

Practices and perceptions in learning Araling Panlipunan using modular distance learning approach among Grade 9 students: Input to the preparation of supplementary learning materials

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Abstract: The key purpose of this research was to find out the modular distance learning approach practices employed by the Araling Panlipunan teachers, perceptions as to teaching and learning using this approach and the challenges encountered by the Grade 9 students of an integrated school in the Philippines. The study was descriptive type. Random sampling was used with a sample size of 99 Grade 9 students enrolled in SY 2022-2023. The data were collected and analyzed using weighted mean and percentage. The result scores shows that the support given by the Araling Panlipunan Teachers gave them the motivation to finish their modules, they are well-oriented as to the teaching and learning processes in this learning modality and the content of the module was the major challenge that they faced in this new set up.

Keywords: Modular Distance Learning Approach, Araling Panlipunan, Teaching and Learning

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INTRODUCTION

Education is a powerful tool for bringing about significant social change. According to former Education Secretary Leonor Magtolis Briones, "education must continue" despite the obstacles that the world is currently facing as a result of global health challenges.

As stipulated in the 1987 Philippine Constitution, Article XIV of Section 1, "The State shall protect and promote the right of all citizens to quality education at all levels and shall take appropriate steps to make such education accessible to all." Hence the issuance of DepEd Order No. 12 series 2020 or the Adoption of the Basic Education Learning Continuity Plan for SY 2020-2021 in Light of the Covid-19 Public Health Emergency. This underscores the immediate response of the education sector in response to the pandemic. Some notable changes were made to the K-12 curriculum, alignment of learning materials, deployment of numerous learning delivery modalities, provision of corresponding trainings for teachers and school leaders, and correct orientation of learners' parents and guardians.

The threat of the pandemic and other health related concerns raises concerns about the safety of students. Hence, the department issued the DepEd Order No. 37 s. 2022 or the Guidelines on the Cancellation or Suspension of Classes and Work in Schools in the event of natural disasters, power outages, and other calamities. As mentioned in this policy, protection to physical and psychosocial welfare of learners, personnel, and families should be ensured by providing guidance as such suspension of classes, giving interventions and defining roles and responsibilities.

As a result, several coping strategies were prepared and implemented by the schools to address these issues and ensure the safety of the learners, among the top solutions availed were shifting to blended learning or the combination of face-to-face classes and modular distance learning set up. Based on the survey conducted by Tinga Sorosoro Integrated School, it shows that 90% of the populace preferred the Modular distance learning due to the threat of virus and other health related concerns.

Technology solutions are very important in distance learning. Online platforms are regarded to be the most advanced because of its ability to facilitate various interactive and remote activities and carry a broad range of content to a connected community. These are some features which lacked the community where TISISI is located that is why learners and parents agreed to apply the 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 television (TV)/Radio-Based Instruction. Particularly, modular distance learning involves individualized instruction which allows learners to use learning modules in print or digital format, whichever is applicable in the context of the learner, and other learning resources like learner's materials, textbooks, activity sheets, study guides, and other study materials. Learners access electronic copies of learning materials on a personal computer (PC), tablet PC, or smartphone. CDs, DVDs, USB storage, and computer-based applications can all be used to deliver e-learning materials, including offline ebooks (DO 12 s. 2020).

The teacher takes the responsibility of monitoring the progress of the learners. The learners may ask assistance from the teacher via email, telephone, text message/instant messaging, etc. Where possible, the teacher shall do home visits to learners needing remediation or assistance. Any member of the family or other stakeholders in the community need to serve as para-teachers.

Araling Panlipunan is the learning area that lays most stress on the development of social awareness, empathy, and firm commitment to our common goal as a nation. It entails the use of integrated units, which enable the individual to personally process, assimilate, and systematically practice wide range of values and life skills including work ethic. With its grading system that relies 50 percent on performance tasks, this new normal set up is really a big challenge.

The researcher was motivated to conduct this study to find out students' challenges and perceptions in learning Araling Panlipunan using modular distance learning approach. Hence, the researcher also sought solutions that could further help the Grade 9 students in understanding economic concepts since it must use theoretical and scientific approaches in understanding its concepts.

Statement of the problem

This study aimed to determine the modular distance learning approach employed by the Araling Panlipunan teachers in an integrated school in the Philippines.

Specifically, this study sought answer to the following questions:

- 1) What practices were employed by the teachers in modular distance learning modality in Araling Panlipunan 9?
- 2) What are the students' perceptions in a modular distance learning approach in Araling Panlipunan 9?

METHODOLOGY

Research design

The study used a descriptive method of research. The researcher employed random sampling to gather responses from 99 Grade 9 students taking Araling Panlipunan 9 at Tinga Sorosoro Integrated School. Data collection involved a researcher-made questionnaire and informal interviews .

The study was conducted at Tinga Sorosoro Integrated School, located in Sorosoro, Ibaba, Batangas City, Philippines. The respondents were 99 Grade 9 students from different sections enrolled in Araling Panlipunan 9 during the school year 2022-2023. Consent from the school principal, parents, and students were sought prior to the conduct of this study. Likewise, the students were informed that their participation in this study would be voluntary and that their identity will be concealed.

Research instruments

The primary instrument used for data collection was a researcher-made questionnaire. Additionally, informal interviews were conducted to gather more in-depth information. The questionnaire included items to measure various aspects related to the modular distance learning approach, such as students' demographic profiles, perceptions of teaching and learning, and the challenges they encountered.

Data analyses procedure

The data collected in the study were analyzed using various statistical treatments to provide a comprehensive understanding of the results. The primary methods of analysis included frequency, percentage, ranking, and weighted mean. These techniques allowed for a detailed examination of the responses from the participants. The study utilized a specific rating scale to interpret the weighted mean, categorizing responses into four levels: "Strongly Agree" (3.50 – 4.00), "Agree" (2.50 – 3.49), "Disagree" (1.50 – 2.49), and "Strongly Disagree" (1.00 – 1.49). This structured approach enabled the researcher to quantify the perceptions and challenges encountered by the Grade 9 students in the modular distance learning setup effectively.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Instructional practices in modular distance learning approach in Araling Panlipunan 9

The researcher observed that the teachers provided support to the learners through motivation before they answer the module with a weighted mean of 3.30 and interpreted as agree. Motivation increases students' learning. Students' learning can increase because of their own innate desires to perform or accomplish a task (Theobald, 2006). Teachers can increase students' motivation to learn by support of students' autonomy, relevance, relatedness, competence, teachers' interests in the subject, and self-efficacy (Ferlazzo, 2015). Though motivation can be intrinsic or extrinsic, it is important for teacher to create an environment that motivates students' learning.

Second, the Teacher sends appropriate audio or video for better understanding of the lesson with a weighted of 3.28 and interpreted as agree. The K to 12 curriculum is boosted with various skills that makes every Filipino learners holistically developed. One of which is the information, media and technology skills. Based on the Republic Act 10533, this skill allows the learners to navigate the fluid and dynamic environment of knowledge creation and acquisition.

In today's time, it is a must for the teachers to use audios and videos in presenting lessons. Targamadze and Petrauskiene, 2010 said that the extant educational literature has proven the positive effect of using new technologies as a support tool for enhancing learning efficacy. These technologies capture students' attention as students are familiarized with them and they can easily use these tools. Furthermore, Folley (2010) stated that, as students' progress through academic levels, the perceived importance of lectures declines as students

gradually become independent learners. Thus, alternative teaching methods that are more interactive increase in importance.

Meanwhile, the teacher provides assessments which are within the content of the topic that was discussed ranked third with a weighted mean of 3.25 and interpreted as agree. Assessment is an integral part of educational process. Panadero et al. (2016) defined assessment as a wide variety of mechanisms and techniques through which students describe (i.e., assess) and possibly assign merit or worth to (i.e., evaluate) the qualities of their own learning processes and products. This is a good manifestation that the teacher is providing timely and relevant assessments to grade the outputs of the students.

On the other hand, fourth in rank was the teacher prepares self-directed learning materials which is within the ability of the learners with a weighted mean of 3.24 and interpreted as agree. This was followed by the teacher supplies supplementary materials to broaden the knowledge on the topic, checks activities with comments and suggestions to improve outputs and manages records and return learners records on time, all tied in ranked sixth with a weighted mean of 3.23 and interpreted as agree.

Ranked eight was the teacher provides immediate feedbacks on questions and activities of the learners to improve academic performance with a weighted mean of 3.22 and interpreted as agree. Feedback is considered as a vital approach to facilitate students' development as independent learners to monitor, evaluate, and regulate their own learning (Ferguson, 2011). According to Yorke (2003), good feedback practice can not only provide useful information to the students in improving their learning, but also can offer decent information to teachers which is eventually improve the learning experience for the students.

Then, the teacher applies appropriate strategy in the delivery of the lesson which ranked ninth with a weighted mean of 3.19 and interpreted as agree. In this new normal set up, specially that the school is implementing modular distance learning approach. The teachers feel the dilemma of applying various strategy in teaching compared when the set up is face to face. However, it is good to note that Grade 9 students were still seeing their Araling Panlipunan teachers applies several strategies in teaching.

Last in rank was the teacher uses interactive media such as teleconferencing and video calls to explain concepts. The teachers seldom used teleconferencing and video calls to reach students because the school is under the modular distance learning. Another modality offered by the Department of Education in this new normal set up is the online distance learning. But because of the unavailability of internet connections to majority of the learners this was not pushed through.

Overall, it registered a composite mean of 3.24 and interpreted as agree. Meaning to say, students were able to witness how teachers makes education possible in this new normal set up. This also indicates that the trainings given by the Department of Education in the different learning modalities were being applied by the teachers in AralingPanlipunan.

Perceptions of Grade 9 students in modular distance learning in terms of teaching and learning

The data presents the perceptions of Grade 9 students in Modular Distance Learning in terms of Teaching.

Majority of the students perceived that in modular distance learning teachers will send a copy of print or digital format of the learning materials in different subjects with a weighted mean of 3.41 and interpreted as agree. Based on Deped Order No. 12 s. 2020, modular distance learning modality may need to really send materials in digital format or print copy. In the Basic Learning Continuity Plan implemented by the school, both printed, and digital

copies of module is applied. Printed modules and weekly home learning plan in all learning areas were distributed and the soft copies that can be found in their tablets.

The teacher will supplement learning materials such as textbooks, activity sheets, study guides and other materials was second in rank with a weighted mean of 3.38 and interpreted as agree. There is potential for print material to serve as either the primary source for course instruction or as a supplementary source – i.e. textbooks or other printed required readings. In this case, communication via email or other electronic means could be utilized for student questions, assignment submissions, and instructor feedback.

Tied in rank 3.5 is the student's perception that the communication will be in the form of online means such as email, chat, and text messages and The teacher uses rubrics provided in the module in assessing the students answer with a weighted mean of 3.33 and interpreted as agree. Evidently, it is really the practice of Tinga Sorosoro Integrated School. Communications were all online via messenger and thru calls and text messages and rubrics can also be found in every activity sheet where there is a performance task.

Then ranked fifth is their perceptions that the teacher will implement individualized instructions that allows learners to answer their self-learning modules with a weighted mean of 3.31 and interpreted as agree. This was followed by their perceptions that the parents and other family members will serve as para-teachers in the learning process with a weighted mean 3.30 and interpreted as agree. Moreover, ranked seventh is their perceptions that the teacher responsibly monitors the progress of the learners this garnered a weighted mean of 3.27 and interpreted as agree. Last in rank was their perceptions that the teacher will conduct home visitation to check on the performance of the students with a weighted mean of 3.23 and interpreted as agree.

The composite mean of 3.32, interpreted as agree shows that learners were able to understand the new normal set up when it comes to the role of the teachers in modular distance learning approach. This further indicates that they agree to the approaches that is being applied by their teachers.

In terms of the perceptions of the students in modular distance learning, it can be gleaned that most of the respondents perceived that they are aware of the use of weekly home learning plan and some materials that my teachers sent this has weighted mean of 3.29 and interpreted as agree. According to DO 12, s. 2020, the weekly home learning plan shall be prepared by the teachers and shall aid the learners and parents in implementing modular distance learning. It shall be communicated through the parents for their reference and guidance.

More so, Grade 9 students perceived that they are knowledgeable on how to search information on the internet when the lesson is hard and they can ask for help among their family members about the tasks that they cannot do alone. This tied in ranked 2.5 with a weighted mean of 3.26 and interpreted as agree respectively. This conforms the findings of Calvo-Porrall et.al (2019) that generation X individuals are mainly driven by utilitarian purposes and information search. They mainly use technology for this purpose unlike the millennials which is more on hedonistic purposes.

Fourth in rank is their perceptions that they are confident that their teachers are always available to assist them in answering modules with a weighted mean of 3.19 and interpreted as agree. This was followed by their statement that they are responsible enough to accomplish weekly tasked since this is self-paced. It garnered a weighted mean of 2.61 and agree. While, setting their own schedule in finishing the tasks in the module was ranked sixth with a weighted mean of 2.55 and interpreted as agree. They also revealed that they have their own way of learning what is in the module.

Meanwhile, the students responded Disagree to the statement that they can easily grasp the content in the module. It registered a weighted mean of 2.35. Based from the

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interview conducted, they were able to witness the errors in the modules, they also observed some confusing activities in the modules and they have also noticed the limited discussions or content of the modules.

The composite mean of 2.88, interpreted as agree is a testimony that Grade 9 students are willing to learn despite the new normal situation. However, it also indicates that they really have a big needs when it comes to attaining the learning outcomes.

Towards the development of a supplementary learning material

In order to address the problems encountered by the Grade 9 Araling Panlipunan students the researcher prepared a supplementary material, which aimed to help students deepen their learning in this subject area. The researcher aligned the supplementary materials in the Department of Education's Most Essential Learning Competencies (MELCs) which can be an accompanying tool to help learners improve their performance in class.

Since Araling Panlipunan is more on performance tasks, the researcher decided to create activities that is performance-based and can fit with the different learning styles of the learners. Hence, the researcher also enhanced the content of the material, making concepts clearer so that learners can be more familiar with the economic terminologies. There is also a balanced number of activities per week and the researcher also included real-life scenario and activities that can be participated by family members like surveys, budgeting allowances and more. Thus, household chores may not be a problem since some are also incorporated like taking a grocery, making a market list and more.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATION

The common perception of Grade 9 students regarding the modular distance learning approach reveal is that, in terms of teaching, teachers send copies of learning materials in both print and digital formats for various subjects. In terms of learning, students are aware of the use of weekly home learning plans and other materials provided by their teachers. However, the primary challenge faced by the Grade 9 Araling Panlipunan students in modular distance learning is the difficulty of the activities.

To address these issues and deepen students' understanding of Araling Panlipunan, the researcher developed supplementary learning materials. These materials are anchored in the Most Essential Learning Competencies (MELCs), ensuring that they are relevant and beneficial for the students' educational needs.

In light of the above conclusions, several recommendations are proposed. Firstly, the output of this study should be submitted to the learning resource division for validation and evaluation. If approved, it could be utilized by various schools within the Schools Division to address the challenges faced by learners. Furthermore, Araling Panlipunan teachers should orient parents on effective teaching strategies that can be applied at home, recognizing their critical role as paraprofessional teachers in the modular distance learning setup. Additionally, providing video-based lessons could further support learners in their home studies. Finally, it is recommended that Araling Panlipunan teachers continue to develop and implement best practices to cultivate a greater love for the subject among students.

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