013), namely, modular distance learning in the delivery of technological livelihood education among high school students, which begins with assumptions and applies an interpretive approach to its theoretical and conceptual framework. The interest of the research was the phenomenon of modular distance learning and the challenges facing TLE teachers in this phenomenon.

To elicit, negotiate, and construe the meanings from and among the teacher-participants, the researcher delved into the narratives of the challenges shared by TLE teachers through semi-structured interview guide questions. Such a technique possesses wide and deep power to elicit meanings and surface constructs, which is the primary aim of this qualitative research guided by personal construct theory (Glanvile, 2018).

This study was interested in exploring the challenges facing TLE

teachers as facilitators of modular distance learning and providers of learning resources. These strategies for learning and instruction were formed by implementing special education policies; however, as a result of CoVid-19, policies are being revisited to better address special education needs in the new normal. The goal was to transform participants' narratives about their challenges into coherent constructs that served as a foundation for recommending inputs to emergent special education policies. There were three (3) phases of gathering information, which included the preliminary interview, the actual interview, and the post-interview.

The gathered qualitative and empirical data were conducted by the TLE teachers of the eight (8) identified schools and analyzed using an interpretivist lens guided by constructivist philosophy. Using thematic analysis, the researcher strived to identify patterns of themes in the interview data (Mortensen, 2020). It is generally considered an effective data analysis tool because of its systematic approach to organizing interview data. This lessened the possibility of personal biases clouding the interpretation of data. It also made it easier to explain and convincingly assure the reliability of the findings and conclusions from the study. By means of the representation of TLE teachers' narratives of challenges, through which the meanings of the conversation were deduced by the researcher, she understood the challenges they faced

and the challenges for just and accurate evaluative assessments of the work skills acquired by the students.

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RESULTS

The challenges of the participants when it comes to teachers teaching TLE using the modular distance learning approach include confronting the reality of other teachers in different subjects and teaching with enthusiasm, even with an emotion, setting the mind right, and coming face-to-face with challenging learners or students.

The coping mechanisms of the participants to deal with the challenges and demands of teachers with their students' evaluations, the perk of collaboration, and their flexibility and resiliency are their composure and conviction, active collaboration with the school principals, which make things possible.

DISCUSSION

The reality of teachers teaching TLE using modular distance learning in the Philippines, as shared by the collective accounts of the selected participants in the public high schools in Binan City, Laguna, is an affirmation of a committed and devoted community of teachers who can confidently confront

and embrace a fact that they successfully dealt with through experience in welcoming various reactions, setting their mind right, and coming face to face with the students.

Although struggling in the early stages of the phenomenon, the participating teachers were resolute and ready to stand their ground by clinging to the power of composure and conviction, the perks of active collaboration, students' evaluations, and their own resilience and flexibility to make things possible. Irrefutably, teachers, which seem to be a disadvantage at first glance, can turn into a solution to a considerable extent since in the country, a lack of qualified and competent teachers teaching TLE using modular distance learning is still a rampant issue in the educational system, provided that teachers who have the right attitude display willingness to learn, relearn, and unlearn and to expand their knowledge horizons in order not to compromise the successful learning process of today's highly diverse learners' strata.

In this study, the researcher determined and analyzed the narratives of the experiences of TLE teachers who act as remote facilitators of learning. This had a big impact on the principal and school heads' views of the phenomenon of modular distance learning as now normal, provided insights on how the teachers strive to objectively evaluate students' performance, and provided insights into the reality (ontology) of this phenomenon as experienced by the

teachers as the basis for school policy formulation.

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