

MODULAR DISTANCE LEARNING AND ITS CHALLENGES

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Education builds the person's intellectual well-being in which successful execution of the teaching-learning process bridges the development of a person's ability to face the journey of life. In a time of any crisis like the current pandemic, teachers and learners are in the midst of challenging circumstances for the delivery and acquisition of the desired learning and skills. The implications hereby built strategies to continue the education despite the threat caused by the virus and its negative effect in the learning community: teachers, learners, and learning institutions. The strategy must have the potential to provide the needs of learners by equipping teachers with the technical skills to push through the learning.

Thinking of how to safely continue the education where everyone is at risk of getting the virus leads to adopting different learning modalities: Printed Modular, Digital Modular, Online, Educational TV, Radio-Based Instruction (RBI), Home Schooling and Blended Learning. Different learning modalities caught challenges of disapprovals because of the risk a pandemic could bring but with the systematic actions of the Department of Education and the help from other sectors, modalities have been implemented. Choosing the right modality to be adopted comes with the learning institution's capability in sustaining the materials for learners and teachers and the students' capacity to connect with the teachers' instruction with the help of their parents or guardians.

Modular Distance Learning leads learners in using self-learning modules (SLMs) in print or digital format and other learning resources such as Students' Modified

Learning Materials aligned with the MELCs, textbooks, activity sheets for written works, and performance tasks, study guides, and other learning materials. The responsibility of the teachers is generally to monitor the learning development of the students. The teachers also provide the learners the chances of asking assistance which could be thru email, telephone, text message, instant message, and others. Adopting modular distance learning requires all teachers to prepare learner's answer sheets, develop Weekly Home Learning Plan (WHLP) as a guide for students to follow in accomplishing the tasks for the assigned subject with the allotted time per day, check the retrieved answer sheets, provide feedbacks on students' outputs, prepare the learners' Intervention Materials to help the students who are having a hard time answering the activities in SLMs, monitor learners' learning development and answer parents'/ guardians' inquiries regarding with the lessons.

Considering the learners to learn best in all possible ways makes teachers execute full efforts to maintain the students' drives to accomplish all the tasks at hand. Modular distance learning contributes to teaching the learners how to properly adapt to change. Learners learn to become flexible with the changes in the learning environment for the academic set - up is far different from face-to-face classes. Parents and guardians see their value as they play a significant role in the learning of their children. They realize that teaching is not an easy task to handle and managing students' behavior requires depth understanding.

Modular distance learning streams new learning development in students' knowledge and skills as well as in the learners' behavior but still faces some challenges. Production, allocation, and distribution of self-learning modules to public schools have been the major issue in continuing education in this time of the pandemic. According to DepEd Secretary Leonor Briones, the SLMs, together with the different alternative learning delivery modalities, are managed to address the needs, present conditions, and available resources of every learner. The SLMs will also be used to cover all the bases in

ensuring that basic education will be accessible amid the present crisis caused by COVID-19. Though education sectors work hard to comply in producing self-learning modules, public schools still meet an insufficient number of SLMs which caused some teachers to shoulder the production of materials. For some students who belonged to printed modular, poor internet connection and lack of gadgets to use hinder the learners from properly managing their learning.

In modular distance learning, students are provided a time frame for the completion of activities which caused them to just comply for formality purposes without executing a true sense of commitment toward learning. Parents who become the learning coaches face challenging roles as they guide their children, especially those who are confirmed illiterate, working, and have low-digital knowledge in using computers. Thus, parents with children in higher grades are having difficulties teaching complicated lessons. Managing learners' behavior while studying the lessons is a burden on parents' side; and to avoid such a scenario, parents tend to answer students' activities in place of the learners.

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Education in the present pandemic is new to everyone. Facing the reality comes with accepting challenges in the learning environment with appropriate recommendations and suggestions to address good results. Production of adequate self-learning modules must be properly coordinated to all schools. Parents and teachers should be aware of the roles they play and their responsibilities in helping the learners for efficient and effective learning development. Also, parents must exert extra patience in teaching their children. Teachers should provide follow-up instructions as an intervention for students who are having challenges learning the lessons. Make sure not to bombard the learners with lots of activities to do, this will lessen the students' and teachers' daily work.

References:

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