

Risk and Coping Strategies of Teachers during the Transition to Modular Delivery of Instruction

HAZEL M. TADLAS
DR. LOLITA A. DULAY
Bukidnon State University, Mindanao, Philippines

Abstract

This study determined the risks and coping strategies encountered by teachers in the transition process to modular learning delivery of instruction, during the school year of 2020-2021.

This study used the phenomenological qualitative method of research. The research instrument was a researcher-made questionnaire. The participants were the 7 elementary teacher of Mapayag Integrated School, and were purposively selected. It was interpreted using the PAIS method.

Generally, there are seven risks encountered by teachers: (1) *Arduous Unprecedented shift of instruction* (2) *Insufficient support system* (3) *Inadequate activities for mastery of competencies* (4) *Biases in assessing learners performance* (5) *Low emotional and academic drive* (6) *Increased health risk exposure* and (7) *Stressful adjustments*. There were also seven coping strategies made by teachers, as they encountered those risks:

(1) *Embracing new instruction* (2) *Adequate funding and access for school supplies* (3) *Aligning the curriculum* (4) *Providing necessary activities for full mastery of skills* (5) *Teacher-Parent Collaboration* (6) *Being Innovative When Reaching Out* and (7) *implementing practices for safety and sanitation*

Keywords: Risks, Strategies, Transition, Modular Learning Delivery Approach

Introduction

The pandemic caused by COVID-19 is one of the problem that the world is facing. It is a virus that slowly weakens the immune system and if not immediately taken action, can cause death. It can easily be transmitted from one person to another so a need to keep distance from the public is necessary to prevent its spread. It caused a pause in every country for more than a month due to enforcement of lockdown to ensure safety among individuals. Precautions and strict compliance to the law is mandated. With this, comes changes in the ways of how the government handles the economy, agencies and departments. To continue life but with some changes, everybody has to do adjustments based on existing constraints.

Along with these changes, is the shift of the educational system into new normal. This caused a rapid transition from the traditional to the distance learning model of teaching and learning. It is the only way education can still continue following protocols for the safety of everybody. Teachers adopt abruptly to these changes in order to still impart learning to children with guidance from the Department of Education's series of memorandum released. Thorough planning was made by the South East Asian Ministers of Education. They presented their different educational strategies in response to COVID-19 crises during the SEAMEO e-forum. Many countries, especially the Philippines adopted the modular approach. Teachers were then oriented about this kind of distance learning modality for efficient and effective implementation in the field.

On the transition to modular delivery of Instruction

Transitions are marked by change and adaptation. A feeling of stress and disruption are common feelings in the transition process for it pertains to adjustments to the new ways of being (Kralik, Visentin & van Loon, 2006). According to Hart & Swenty (2016), individuals undergoing transitions are facing periods of greater vulnerability followed by adjustment, adaptation and stabilization. This pertains to a need for support in order for people who are experiencing transition, not be stress.

Schools are experiencing difficulty in printing and mass production of modules including the supply of inks and bond papers. It is also another burden for teachers those learners who still don't know how to read and comprehend the lessons in the modules. A need to keep track of these children is necessary for teachers to give them additional activities for the enhancement of reading, and guiding them in answering their modules to ensure understanding.

Furthermore, teachers think that learners' answer in their modules have no transparency and validity at all since they cannot see how the child answered the modules and they cannot observe how they acquire the competencies in every lesson. Some learners can only be contacted through phone calls and text which is difficult to some subjects. According to Sintema(2020), the level of academic performance of the students is possible to drop because of reduced contact hours with the learners and lack of consultation with teachers whenever they face difficulties in understanding lessons. With this, the assessment of the teachers is not reliable and valid since they cannot observe the learners on how well they understand and comprehend the lesson. Moreover, teachers cannot fully say that the learners are the one who's answering their modules because of the handwritings in the answer sheets. According to Bearman (2019), transparency in assessments connotes fair and consistent markings made by teachers as they examine and go through learners' works.

With teachers facing difficulties, along with it is the risks they come across with while delivering instruction. The primary risk is the safety of the people especially the school personnel since they meet people almost every week for module purposes. the risks of transmission is possible unless it is made sure that the teachers won't roam around other places to lessen contact with other more people.

On the coping strategies of teachers during the transition to modular delivery of Instruction

Despite its lapses, the use of modules encourages independent study. The acquisition of learning skills will be done by the learners. With little or no assistance from others, the learners progress on their own and develop a sense of responsibility as they answer the assigned modules given to them. They are learning how to learn which puts emphasis to "empowered learners" (Nardo, M.T.B, 2017). The monitoring of learners can remove the gaps academically and emotionally. A need to make sure that learners positively adopt the new

instruction in order for them to increase their motivation to learn despite of the challenges encountered. Other advantages of modular instruction include the choice how they manage time in answering; flexibility for teachers and staff as they develop ways to accomplished their works. By understanding the transition processes, individuals develop their different therapeutic strategies to facilitate and ease the transition journey and promote healthy outcomes (Hart & Swenty, 2016. Et al.).

Another significant thing during transition is the need to feel and stay connected. When you feel connected with the environment and people in it, healthy transition outcomes will follow. (Meleis et al., 2000). Less formal, more interpersonal relationship are big supports for teachers to ease their burden as they transitioned from things they are familiar with to a whole new set of instruction (Ashley et al., 2015). Adequate and suitable support and attention should be given to teachers to address policies and implementation gap (Dembele & Lefoka,2007). The training should be well thought out, as many teachers resist changing their traditional teaching methods because they are used to it. A sense of motivation and reassurance for teachers through their higher leaders should be necessary to keep them going forward towards change.

Methodology

This study used the qualitative phenomenological research method of Creswell and Creswell (2017) in exploring the risks and coping strategies of teachers during the transition to modular learning delivery of instruction. It explored the risks and coping strategies of teachers during the transition to modular learning delivery of instruction in Mapayag Integrated School, District 6 of Malaybalay City Division, Bukidnon. The process of research involves emerging questions and procedures, data typically collected in the participant's settings, data analysis inductively by building particulars to general themes, and the researcher making interpretations of the meaning of the data in conducting action research (Creswell, 2017).

The participants of the study are the teachers of Mapayag Integrated School during the school year 2020-2021. It is an Integrated school but we will only interview elementary teachers to be used as our sample.

The researcher used the semi-structured interview and focus group discussion in gathering the data with the use of researcher-made questionnaire. It is in an interview type guide questionnaire having different questions regarding the risks encountered and coping strategies used by teachers in the transition process.

These research guide questions underwent the validation of experts. The researcher personally conducted the research instrument in the participating school in order to gather the data from the elementary teachers. The interview process was done individually. Another schedule was set for the FGD in order to elicit more information from the participants, the participants were encouraged to express their answers or responses through the language or dialect they were comfortable to use. All the information that were gathered by the researches were kept confidential.

Then, the researcher listened to the voice recording of the interview. The transcriptions of the discourse from the voice recorder were played and repeated. This was done to get the thoughts and ideas of the participants. The important statements were annotated and clustered according to the themes generated from the responses of the participants.

Results

The Risks and Coping Strategies of Teachers in the Transition of Instruction to Modular Learning Delivery Modality

The discussion on the risks and coping strategies encountered by the teachers proceeds through the use of matrices containing the meaning units, and sub-themes. This procedure provided the means for determining the essence of the lived experiences of teachers in the new modality being used.

The findings revealed at least fourteen outstanding themes. 7 themes in the risks, and 7 themes in the coping strategies. Under this, a total of 26 sub-themes were formulated. There are seven major themes in the risks.

These include (1) *Arduous Unprecedented shift of instruction* (2) *Insufficient support system* (3) *Inadequate activities for mastery of competencies* (4) *Biases in assessing learners performance* (5) *Low emotional and academic drive* (6) *Increased health risk exposure and* (7) *Stressful adjustments*. While on the coping strategies made by teacher during the transition, there were seven (7) emergent themes discovered the such as (1) *Embracing new instruction* (2) *adequate support system* (3) *Aligning the curriculum* (4) *Providing necessary activities for full mastery of skills* (5) *Teacher-Parent Collaboration* (6) *Being Innovative When Reaching Out and* (7) *implementing practices for safety and sanitation*

Focusing first on the risks encountered by teachers, the matrix below shows the seven emergent themes together with its sub-themes, and the formulated meanings.

Matrix 1 Risks encountered by teachers during transition to modular learning delivery of Instruction

Formulated Meaning	Sub-theme	Emergent theme
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of enough information in the new transition of instruction so it is still confusing 	<i>Insufficient knowledge for the new transition of instruction</i>	<i>Arduous Unprecedented shift of instruction</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Additional pressure to the newly hired since they will be learning both new and old systems of instruction. 	<i>pressured in the new transition of instruction</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The new shift of instruction is challenging since it will start from scratch. Challenging for lower grade teachers since they teach foundation of learnings or the basics. Difficulty of coping because the change is so sudden (now more about paper works). 	<i>Grapple for the rapid shift of pedagogy</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of printers to reproduce tons of modules to be distributed 	<i>Inconvenience</i>	<i>Insufficient support system</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> some of activities in the modules are not relevant to the competencies being measured 	<i>Unnecessary activities in the module will not suffice the mastery of the lesson</i>	<i>Inadequate activities for mastery of competencies</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Modules are not enough in mastering basic writing letters and their sounds Modules cannot compare to face to face instruction 	<i>Modules cannot fully cater mastery of lesson</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Learners are having difficulty in the modular approach which resulted to unanswered modules. Unreturned modules because of no answer. 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Basis of grading and understanding is not valid even if they will be home visited 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Difficulty tracking learners understanding even if they will be home visited due to minimal meetings 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hard time in checking the 		

<p>learners works since no proper placements or labels in their paper.</p>	<p><i>No transparency in the grading system</i></p>	<p><i>Biases in assessing learners performance</i></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cannot guarantee that their outputs are same to their level of understanding 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hard to determine learner's strength and weaknesses because of lack of meetings 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Answers are not valid due to Handwritings that are different from the learners 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Modules are answered very well but teachers are unsure how to rate because they might just copied the answers directly from the answer keys. 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learners performance are really low even if home visited • Unsure about learning because of less exposure to teachers strategies to make lessons easy to understand • Tendency of learners having difficulty identifying sounds and letters if not properly guided. 	<p><i>Decreased interaction for learning</i></p>	<p><i>Low emotional and academic drive</i></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Giving of instruction and teaching difficult lessons is not easy since it is one on one • Teachers can only give limited guidance to the learners through home visitation, text and call due to minimal exposure 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decreasing motivation of learners to answer because of lack of understanding and monitoring 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interaction with learners and parents is risky since teachers came from city proper • All will be affected if there will be at least one who's expose to the virus. 	<p><i>Takings risks in unsafe physical interaction</i></p>	<p><i>Increased health risk exposure</i></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shared modules because of rotation is risky since it will be passed from one hand to another 		

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Health risk even in going in and out of school 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adapting new routine of going to work and directly go home to lessen contact with other people 	<i>adapting to new routines amidst constant change</i>	Stressful adjustments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Additional health practices to be followed and implemented 	<u><i>Change management practices to support the implementation</i></u>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New practices, additional adjustments that are necessary for safety. 		

These are the themes that came out base on the response of the participants. With these, we come up with seven major things that teachers encountered as they experience the abrupt transition to modular distance learning. They were shocked because of the sudden change and with that, comes emotional and physical adjustment that they must overcome to maintain their balance. Aside from that, their another concern is the learner's performance. How will they reach out to them in order to still give them quality learning despite not seeing each other. Giving of grades is difficult since it is not transparent at all because no observation or actual communication was done.

If there is risk and uncertainties encountered, it will be followed by proposed strategies in order to overcome the said risks. The following strategies were made by teachers in order to cope and improve learners' performance. There were also seven emergent theme discovered as the major coping strategies done by teachers.

The (1) Embracing new instruction (2) Adequate funding and access for school supplies (3) Aligning the curriculum (4) Providing necessary activities for full mastery of skills (5) Teacher-Parent Collaboration (6) Being Innovative When Reaching Out and (7) implementing practices for safety and sanitation

Matrix 2: Coping Strategies of teachers during the transition to modular learning delivery of instruction

Formulated meaning	Sub-theme	Emergent theme
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Preparation of the school year through various webinars for orientation 	<i>Supplying information for readiness in the instruction</i>	Embracing new instruction
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Slowly coping up and embracing change by being flexible Staying calm to avoid panic Manage time in learning the system so that you get used to it Fast-paced adaptation to get used of the system quickly but accurately 	<i>Individual coping mechanism</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Memorandums as legal guide 	<i>Follow legal basis</i>	

in the new instruction		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communicate with your colleagues, share ideas and information deemed helpful 	Positive Communication of personnel for better understanding of the system	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Positive approach as a way of motivating the teachers to keep going 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Materials used were properly budgeted to supply the needs of the school Enough materials with upcoming printers 	Allocate budget for school supplies	Adequate funding
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Learning portal for teachers to have easy access of modules per grade 	Easy access of modules	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Trimming of unnecessary activities to lessen the pages they will answer 	Curriculum alignment of the module	Aligning the curriculum
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Giving of additional activities to master the skills and competencies Home visitation to personally see their mastery in writing and sounds 	Activities and monitoring for supplementation of pedagogical skills	Providing necessary activities for full mastery of skills
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contacting the parents to monitor their difficulties in guiding their child Reminding parents to stand as a guide not to be the one who will answer Communicating with the other parent and agreeing to give unified instruction to his child and neighbor to guide them together 	Establishing healthy parent-teacher relationships for early learning success	Teacher-Parent Collaboration
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> information about child's performance the other year to give teachers an idea how they behave and perform in class. Contacting learners for simplifying lessons they find hard. 	Engaging Wholeheartedly and Approaching the learners	Being Innovative When Reaching Out
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Giving fair grades to all learners but still makes way to make them learn by remedial activities 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Frequent follow-up to make sure they understand the lesson rather than just copying the answer keys 		
	Being innovative in	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Answer sheets to organize the answer of the learners easy for teachers to check their work 	<p><i>assessing learners performance</i></p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Setting schedule for monitoring to fairly assess all learners • Home visitation for hands on learning especially in sounds and letters • Home visitation is deemed important to get to know the learners and personally guide them in lessons they find difficult 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Follow-up and monitoring to increase motivation to answer • Giving alternative solution to reach learners living far with no phones 	<p><i>Teachers' personal beliefs and their motivational strategies</i></p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementing health protocols to ensure safety • To keep reminding the safety practices every now and then • Providing masks and other sanitation before conducting home visitation • Holding parent conference for feedbacking while still applying social distancing. • Giving one on one instruction and not grouped every home visitation to minimize exposure • Giving of packed foods for school feeding by schedule 	<p><i>Community and school collaboration for cleanliness, sanitation and health practices of the school</i></p>	<p><i>Implementing practices for safety and sanitation</i></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • lower grades learners' safety in distribution of modules • Practicing proper health safety during disinfection of the modules • Disinfecting buildings, classrooms and returned modules for safety 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Various assessing methods to still keep track of the learners despite limited meeting • Pahina as a big source of support of parents despite not 		

<p>having face to face.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City workers volunteering to help maintain cleanliness in the school. • LGU's and other stakeholders help is a big help for the school's improvement. • Giving of health materials to be use by school personnel • Communicating with the brgy. Captain to suggest about the giving and returning of modules 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Being positive towards the new ways of health practices 	<p><i>Positive thinking: Reduce stress by eliminating negative self</i></p>	

These were the things that teachers did along the way in order to cope with the changes presented. They developed different strategies to manifest healthy mental and physical attributes. The parent-teacher communication was made stronger because of follow-ups made for the learners. Also, various safety protocols and methods were done in order to ensure safety in the school as well as the modules to be given to the learners.

Conclusion

Based from the findings generated, the lived experiences shared by the public elementary teachers on the risks and their coping strategies during the transition to modular learning delivery of instruction, brought significant changes in their life as teachers. Despite all the challenges and problems they encountered, they still manage to adjust and became front liners to continuously educate the learners amidst this pandemic. They learned to cope with the new educational setting which motivates them to exert more effort in their teaching career. Indeed, the teachers learned to become innovative and resourceful in respond to the emerging needs.

Moreover, considering the current situation of the country's education, teachers were more approachable and flexible in dealing with their students. Nevertheless, the success on the transition to modular learning delivery approach cannot solely achieve by the teachers but it will become possible with the continuous support of the administrators, parents, students, and all the stakeholders.

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