

Strategies Utilized by Intermediate Teachers Handling Multiple Subjects amid Pandemic

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Abstract: *This study determined the strategies utilized by the intermediate teachers handling multiple subjects amid pandemic in Pilar Cluster for S.Y 2021. The study used descriptive method of research. It is descriptive in the sense that it determined the strategies utilized by the intermediate teachers handling multiple subjects amid pandemic as well as the challenges encountered by the teachers. The main instrument that was used in the study is a questionnaire checklist prepared by the researcher. The respondents of this study were the intermediate teachers in Pilar districts who are basically teaching multiple subjects under grade four, grade five and grade six. The data that were gathered have been tabulated, analyzed and interpreted by the use of appropriate statistical tools and measures.*

Keywords: teacher, modular delivery, instructions, amid pandemic

1. Introduction

Whoever teaches learns in the act of teaching and whoever learns teaches in the act of learning. Despite the overwhelming consequences of the pandemic, this global crisis has also been an extraordinary time for learning. People are learning how adaptable and resilient educational systems, policy makers, teachers, students and families can be. The role of teachers is rapidly evolving becoming in many ways more difficult than when learning took place only in person.

Two crucial factors have shifted due to the pandemic. First, pedagogical adaptations have proven to be pivotal as the traditional lecturing in-person models do not translate to a remote learning environment. No matter the type of channel used (radio, TV, mobile, online platforms, etc.) teachers need to adapt their practices and be creative to keep students engaged as every household has become a classroom - more often than not - without an environment that supports learning. Some countries are supporting teachers with this. In Sierra Leone, where the main remote learning channel is radio, a 'live' and toll-free phone line is open for students to call teachers with questions and schedules of radio lessons allow time for children to help their families with daily chores.

Second, the pandemic has recalibrated how teachers divide their time between teaching, engaging with students, and administrative tasks. In Brazil according to a survey conducted by Instituto Peninsula, 83% of teachers did not consider being prepared to teach remotely, 67% were anxious, 38% felt tired, and less than 10% were happy or satisfied. The pandemic has highlighted the need for flexibility and more time for student-teacher interactions. For example, in Estonia teachers were given autonomy to adjust the curriculum, lesson plans, and their time allocation.

Almost 90% of countries that responded to the survey of Ministries of Education on National Responses to COVID-19 conducted by UNESCO, UNICEF, and the World Bank (2020) supported teachers by sharing guidelines stressing the importance of: providing feedback to students, maintaining constant communication with caregivers, and reporting to

local education units to keep track of learning. Fewer governments took a different approach: Costa Rica developed a digital toolbox with pedagogical resources such as a guide for autonomous work, the state of São Paulo in Brazil organized frequent two-hour conversations between Secretary Rossieli Soares and teachers through the mobile application developed by the state. These conversations and tools allowed governments to have an open line of communication with teachers to better understand their concerns and adjust remote learning programs.

As teachers started to implement these guidelines and recommendations, they found themselves balancing educating and providing feedback to students remotely, filling administrative reports, and taking care of their families. Some governments recognized early-on those their well-intentioned teacher support systems ended up generating burnout. Peru's Ministry of Education was open to receive feedback and reacted rapidly by changing the guidelines to reduce teacher's administrative workload. The state of Minas Gerais in Brazil developed the mobile application 'Conexao Escola' to encourage teacher-student interaction during designated time after each class, avoiding a situation in which students contacted teachers through WhatsApp or text message throughout the day. In Uruguay, teachers were expected to fill administrative information, but instead of requesting new information from them, the government decided to use GURI, a digital platform that has been used by Uruguayan teachers for over 10 years to report information such as student attendance and grades.

As the country continues to confront different issues brought by the coronavirus disease 2019 pandemic, the Department of Education is addressing the challenges in the basic education for the school year 2020-2021 through its Basic Education Learning Continuity Plan under DepEd Order No. 012, s. 2020. The BE-LCP is consistent with the mandate of Section 1, Article XIV of the 1987 Constitution for the state to protect and promote the right of all citizens to quality education at all levels, and to take appropriate steps to make such education accessible to all. Under Section 6, Chapter 1 of Republic Act No. 9155, or the Governance of Basic Education Act of 2001, DepEd is vested with the authority, accountability, and responsibility for ensuring access to,

promoting equity in, and improving the quality of basic education.

Hence, the aims to ensure the health, safety, and well-being of the learners, teachers, and personnel in the time of COVID-19, while finding ways for education to continue amidst the crisis. The BE-LCP has been designed with a legal framework responsive to the “new normal,” keeping in mind the constitutional mandate to uphold the right of all citizens to quality education at all times. In line with this, the learning delivery modalities that schools can adopt may be one or a combination of the following, depending on the local health conditions, the availability of resources, and the particular context of the learners in the school or locality: distance learning, blended learning and home schooling.

The province of Sorsogon has been dramatically increasing its need for education reforms in this time of pandemic to facilitate learning and to be able to contribute quality education to its students. However, further assistance to matters in line with teaching development must be realized. This has been proven during the Division training on managing interrupted face to face instruction under division memorandum number 15, series of 2021. The training aimed to draw up a plan of action anchored on the principles of remote teaching and learning, present, introduce strategies in navigating remote teaching and learning. This was also cascaded in the district of Pilar through the district coordinators. Therefore, this contemporary undertaking also seeks to better gratify the learning processes in the department of education amidst pandemic particularly in the elementary level and those who are teaching multiple subjects in Pilar must be given attention since education is inclusive and that problems arising in times of pandemic be mitigated through this research that will serve as an eye opener to the present education that the locale is experiencing.

General Objective

This study determined the strategies utilized by the intermediate teachers handling multiple subjects amid pandemic in Pilar Cluster for school year 2020-2021.

Specific Objectives

- 1) To determine the strategies utilized by intermediate teachers along:
 - a) Distribution of modules
 - b) Teacher and parent collaboration
 - c) Home visitation
 - d) Assessment
 - e) Retrieval and other activities
- 2) To find out the challenges encountered by intermediate teachers in teaching multiple subjects along the identified variables.
- 3) To propose an action plan based from the results of the study

2. Methodology

This study employed a descriptive-correlational research design in the collection of data from the population by means of survey questionnaire.

The statistical tools utilized were frequency count and percentage. The 30 senior high school students from the selected schools of Sorsogon City are the respondents of this study.

3. Results and Discussions

Based from the results, it was found out that there are identified priorities of the teachers relative to the strategies used by them.

- a) On the distribution of modules such as: they practiced social distancing, sanitation and temperature check-up, next is they provided envelop or folder per student to eliminate damage and disorganize modules and the third one is the teachers scheduled the date of distribution and categorized the modules to Set A and Set B with the frequencies of 36, 35 and 33 respectively.
- b) On teacher and parent collaboration. feed backing and consultation on how to assist the students, they talked about their difficulties with the students, helped in the progress of the student's academic performance and validated the student's performance at home and encouraged the parents and students to watch and listen to the educational television shows and radio programs with the frequencies of 34, 34 and 32 accordingly.
- c) On home visitation. Eagerness to ask the family members to help the student in understanding the lessons in the modules, they also considered the status of the family in the understanding why the student finds difficulties in learning and checked the health condition of the student and considered the nutritional status of the student.
- d) On Assessment. The teachers provided summative examinations, provided formative examinations and checked and recorded the assessment activities.
- e) Retrieval and other activities. follow up the students/parents who did not submit the modules, they provided worksheets and other supplementary learning materials with differentiated tasks according to students' needs and learning level, parents are informed via text messaging, phone call and Facebook messenger about certain problem and utilized simplified Learning Activity Sheets to supplement the learning competencies of the subjects taught.

There are identified challenges that were most encountered by the respondents.

- a) On the distribution of modules. The absence of the parents to get the modules, incomplete modules to be distributed, the difficulty in disseminating information via mobile phone call or text messaging because of lack of resources of the parents and the content has errors and unclear pictures.
- b) On teacher and parent collaboration. Incapacitated to teach and assist the student due to lack of education on the part of the parents/guardians, lack of parental initiative to teach and assist the student and the lack of open communication about their difficulties with their children.
- c) On Home visitation. Availability of parents due to work schedule, too much extension time for the submission of the modules and other subject requirements and no one

could help the student in understanding the lessons in the modules.

- d) On Assessment. The students did not honestly answer the modules by themselves and did not do the portfolio. Student cannot write an essay and the teachers find difficulty to provide assessment because of the late and lack of modules to be distributed to the students limited time in the preparation of assessment due to loaded paper works to be accomplished in school.
- e) On retrieval and other activities. Lack of access to the DepEd commons and Google application and other electronic learning materials due to lack of resources/internet connectivity/electricity, lack of books, magazines, newspapers, encyclopedia and other educational printed materials, and parents and students cannot watch and listen to the educational television and radio programs due to lack of resources/electricity. An Action Plan may be designed to enhance the strategies used by the teachers and address the challenges met by them.

It was concluded that the strategies used by the teachers along distribution of modules, teacher and parent collaboration, home visitation, assessment, retrieval and other activities amid pandemic can be enhanced and improved. The challenges encountered by the teachers can be given attention and address for the achievement of quality education among the students. The Action Plan hereby proposed can be submitted for approval and be adapted and implemented.

It was recommended that strategies of the teachers may be considered to address issues and concerns on the modular delivery of instruction amid pandemic. Other strategies which are not commonly used may be reviewed and considered. The school administrators, teachers and parents may collaboratively conduct meetings and conceive effective practices to address the challenges. There is a need to submit the action plan for approval and be adapted and implemented. Researchers may consider the findings of the present study for future research endeavors in a wider scope.