SELF LEARNING MODULE AND LITERACY ADVANCEMENT AMONG SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS IN THE NEW NORMAL

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ABSTRACT

Due to the COVID 19 pandemic, face to face learning engagement of students and teachers within the school has been suspended. This pandemic paved the way to the implementation of Modular Distance Learning as an urgent response to ensure continuity of education. A qualitative study was planned to describe the difficulties and challenges of Self Learning Modules and Literacy Advancement among Senior High School students in the New Normal in one of the schools in the Division of Sultan Kudarat. The study aims to: (1) describe the difficulties and challenges of student's experience using self-learning modules as learning modality in this time of pandemic; (2) describe how students cope with the system of learning in the new normal education; and (3) present realizations of the students on the use of self-learning module as the new learning modality. In the study, data saturation was achieved after analyzing the responses of 10 senior high school students using In-depth Conservations through Focus Group Discussion (FGD) and In-depth Interview (IDI). Three major themes were emerged after data analysis: difficulties and challenges on self-learning modules; coping with the system of the new normal learning; and realizations utilizing SLM as a new learning modality. It was then revealed that one of the major difficulties and challenges of the students using self-learning module was procrastination- putting off intentionally the doing of something that should be done. In addition, other factor was lack of instruction and guidance of the teacher. This factor would lead students misunderstanding and misinterpretation towards the lesson since some were struggled learners and SLM requires independent learning. In terms of coping with the system of new normal learning, students deliberated how Self Commitment, Time Management and Adjustment affect them using self-learning module. Students therefore realized that Companionship, Self – Understanding and Determination could help them in this present endeavor.

Keyword: - *Self-learning module, literacy advancement, new normal, and senior high school students.*

1. INTRODUCTION

The Corona Virus Disease (COVID 19) pandemic, which has infected millions of people worldwide and has wrecked chaos around the globe, has already transformed into an economic and labor market shock. Many other issues have emerged and need to urgently addressed, like the closure of schools and its impact on learning and the burden of education on students, parents and teachers.

The pandemic situation has brought extraordinary challenges and has affected the educational sectors, and no one knows when it will end. Many countries around the world have temporarily closed educational institutions to contain the spread of the virus and reduce infections (Tria, 2020). Face to face engagement of students and teachers within the school has also been suspended. At present, the Philippines adapting to the new normal form of education and continuous innovations of educators and active involvement of other stakeholders are the driving force for its

success. For the continuity of education and for every school to still attain its mission and vision- to provide quality education to every Filipino learner, the Department of Education (DepEd) implemented the Modular Distance Learning (Pe Dangle & Sumaoang, 2020).

Modular learning is the most popular type of distance learning in the country. This learning modality is currently used by all public schools because according to a survey conducted by the Department of Education (DepEd) learning through printed and digital modules emerged as the most preferred distance learning method of parents with children who are enrolled this academic year (Bernardo, J., 2020). This is also consideration to the learners in rural areas where internet connection is not accessible for online learning.

One of the benefits of using modules for instruction is the acquisition of better self-study or learning skills particularly to independent learners. The learners engage themselves in learning the concepts presented in the module. They are learning how to learn, they are empowered (Nardo, M.T., 2017). Other advantages of modular instruction include more choice and self-pacing for students and increase adaptability of instructional materials. The disadvantages on the other hand include greater self-discipline and self-motivation required for students, increased preparation, true and lack of concrete rewards for teachers and staff and greater administrative resources needed to track students and operate multiple modules (Pe Dangle & Sumaoang, 2020).

The purpose of this study would like to describe the challenges and problems of Self Learning Modules and Literacy Advancement among Senior High School Students in the New Normal.

2. METHODOLOGY

This study utilized Phenomenological Research Design that was conducted primarily through In-depth Conservations through Focus Group Discussion (FGD) and In-depth Interview (IDI). It can be defined as the direct investigation and description of phenomena as consciously experienced by students living those experiences. Phenomenological research is typically conducted through the use of in-depth interviews of small samples of participants. The participants of the study were the ten (10) senior high school students of one of the schools in the Division of Sultan Kudarat School Year 2020 – 2021.

A questionnaire with open ended questions developed by the researcher or the data gathering instrument of this study which will only serve as a guide. This was used during the group discussions with the participants. This gathered bits of information that will allow the research questions to be answered and to be accurately addressed.

This study made use of the non-numerical description to analyze the responses on the reality of phenomenon. In presenting the difficulties and challenges of the senior high school students using self-learning module as modality in the new normal setting of education were presented in theme and concepts to point out the different angles of the issue although in the guide questions, all the situations were presented in a neutral ground. Pure verbose description was used to present results of the study. The researcher had worked in the public secondary school for the last 8 years using traditional and blended approach of teaching because he is trained in overseas learning modalities and seen the real score which could cling to one side of the stand. In this case, it is clear statement that the researcher brackets his biases in presenting only what was revealed and gathered in the conduct of the data gathering information.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Theme 1: Difficulties and Challenges on Self Learning Module

This theme involves three sub themes: (a) Procrastination; (b) Misinterpretation of Lessons; and (c) Lack of Instruction.

Procrastination

It was revealed that lack of time management would lead to procrastination. Students were concerned on how they manage their time between answering their modules and doing their obligations at their homes. According to some, instead of answering their modules, they first prioritize household chores; some would prefer doing

online/offline games which procrastination takes place. Two students pertaining such difficulty mentioned the following:

According to participant 1, *"Learning alone is quite different from face-to-face method. I need to balance my time and fight laziness and anxiety just to finish our module. However, most of the content was dealt with so many activities so as a learner who just became dependent on myself, I found difficulty in answering it right."*

Participant 10 then supplemented *"There are lots of challenges that I had experienced using the self-learning module. One of these is time management. There are lots of works to be done in our house same with lots of activities to be performed and answered in our module. So, how can I manage it?"*

(Voge, 2007) Procrastination is not a matter, solely, of having poor time management skills, either, but rather can be traced to underlying and more complex psychological reasons. He also added that in reality, procrastination is often a self-protection strategy for students. He concluded that for the most part, our reasons for delaying and avoiding are rooted in fear and anxiety-about doing poorly, of doing too well, of losing control, of looking stupid, of having one's sense of self or self-concept challenge.

However, some of the students are striving hard in order to surpass this particular difficulty and challenge. Despite this phenomenon, their eagerness is much more powerful and that whatever modalities are being used by the school, choosing to learn prevails.

Misunderstanding the Lessons

Students were concerned on the content of the self learning module. Some of the modules contain vague words which resulted to misconception. This particular factor hampered their learning. In fact, some students detailed the following:

Participant 6 stated *"I have a hard time figuring out what those words are. This really challenges me understand each question. So I had to study more, to research more so that I will have an idea on what those questions are."*

In addition to this, participant 9 pointed out, *"Without the presence of the subject teacher, this would lead us to many perceptions and ideas which sometimes make our understanding on the topic different from one other."*

It was evident that every student learner has his/her own style of learning.

Lack of Instruction and Guidance of the Teacher

Students discussed how they answer the self learning module independently. Most of the students prefer face to face classes where they can interact with their classmates and teachers. Because of modular approach, sustaining the discipline, engagement towards various activities, utilization of different methods in learning causes minimal problem. This factor which hampered students learning was highlighted in their words below:

On this particular challenge, participant 3 indicated *"It is very hard to comprehend and answer alone without teachers. It is very challenging and stressful. Knowing that the modules contain many task to do and deadline to attend to. Walang kahit isa na tutulong at magtuturo sa iyo. Yes, I have answers but I cannot deny the fact na wala ako masyado natutunan." (Trans: "It is very hard to grasp the topic and answer it all alone without the presence of the teacher. It is actually very challenging and stressful in my part knowing that modules contain many tasks considering that we have deadlines to attend to. No one can help me neither can teach me. Yes I have answers yet I cannot deny the fact that learnings are very limited and became unreliable.")*

Participant 8 then added, *"Self-study is not easy, it is a challenge for my part on how do I understand the question, solve the problem and answer it all by myself."*

It was then seconded by the participant 2 using the words *"There are lots of factors that challenge me using SLM; one of it is the absence of instruction and guidance."*

Theme 2: Coping with the system of the new normal learning

This theme involves three subthemes: (a) Self Commitment; (b) Time Management; and (3) Adjustment.

Self-Commitment

Students mentioned how important continuing education using Self Learning Module in this new system of learning. Amidst pandemic, the eagerness of the students to accomplish their modules is very evident. Focusing on their dreams as their driving mechanism to pursue their academe was highlighted below:

"Coping with the new system by studying hard, having self-confidence in understanding the question will help us to improve. This little way might be our solution to reach our dreams one step at a time."

Participant 8 also added *"By means of patience, we can accomplish what we need to no matter how boring and stressful the modules are. We need to have more patience and study hard."*

(Kashyap, 2018) Learn as much as you can from whosoever you want as it would be something no one can take away from you. Never stop learning as most times there are more than one way to do a same thing. The moment you shed your preconceived notions and embrace adaptability, opportunities will automatically present themselves in the most unexpected ways. He also mentioned the words of Charles Darwin, it is not the strongest of the species that survives, nor the most intelligent that survives. It is the one that is the most adaptable to change. So therefore, as a student, you have to make several commitments to yourself to reach and live the life you've dreamt in your dreams.

Time Management

A large number of students answered that time management would help in coping with the system of the new normal learning. Proper planning and organizing their times between household chores and other tasks and doing modules will result into time well-spent. Students thus realized that organizing their time made them new normal ready-student in this time of crisis.

In fact, participant 1 said *"Well, I push myself to do the right thing which is balancing my time to perform my tasks as a child and as a student at the same time."*

Participants 10 and 9 then supplemented, *"I am trying to cope with the new normal education by managing my time accordingly." "You just need to focus. Have self-discipline and time management for our education."*

Another participant said *"Wala tayong choice kundi sumunod sa bagong sistema ng new normal education dahil ito lang ang paraan para makapagtapos at maipagpatuloy ang pag-aaral. Para hindi masayang ang oras at matuto ng mga bagong lesson." (P7)* (Trans: "As of this time, we do not have choice otherwise we'll remain stagnant and unproductive. No time should be wasted. This is the only way to continue our education and so we should.")

Time management among the students has been the most underrated factor, yet one of the most crucial key leading towards success. A person, who learns to manage time, accomplishes half of the work done even before starting it. A valuable talent to depend on at every phase of life, time management skill can only be harnessed with continuous practice and dedication to implement it in life (Panigrahi, 2021).

Adjustment

Students also discussed in coping with the system of the new normal learning that they are adjusting from the current scene. During this time of global health crisis, they tend to alter their perspectives. They realized that adapting the new system will make them strong and adaptable students.

According to participant 4, *"Since CoVID 19 exists, adopting with the new system should be done. We should be ready to changes and be adaptable students. It's really hard for now yet I am trying my best to adjust and to fit with what our society requires us to be."*

Another participant said with accompanied laughter, *"We are experiencing a huge change and a huge adjustment is a must. We do not have choices. Faith, determination and patience will save us. HAHA!"* (P3)

Theme 3: Realizations Using SLM as a New Learning Modality

This theme entails the following sub-themes: (a) Companionship; (Self - Understanding); and (c) Determination.

Companionship

Students pointed out that having accompany in answering self-learning modules help them catch up their lessons. With the help of their parents, guardians, brothers and sisters, friends, classmates and even their teachers, they will be able to absorb new knowledge and understanding. One of the students commented:

"I realized the importance of comrades and the presence of my teachers. Simple as that!" (P1)

As mentioned by (Okita, 2012) that social interaction plays an important role in learning. Interacting with other people has proven to be quite effective in assisting the learner to organize their thoughts, reflect on their understanding, and find gaps in their reasoning. Underneath the broad umbrella of social interactions and learning, variants can range from peer teaching, reciprocal teaching, learning by teaching, learning by observation, learning by doing, and self-other monitoring.

Self – Understanding

A large number of students answered self-understanding as realization using self learning module as new learning modality. They realized that it will help them in processing their acquired knowledge using self-learning module.

Participant 3 commented *"In order for you to learn and understand the lesson in the SLM, try to deepen your understanding and rely on your abilities. Self-learning module as a new learning modality is very challenging for me because I encounter different concepts which are far from my understanding. Yet I am trying very hard to understand and research things in order for me to learn."*

Another commentary was given by the participant 5 stating "Natutunan kung sumagot ng mag-isa at pagkatiwalaan ang sarili ko." (Trans: "I learn to trust myself and so I answer my modules independently.")

Participant 9 also said, *"I realize that self-education is challenging, educating yourself without the help of the teacher, without the help of other people. But if you really want to learn, you will understand everything, you can answer each question."*

(Mullings, 2019) Students exploring for themselves is at very core of learning. Making discoveries from a task the teacher sets that they are genuinely interested in and find challenging, and the feeling they gain from self-direction, is wonderfully rewarded for learners as well as an incredible life tool.

Determination

Students also discussed their ability to establish their purpose as a student. They realized that being determined amidst pandemic will generate them new ideas in facilitating new knowledge from the module. This is evident with the answers given by the two students below:

According to participant 8, *"Realization? Nothing is impossible for a person that is much willing to learn. Everyone must have a role to play and we must take it seriously."*

Participant 10 then supplemented, *"The realizations I have on the use of self-learning module as a new learning modality is how important our teachers are in delivering the lesson. It is very hard to understand a topic on the module without the help of the teacher. I also realize how hard is it to learn and to teach myself because I already experienced it while I'm teaching my own self just to catch up with the lesson. In the end, all you need to do is to be determined in order to surpass this situation."*

Lumapenet (2022) mentioned that students' performance and achievement have improved with the modular learning approach which means that the self-learning modules can be effective in teaching in times of the pandemic. However, Keating (2020) explained that if you're not willing to learn then no one can help you. If, however, you are determined to learn then no one can stop you. Learning is a choice. The decision to improve your lot in life through education is one of the best decisions you'll ever make.

4. CONCLUSIONS

Self-learning module (Modular Learning) has emerged as a substitute to the traditional method of learning (Face to Face) this time of pandemic. As a new learning modality, there are difficulties and challenges faced by the students. These include Procrastination, Misunderstanding of the Lessons, and Lack of Instruction and Guidance of the Teacher.

In terms of coping with the system of new normal learning, students discoursed how Self Commitment, Time Management and Adjustment affect them using self-learning module. Students therefore realized that Companionship, Self – Understanding and Determination would help them conquer current endeavor and be adaptable in this new normal set up of education system.

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