

# LIVED EXPERIENCES OF TEACHERS IN IMPLEMENTING MODULAR DISTANCE LEARNING IN THE PHILIPPINE SETTING

## EXPERIÊNCIAS VIVIDAS DE PROFESSORES NA IMPLEMENTAÇÃO DA APRENDIZAGEM A DISTÂNCIA MODULAR NO AMBIENTE FILIPINO

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Received: 20/09/21

Accepted: 25/09/21

Published: 28/09/21

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**Abstract:** COVID-19 pandemic posed various challenges and issues in the education system in the country. The pandemic forced the schools to temporarily close to contain the spread of the virus. Thus, the School Year 2020-2021 became the “new normal” of education where traditional in-person learning shifted into distance learning which threatened not only the parents and learners but most especially the Department of Education. The pandemic created challenges to the Department of Education on what they can do to ensure that though the delivery of learning changes, the quality of the education remains the same. The study is qualitative research with a phenomenology research design. It was conducted to explain the lived experiences of Teachers in Implementing Modular Distance Learning. Specifically, this aims in discussing the experiences and challenges encountered by the teachers in implementing the MDL as part of the “New Normal”. Purposive sampling was used in selecting 5 teachers that participated in the study. The researcher used online interviews through Google forms and Messenger calls to seek in-depth information that revealed the lived experiences of the teachers in implementing modular distance learning modality. Colaizzi’s 1978 method of data analysis was utilized to analyse and interpret the results of this study. Findings from the study showed themes based on the experience of teachers in implementing MDL. Through the result of this study, SDO- Alaminos City may utilize the results in designing various Professional Development Programs/training that would enhance the capability of teachers and provide a support system to teachers during modular distance learning

**Keywords:** Modular Distance Learning. Teachers. New Normal. COVID-19. Lived Experiences.

**Resumo:** A pandemia COVID-19 trouxe vários desafios e questões ao sistema educacional do país. A pandemia obrigou as escolas a fecharem temporariamente para conter a propagação do vírus. Assim, o Ano Escolar 2020-2021 tornou-se o “novo normal” da educação, onde a aprendizagem presencial tradicional mudou para o ensino à distância, o que ameaçou não apenas os pais e alunos, mas principalmente o Departamento de Educação. A pandemia criou

desafios para o Departamento de Educação sobre o que eles podem fazer para garantir que, embora a oferta de aprendizagem mude, a qualidade da educação permaneça a mesma. O estudo é uma pesquisa qualitativa com um desenho de pesquisa fenomenológica. Foi conduzido para explicar as experiências vividas por Professores na Implementação do Ensino à Distância Modular. Especificamente, pretende-se discutir as experiências e desafios encontrados pelos professores na implementação do MDL como parte do “Novo Normal”. A amostragem intencional foi usada na seleção de 5 professores que participaram do estudo. A pesquisadora utilizou entrevistas online por meio de Google forms e Messenger calls para buscar informações aprofundadas que revelassem as experiências vividas pelos professores na implantação da modalidade modular de ensino a distância. O método de análise de dados de Colaizzi de 1978 foi utilizado para analisar e interpretar os resultados deste estudo. Os resultados do estudo mostraram temas baseados na experiência dos professores na implementação do MDL. Por meio do resultado deste estudo, SDO-Alaminos City pode utilizar os resultados na concepção de vários Programas / treinamento de desenvolvimento profissional que aumentariam a capacidade dos professores e forneceriam um sistema de apoio aos professores durante o ensino à distância modular.

Palavras-chave: Ensino à Distância Modular. Professores. Novo Normal. COVID-19. Experiências Vividas.

## INTRODUCTION

The COVID-19 pandemic has led to the largest disruption of education. In mid-July, schools were closed in more than 160 countries, affecting over 1 billion students. At least 40 million children worldwide have missed out on education in their critical pre-school year. (United Nations, 2020)

The COVID-19 pandemic posed major challenges and problems in various sectors of the country. Health protocols like physical distancing and neighborhood quarantine were imposed. Schools and other learning facilities are being forced to close in order to contain the spread of the virus. As a result, the School Year 2020-2021 is marked as the start of the “New Normal Education” system.

“New Normal Education” system serves as the transition phase from in-person learning to distance learning. This setup of education threatened the learners, parents, and most especially the Department of Education as it aims to deliver quality education. In response, the Department of Education issued DepEd Order 12, s.2020 dated June 19, 2020, entitled “Adoption of the Basic Education Learning Continuity Plan for School Year 2020-2021 in light of the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency” which presents the Department developed

Basic Education Learning Continuity Plan (BE-LCP), a package of education interventions that will respond to the basic education challenges brought by COVID-19 which ensures the health, safety, and well-being of all learners, teachers, and personnel of the Department while finding ways to keep education continue amidst the current crisis.

In accordance with the DepEd Order No. 12, s. 2020, the Department of Education employs multiple learning delivery modalities (LDMs) to ensure the continued provision of learning opportunities to learners while protecting the health and safety of both personnel and learners. This can be done through blended learning, distance learning, and home-schooling.

The Department of Education ensures that all learners have access to quality Basic Education. They distributed Self Learning Modules (SLMs) that are used by the learners together with the modalities suited for them. According to Department of Education Secretary Leonor Briones “The Self Learning Modules and the other alternative learning delivery modalities are in place to address the needs, situations, and resources of each and every learner and covers all the bases in ensuring that basic education is accessible amid the present crisis posed by COVID-19,”. The claim is in line with the result of a study conducted by Creus and Angeles (2019) where they found out that Module-based localized learning materials resulted in increased performance of most learners. (Espineli, 2021)

Learning through printed and digital modules emerged as the most preferred distance learning method of parents who enrolled their children in the school year 2020-2021, based on a survey conducted by the Department of Education (DepEd). During the 45-day enrollment period in public schools that ended July 15, 2020 parents and guardians were made to answer the DepEd's Learner Enrollment and Survey Form. It asked them about their preferred alternative learning mode, and sought to profile the enrollee's readiness for distance education. Survey results released by the DepEd showed that 8.9 million parents preferred modular distance learning, where students at home would study through self-learning modules. Over 4 million parents chose blended learning, which is a combination of learning through modules, online classes, television and radio, according to the survey results. Online learning was the third most preferred modality, picked by 3.4 million parents, followed by educational TV, chosen by 1.3 million. Around 6.5 million parents that took the survey said they have a way to connect to the internet while 6.3 million said otherwise. Over 3.4 million survey respondents said they have an internet connection at home. More than 3.6 million respondents said they

have television without cable at home, while nearly 2.6 million said they have television with cable. The survey also showed some 937,000 parents chose radio-based instruction, while a little over half a million picked "other modalities," which was unspecified. (Jaehwa Bernardo-ABS-CBN News, 2021)

The Schools Division of Alaminos City offers two types of learning modalities, Online Distance Learning (ODL) and Modular Distance Learning (MDL) to address the needs of the learners while they are geographically away from one another. Online Distance Learning (ODL) is for learners who have access to the internet and can afford to buy gadgets for online classes and also are given modules in case the internet connection alters. Meanwhile, Modular Distance Learning (MDL) is for learners who have no gadgets for online learning and have a poor internet connection in their area. Considering the given factors, Modular Distance Learning (MDL) is the most common learning modality used by teachers in the Schools Division of Alaminos City. Modular Distance Learning involves individualized instruction that allows learners to use SLMs 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.

In the study of Wigati, Maharta, & Suyatna (2015) as cited by Rahmawati, Lestari, and Umam (2021) further explained that "module is a learning tool in written form that is arranged systematically, contains learning material, methods, learning objectives based on basic competencies or indicators of achievement of competencies, instructions for self-learning activities, and provides opportunities for students to test yourself through the exercises presented in the module".

Each SLM contains the learning competencies that should be learned by the learners. It contains an activity which aims to check what the learners already know about the lesson. It includes drill or review to help the learners link the current lessons with the previous one. There is a portion which introduces the new lesson. It also has a brief discussion of the lesson and activities for independent practice. It contains tasks to help the learners evaluate their level of mastery in achieving the learning competency. It has an activity which aims to enrich the learner's knowledge or skill of the lesson learned. The last part contains the answers to all the activities in the module. (Gonzales,2021)

The use of modules also encourages independent study. It directs students to practice or rehearse information. To gain mastery of the concepts, exercises are given following the progression of activities from easy to difficult. The arrangement of the exercises as such formalizes the level of difficulty that the learners can perform. Another benefit of using modules for instruction is the acquisition of better self-study or learning skills among students. Students engage themselves in learning 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 the teacher, the learners progress on their own. They are learning how to learn; they are empowered. (Nardo, 2017)

In modular distance learning, the role of the teacher shifted from traditional lecturing in-person models into remote learning environments. Teachers need to adapt their practices to keep their students engaged to effective and efficient learning as every household has become a classroom. Teachers are also responsible for monitoring the progress of the learners. They address the queries of their students through text messaging, phone calls, messenger chats, and calls. They also conduct home visitation to provide instructional support to the learners or any member of the family who serves as home facilitator. As in-person learning is put to a halt, the teacher's crucial role in delivering learning is conspicuous.

The majority of public school students—from 66% to as much as 86%—learned less under the remote learning set up which was implemented due to the COVID-19 pandemic, a poll conducted by the Movement for Safe, Equitable, Quality and Relevant Education (SEQuRE Educ Movement) showed. The poll, done on 1,299 public students across the country and presented by Professor Lizamarie Olegario of the University of the Philippines' College of Education, revealed that the highest percentage of those who learned less under remote learning at 86.7% was recorded among the ranks of those under the modular learning or those who study based on printed modules. In addition, 52% of teachers said four to six in every 10 students lagged behind in terms of class attendance and submission of class requirements. The polls were conducted from June 25 to July 2. (Llanesca T. Panti-GMA News, 2021)

Though the Department of Education ensures that teachers have a support system in the implementation of modular distance learning to provide quality Basic Education to all learners, there are a lot of challenges and problems that the school and teachers experienced

while implementing modular distance learning. In light of this, the researcher saw the need and relevance to see the lived experiences of the teachers in the implementation of Modular Distance Learning at SDO-Alaminos City.

## RESEARCH METHOD

### Research Design

This paper utilized qualitative research with a phenomenology research design. The phenomenological design describes the interpretations of the participants from their experiences. It was mentioned in the study of Giorgi (2009) as cited by Espineli (2021) that phenomenological research culminates in the essence of the experiences for several individuals who have all experienced the phenomenon. This research project focused on the lived experiences of teachers in modular distance learning.

### Participants of the Study

The selection of the participants employed the non-probability sampling technique called purposive sampling. The participants were selected according to the needs of the study; they were the selected teachers of SDO-Alaminos City.

Participant	Age	Gender	Years in Service	Educational Attainment
Teacher A	27	Female	3	Baccalaureate Degree
Teacher B	26	Male	4	Doctorate Degree
Teacher C	38	Female	6	Baccalaureate Degree
Teacher D	23	Male	1	Master's Degree
Teacher E	45	Female	20	Master's Degree

### Data Gathering Instrument and Procedures

The sampling technique used is non-probability sampling, particularly the purposive sampling technique. The researchers collected data through online means. First, the researcher

sought permission to conduct the study from the Schools Division Superintendent. When the request to study was approved, the researcher sent a letter to the selected participants with attached interview questionnaires. When the participant accepted the invitation, the researcher set the most convenient time for an online interview through Google Meet, Zoom, Messenger Call or conference call. For those who opt for a written response, the Google Form link was sent to the participants. With the permission of the respondents, recorders were used throughout the online interview for better transcribing.

### **Qualitative Data Analysis**

In the analysis of collected data, the researcher utilized Colaizzi's (1978) method of data analysis. It is distinguished with a seven-step process that provides a rigorous analysis in each step closely related to the data. The result summarizes yet an inclusive description of the phenomenon under study directly from the respondents' mouths or points of view. The seven steps can be summarized through the following: (1) familiarization; (2) identifying significant themes; (3) formulating meanings; (4) clustering themes; (5) developing exhausted description; (6) producing the fundamental structure; and (7) seeking verification of the fundamental structure. (Balaza et al., 2021)

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

In studying the lived experiences of teachers in implementing Modular Distance Learning, qualitative means of the investigation were employed. Through an online interview, the lived experiences of teachers in implementing Modular Distance Learning were identified. The perspective of the teachers regarding some questions such as a) What has been your incomparable experience as a teacher during the implementation of modular distance learning for the S.Y. 2020-2021?; b) Based on the experiences mentioned, what inspired you to do it despite the fact that it is already not included in your scope of work or beyond your job description?; c) What has been your most significant realization as a teacher during the implementation of modular distance learning for S.Y. 2020-2021? served as a basis for the analysis of the data.

Teachers are taking on new roles in schools and their profession, in addition to rethinking their primary responsibility as directors of student learning. They collaborate with colleagues, families, politicians, academics, members of the community, employers, and others to set clear and achievable knowledge, skills, and values. They are actively engaged in decision-making in schools, collaborating to set priorities, and dealing with organizational issues that affect their student learning.

Based on the data extracted, the following themes emerged:

### **Theme 1: Challenges of Teachers in Transporting of Self-Learning Modules**

Steadfast in its preparation for School Year 2020-2021, the Department of Education (DepEd) will provide Self-Learning Modules (SLMs) with the alternative learning delivery modalities to be offered for various types of learners across the Philippines. The integration of SLMs with the alternative learning delivery modalities (modular, television-based, radio-based instruction, blended, and online) will help DepEd ensure that all learners have access to quality basic education for SY 2020-2021 with face-to-face classes still prohibited due to the public health situation. “The SLMs and the other alternative learning delivery modalities are in place to address the needs, situations, and resources of each and every learner and will cover all the bases in ensuring that basic education will be accessible amid the present crisis posed by COVID-19,” DepEd Secretary Leonor Briones said. SLMs are delivered in printed format to schools that are located in coastal areas, far-flung provinces, and communities without access to the internet or electricity. For households with gadgets and devices, the Department has announced that SLMs can also be accessed online or offline. (Department of Education- Press Release, 2020)

In contrast, self-learning modules were transported from the Central Office to the Division Office. Then, teachers with the help of stakeholders like the Parent-Teacher Association and Barangay Council will transport modules from the Division Office to the respective schools. Some of the participants shared their experience in transporting self-learning modules from their division office to their respective schools.

Teacher D shared his experience in transporting modules,

“As a teacher from a far-flung school, the travel of getting modules from the division is really a great challenge. However, what made my experience as a teacher more challenging and I think was the unique ways we travel our modules by boat. Our School is surrounded by a wide sea and the way to our school is narrow and uncemented. That is why we used to pay for a boat to get our modules since it's heavy and we can't carry it using our motorcycles. This challenge made us more dedicated to do our task as a teacher.”



Picture 1. Teacher D with his co-teachers transporting modules.

Since in-person learning is not possible, self-learning modules are the modality used by most of the schools in the SDO Alaminos City. It is quite difficult to transport self-learning modules especially to remote areas within the division.

Table 1. Challenges of Teachers in Transporting Self- Learning Modules

<i>Significant Responses</i>	<i>Formulated Meanings</i>	<i>Clustered Themes</i>	<i>Emergent Themes</i>
“As a teacher from a far-flung school, the travel of getting modules from the division is really a great challenge. However, what made my experience as a teacher more challenging and I think was the unique ways we travel our modules by boat. Our School is surrounded by a wide sea and the way to our school is narrow and uncemented. That is why we used to pay for a boat to get our modules since its heavy and we can't carry it using our motorcycles. This challenge made us more dedicated to do our task as a teacher.”	Teachers from remote areas are facing challenges and issues in getting modules from the division office. Teachers create ways to address these challenges.	Challenges and Issues of Teachers in Getting Modules from Division Office to Schools in Remote Areas	Transporting of Self-Learning Modules from Division Office to Schools Remote Areas

## **Theme 2: Constant Monitoring of Learner's Progress**

One of the biggest challenges of modular distance learning during the COVID-19 pandemic crisis is to monitor the progress of the learners. The lack of physical contact and difficulties of communication on digital devices are the underpinning factors on the struggles of the teachers to keep track of the learning progress of the students. In the study of Mean Chin (2021) as cited by Park (2021) it is stated that the open communication between the teacher to students and/or teacher to parents/guardians is also part of the norm. This is to ensure and monitor the progress of the students at home. Just the thought of studying at home gives students the eerie feeling of freedom and luxury of being less pressured. Conversely, this modular distance learning has certain adversities to both parents and students.

Teacher A shared her experience of monitoring the students.

*“In the first 3 months, the flow of our setup was good but there were times my student didn't finish but*



*somehow before the grading period ended, he submitted. Then came the time when I couldn't reach him at their house because he was working- hauling and crushing rocks. In that case, I just leave it to his sister-in-law. However, it was not effective because he could not go home, the child had already stayed in with his siblings and mother at their workplace. The child couldn't submit any more activities. For that reason, I went to the student and looked for his situation. There, I interviewed her mother about how they work and why even children work which they shouldn't, especially that he is neglecting her studies. Since then, I have been delivering the SLMs and activities in the student's workplace. When I can't go inside the workplace, I just leave the activities to his sister-in-law.”* Teacher B also shared his experience, *“During the implementation of modular distance learning, I have experienced delivering modules and monitoring my students who live in a very remote area”*.

*Picture 2. Teacher B monitoring and delivering SLMs to student in remote area*

Furthermore, Teacher C also cited a common experience in monitoring the progress of the students. *“In this kind of modality that we are using, it is very difficult to monitor the learning progress of my pupils. Together with my fellow teachers, we conducted home visitation to conduct instructional support to our pupils and home facilitators. It is not an easy journey because we need to cross creeks between mountains, as well as we need to cross hanging bridges just to cross a river. We also climb*



*mountains and walk for almost 6 kilometers in 4 hours. It is the only way that we can reach our learners who are living in the areas that are not reachable by any kind of vehicle, especially those who are living in the mountains.”*

Picture 3. Teacher C crossing hanging bridge to reach learners in remote areas

The great inequities in access to technology, connectivity and electricity both within and between countries mean that multiple delivery channels for remote learning are needed to reach all children (Dreesen et al., 2020). New protocols for distance learning, online or otherwise, require teachers to rapidly change their practices, including daily tasks, responsibilities and accountabilities. Teachers may be asked to develop new alternative and varied approaches to monitor children's learning (from assessing to remediating learning losses) during the COVID crisis, including both formative and summative methods. Different methods may be required per grade and subject area for both individual and collective feedback and support. Teachers may lack relevant resources at home, training and experience, particularly on digital learning platforms. Some programmes may largely reduce the amount of time allocated to teacher-directed learning processes by focusing on children's self-learning. (UNICEF,2020)

In relation thereto, teachers have driven the initiative to innovate and create interventions to make sure that the learning of the students never stops. Consequently,

teachers have worked tirelessly to provide support systems and develop new learning environments for their pupils in contexts ranging from areas where students have no ability to provide computers with themselves and areas that have no internet connectivity. Monitoring the progress of the students enables teachers to collect useful data for the improvement of instruction and most significantly to address the needs of the learners at risk and provide necessary interventions to ensure the student's achievement.

Table 2. Lived Experiences of Teachers in Constant Monitoring of Learner's Progress

Significant Statement	Formulated Meanings	Clustered Meanings	Emergent Themes
<p>"In the first 3 months, the flow of our setup was good but there were times my student didn't finish but somehow before the grading period ended, he submitted. Then came the time when I couldn't reach him at their house because he was working- hauling and crushing rocks. In that case, I just leave it to his sister - in -law. However, it was not effective because he could not go home, the child had already stayed in with his siblings and mother at their workplace. The child couldn't submit any more activities. For that reason, I went to the student and looked for his situation. There, I interviewed her mother about how they work and why even children work which they shouldn't, especially that he is neglecting her studies. Since then, I have been delivering the SLMs and activities in the student's workplace. When I can't go inside the workplace, I just leave the activities to his sister-in-law."</p> <p>"During the implementation of modular distance learning, I have experienced delivering modules and monitoring my students who live in a very remote area".</p>	<p>One of the biggest challenges of Modular Distance Learning is monitoring the development of the students. The lack of physical contact and difficulties of communication on digital devices are the underpinning factors on the struggles of the teachers to keep track of the learning progress of the students. Thus, teachers create ways to reach their children through home visitation especially in far-flung areas.</p>	<p>Monitoring the Learner's development during the Modular Distance Learning</p>	<p>Constant Monitoring of Learner's Progress</p>

<p><i>"In this kind of modality that we are using, it is very difficult to monitor the learning progress of my pupils. Together with my fellow teachers, we conducted home visitation to conduct instructional support to our pupils and home facilitators. It is not an easy journey because we need to cross creeks between mountains, as well as we need to cross hanging bridges just to cross a river. We also climb mountains and walk for almost 6 kilometers in 4 hours. It is the only way that we can reach our learners who are living in the areas that are not reachable by any kind of vehicle, especially those who are living in the mountains."</i></p>			
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### Theme 3: Teachers' Extending Support to Learners and Parents

In this time of the COVID-19 crisis, the economy has decreased, and many families have issues securing education for their children. As a result of the closure of school buildings, some families may find it difficult to meet basic necessities that they would normally meet during school hours. Teachers have first-hand experience providing children with support to continue their education. Knowing that everyone is facing this new reality with a certain degree of uncertainty can help generate a deeper sense of community among teachers, learners and parents. It is important to remember that each community has its own distinct requirements and resources.

Teacher A talked about the experience of providing school supplies and other important items to students.

*"We Teachers noticed that his outputs were dirty, untidy and that other used paper was used to answer the Modules, so I thought of buying him a set of Materials that he could use to answer like, plastic envelopes, set of folders, coupon bond, ballpen, paper and pencil for him to use. "*

Rather than aiming to reconstruct school, Modular Distance Learning (MDL) can give meaningful experiences that link to students' lives, skills, and identities. Families have goals and dreams for their children. It is believed that all families were capable of supporting their children's learning despite the crisis. Families and school employees can work together as

partners through distance learning for the sake of the children. Teaching families how to think aloud or describe what you're doing are only the simple means on how teachers can model the learning process for families.

Teacher E cited common experience in helping the students.

*“At SPED most of my pupils are indigent so I provide crayons, pencils and pad paper. I also lend them puzzles and toys that they can use at home because they also don't have the ability to buy for their children with special needs. Sometimes I even solicit broken or used crayons and toys for my indigent pupils so that they can have something to use and reduce their parents' expenses especially now and life is very*



*difficult because of COVID-19.”*

Picture 4. A parent receiving supplies from Teacher E.

Children/parents/guardians also need to be informed and get used to the new systems so that's another key challenge (and some may simply be unable to use them). Parenting education and counselling is key during the COVID crisis for the well-being, preservation of learning motivation and safety of their children going beyond their necessary involvement in the learning and assessment culture of schools. Countries without an integrated, cross-sector parenting education and counselling system should develop one; this is also an opportunity for schools to build stronger linkages with parents. (UNICEF,2020)

Furthermore, Teacher B also shared his experience in extending support to the parents.

*“I have also tried to educate a group of parents about distance learning in a remote area in Mabini, Pangasinan.”*

Teachers have shown their desire that, although life has been challenged by the COVID-19 outbreak, their students can continue their education. The fact that teachers play the part not only in teaching their pupils but also in making them realize that they all have their aspirations in life. Even though the responsibilities of teachers are arduous, this just shows they uphold the Education Department's purpose that no child is left behind, and education must continue despite the country's crises.

Table 3. Teachers Extending Support to Learners and Parents

Significant Responses	Formulated Meanings	Clustered Meanings	Emergent Themes
<p><i>"We Teachers noticed that his outputs were dirty, untidy and that other used paper was used to answer the Modules, so I thought of buying him a set of Materials that he could use to answer like, plastic envelopes, set of folders, coupon bond, ballpen, paper and pencil for him to use. "</i></p> <p><i>"At SPED most of my pupils are indigent so I provide crayons, pencils and pad paper. I also lend them puzzles and toys that they can use at home because they also don't have the ability to buy for their children with special needs. Sometimes I even solicit broken or used crayons and toys for my indigent pupils so that they can have something to use and reduce their parents' expenses especially now and life is very difficult because of COVID-19."</i></p> <p><i>"I have also tried to educate a group of parents about distance learning in a remote area in Mabini, Pangasinan."</i></p>	<p>The teachers have shown their desire that everyone of their students can continue their education despite the problems brought by the COVID-19 pandemic. Teachers create ways on how they can extend help to their students and make sure that the learning of their students will never stop.</p> <p>Teachers also extend help to parents who serve as a facilitator of learning at home.</p>	<p>Teachers extend help to parents and students to assure that learning must continue despite the crisis.</p>	<p>Teachers' Extending Support to Learners and Parents</p>

#### **Theme 4: The Reason behind Teacher's Persistent Dedication and Commitment during the Modular Distance Learning (MDL)**

Teachers show persistent dedication and commitment during Modular Distance Learning as Teacher A shared,

*"At this time, our students need help from our teachers. I just did my part as a teacher to give the children the opportunity to continue their education."*

Teacher B also expressed his reason for extending support to the learners.

*"Whenever I know that some students out there are being marginalized or being left behind because of some unfortunate circumstances such as the CoVid-Pandemic, I become more determined to go beyond the extra mile just to ensure that they will be given the same opportunity with others. It motivates and inspires me more whenever I feel that I am being part of the journey of my students in reaching their dreams."*

Teacher C also elaborated on her reason.

*"If we reach out to our pupils, we inspire them to pursue their dreams in life. Aside from it is a teacher's achievement or accomplishment, it is very overwhelming when parents' expressing their gratitude because of the sacrifices we've made to reach their area and hear their concerns. The main reason why I want to visit them is that I want to guide them to reach their dreams in life. "*

Teachers' "greatest love of all" is to educate, when one recognizes the frailties of the profession. Teacher D proved it when he cited his reason for persistent commitment.

*"Education is inclusive, no one should be left behind no matter how far the school or how hard the travel it would take to get there. I became motivated to do my job because I knew that with that great challenge the pupils of Longos Elementary School are experiencing I must at least make an effort to lessen the burden of the pupils who are hungry to learn. It may not be included in my job description but I believe that being a teacher is beyond our job description. "*

Teacher E also expressed her reason for helping students during the implementation of Modular Distance Learning.

*"One of the things that pushed me to do that was love for the kids. The responsibility of our teachers to our pupils is not only in the classroom especially now that they are studying at home the more they need to feel our presence and support. Maybe it is also in the attitude or character of a teacher to care for his pupils as we also serve as their second parents. "*

Teaching is in fact a profession and a calling. These are the features of education that no other profession has. It's like facing every day the obstacles and the reality of learning, but still chooses the career when you wake up the next day. From a wider perspective, the inconvenience and disadvantage of teaching as a career might be seen. During the COVID-19 pandemic, teachers make sure that the children of our country are as safe as possible, as responsive to education, and have a chance to succeed. Those who continue to make every effort to ensure the fire is burning are those teachers who light up the pupils' candles despite the world's obstacles.

Table 4. The Reason behind Teachers' Persistent Dedication and Commitment during the Implementation of Modular Distance Learning.

Significant Statements	Formulated Meanings	Clustered Themes	Emergent Themes
<p>"At this time, our students need help from our teachers. I just did my part as a teacher to give the children the opportunity to continue their education."</p> <p>"Whenever I know that some students out there are being marginalized or being left behind because of some unfortunate circumstances such as the CoVid-Pandemic, I become more determined to go beyond the extra mile just to ensure that they will be given the same opportunity with others. It motivates and inspires me more whenever I feel that I am being part of the journey of my students in reaching their dreams."</p> <p>"If we reach out to our pupils, we inspire them to pursue their dreams in life. Aside from it being a teacher's achievement or accomplishment, it is very overwhelming when parents' expressing their gratitude because of the sacrifices we've made to reach their area and hear their concerns. The main reason why I want to visit them is that I want to guide them to reach their dreams in life."</p>	<p>In times of health crisis, teachers show untiring effort and sacrifices to assure that every child can access quality education even if they are learning at home. Teachers adapt to the changes of the education system and innovate to create ways to address the needs of every learner. Teachers have various reasons for being tireless in the</p>	<p>Teachers show persistent dedication and commitment during the Modular Distance Learning.</p>	<p>The Reason behind Teachers' Persistent Dedication and Commitment during the Implementation of Modular Distance Learning.</p>

<p><i>“Education is inclusive, no one should be left behind no matter how far the school or how hard the travel it would take to get there. I became motivated to do my job because I knew that with that great challenge the pupils of Longos Elementary School are experiencing I must at least make an effort to lessen the burden of the pupils who are hungry to learn. It may not be included in my job description but I believe that being a teacher is beyond our job description. “</i></p> <p><i>“One of the things that pushed me to do that was love for the kids. The responsibility of our teachers to our pupils is not only in the classroom especially now that they are studying at home the more they need to feel our presence and support. Maybe it is also in the attitude or character of a teacher to care for his pupils as we also serve as their second parents. ”</i></p>	<p>implementation of the Modular Distance Learning (MDL).</p>		
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### **Theme 5: Teacher’s Significant Realization during the Implementation of Modular Distance Learning**

In this “New Normal”, teachers shared on how they reflect in this brave new world of distance classrooms. Teacher A shared, *“One of my greatest realizations is that as a teacher it is important for us to understand the situation of our students especially now that many have been affected by the pandemic. Help them so that they can support their studies because that is why we teachers exist because we will be the support of our students when they need help. Let's give them hope and understanding. ”*

Likewise, Teacher B expressed his realization during the implementation of Modular Distance Learning (MDL).

*“I realized that we should always be proactive in every situation. We have to come up with a solution or at least do something in order to alleviate the effects of a problem instead of complaining. We should always have a positive mindset despite every situation because as a teacher we should project an*

*image of hope to our students and to the community we are serving so that they will also be inspired to champion the challenges that may come along their way."*

With her lived experiences during the "new normal" in education, Teacher C aforementioned her realization.

*"In Modular Distance Learning, I realized that as a teacher we must reach out to our pupils. If we, teachers, have a hard time with the amount of work that is entrusted to us, it is more difficult on the part of our pupils that there is no teacher to guide their studies so all we can do is help them, we can reach them out because this is a huge thing for them. . I also realized that we need to embrace change in the education system. And we must always remember that all children are equal and that no child should be deprived of an education. "*

Teacher D also shared, *"In this distance learning I realized the essence of family and helping. Our learners are restricted to go to school but with the help of their families, we are able to extend our knowledge to help them learn at home. With us-teachers, creating activity sheets, traveling far to get modules, and constantly checking the progress of our learners to help them gain knowledge and their parents trying to be our substitute made the journey in distance learning worthwhile. Through helping one another we are able to survive and will continue to survive in this distance learning until this pandemic is gone."*

Furthermore, Teacher E cited common realization about the new set-up of education amidst the pandemic.

*"During the Modular Distance Learning, I was able to realize that it's great to be a teacher in a way that we help kids and parents to promote education."*

COVID-19 pandemic posed disruption to the teaching and learning process. The traditional method of teaching and learning is temporarily impossible and unavailable due to the closure of schools. Despite the challenges and issues brought by the pandemic to the teaching and learning process, teachers adopted new and more innovative ways of teaching, engaging and evaluating, and delivering learning content to help every child continue education amidst the COVID-19 pandemic.

Table 5. Teachers Significant Realizations during the Implementation of Modular Distance Learning.

Significant Statements	Formulated Meanings	Theme Clusters	Emergent Themes
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<p><i>"One of my greatest realizations is that as a teacher it is important for us to understand the situation of our students especially now that many have been affected by the pandemic. Help them so that they can support their studies because that is why we teachers exist because we will be the support of our students when they need help. Let's give them hope and understanding. "</i></p> <p><i>"I realized that we should always be proactive in every situation. We have to come up with a solution or at least do something in order to alleviate the effects of a problem instead of complaining. We should always have a positive mindset despite every situation because as a teacher we should project an image of hope to our students and to the community we are serving so that they will also be inspired to champion the challenges that may come along their way."</i></p> <p><i>"In Modular Distance Learning, I realized that as a teacher we must reach out to our pupils. If we, teachers, have a hard time with the amount of work that is entrusted to us, it is more difficult on the part of our pupils that there is no teacher to guide their studies so all we can do is help them, we can reach them out because this is a huge thing for them. . I also realized that we need to embrace change in the education system. And we must always remember that all children are equal and that no child should be deprived of an education. "</i></p> <p><i>"During the Modular Distance Learning, I was able to realize that it's great to be a teacher in a way that we help kids and parents to promote education."</i></p>	<p>With the disruption of the teaching and learning process and temporary closure of schools, teachers had the time to wonder about their significant realizations in the "new normal" setup of education in the country. Teachers realized that every learner should be shown sympathy during this time of pandemic. Teachers are flexible to adapt to the changes in the education system to assure that they will be able to deliver a quality education to their students. Teachers have open arms for students who are in need of help, support and guidance to reach their dreams in life.</p>	<p>Teachers have significant realizations during the implementation of modular distance learning that helps them to adapt to the new system of education.</p>	<p>Teachers Significant Realizations during the Implementation of Modular Distance Learning.</p>
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## CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

In the implementation of Modular Distance Learning (MDL) in SDO- Alaminos City, teachers experienced transition and change in the teaching and learning process from traditional in-person learning into distance learning. Thus, teachers had experienced various issues and challenges in MDL like difficulty in transporting modules in remote areas as well as monitoring the progress of learners. Fontanos et al (2020), cited in Jamon et al (2021) discussed the perceived threat of the teacher in the new normal is the challenge of reaching out to students and parents. For them, it is difficult to communicate with parents and students in the present situation. This implies that more students are at risk of dropping out of school or failing because teachers have difficulty communicating and giving feedback to them. Despite the sudden change in the education system of the country, teachers innovate and create ways to deliver education to every child. As evident in their lived experiences, teachers from SDO- Alaminos City showed persistent commitment and dedication to support and provide the learning needs of the learners for they uphold that *“every child should access quality education”* amid the COVID-19 pandemic.

The researchers devised the following recommendations: (1) revisit the curriculum and reduce the activities, and take out the unnecessary topics (2) lessen the reports and paper works of teachers and let them focus on teaching itself (3) supervisors and administrators should devise strategic planning together with the teachers and parents; (4) Consistent and enough time in assessing and monitoring of pupils’ performance must be taken into considerations; (5) better orientation and debriefing for teachers amidst modular distance learning; and (6) the provision of equipment essential to modular distance learning shall be provided to teachers in a financially flexible way.

## LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The unfortunate situation the researchers are currently experiencing is a limitation of this study. Due to the limited reach to teachers, it proved challenging to consolidate the data with a decent number of respondents. With this, the researchers decided to lower the number of respondents and utilize the Google Forms questionnaire for some respondents as an alternative to the live interviewing. The teachers' responses to the Google Form questionnaire

are shorter compared to the live online interview, which allowed the researchers to clarify answers. The answers of the respondents were translated using Google translator for better transcribing.

## **FUNDING**

This study received a grant from the PARESSU, Inc as part of its extension activity for academic scholars and researchers, granted August 23, 2021. This article is an output resulting from the use of 'START' Approach designed by Camara (2019).

## **CONFLICT OF INTEREST**

The authors declare no conflict of interests.

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