



THE AUTHENTIC EXPERIENCES OF GRADE THREE LEARNERS IN USING LEARNING RESOURCE MATERIALS

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ABSTRACT. The purpose of this study was to establish truth based on the lived experiences of parents and teachers involved in the implementation of modular distance learning. The social construction of reality in the modular education setup was interpreted explicitly based on the responses of the parents and teachers. The grade 3 learners tend to answer the easy activities first before going to the difficult tasks, which in many cases they do not complete anymore. The learners prefer stories with pictures. The learners can accomplish the tasks with the help and support of their parents. The learners do not like texts that are very long. Module writers might not have considered the attention span and interest of the learners when they were crafting the modules. They added that the learning activities should be contextualized and simplified and that teachers should be able to assess the actual learning progress of the learners and not just rely on the scores in the activities. The learners complain about the difficulty and bulk of the activities to be accomplished. To be able to complete the tasks, particularly those with long texts to be read, the learners would have to go over the text again and again. The learners would ask for the assistance of their parents in answering the modules. Considering that many learners tend to show low interest in schoolwork, the parents must be able to motivate them and not resort to answering the modules themselves. The interest of learners is one major factor in the effectiveness of modular learning delivery or any other modalities for that matter. Decades of research in the field of educational psychology suggest that motivation is developmentally linked to the academic achievement of learners. Many parents expressed that their children have a short attention span and would easily give up on the outputs. Both teachers and parents have observed that there are lapses in the modules or learning resource materials distributed in schools. The modules, as learning materials, provide the learning opportunities learners are missing from not being able to go to school. In some cases, the parents finish the activities themselves so the modules can be submitted to the teachers with complete outputs.

KEYWORDS: *AUTHENTIC EXPERIENCES OF GRADE THREE LEARNERS, LEARNING RESOURCE MATERIALS*

Introduction

Another such situation that called for the flexibility of teachers and education systems is the spread of the Covid-19 virus that affected the global community. Despite measures set in place to contain the virus and the efforts to inform the international community of the actions to be taken to prevent its spread, the disease elevated to the pandemic category affecting nations globally. The novel coronavirus was first identified in December 2019 hence the name Covid-19 and was officially declared a pandemic on March 11, 2020. The Covid-19 pandemic severely affected the global economy as well as most other aspects of life including the education of children and youth worldwide.

Pandemic or not, education remains a major concern and a vital contributory factor to national stability and development. Article 26 of the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights states that «Everyone has the right to education.» The United Nations has long been pushing on with its global Education for All initiative. In the Philippines, Republic Act 9155, otherwise known as the Governance of Basic Education Act of 2001 mandates that education should be made accessible to all by providing all Filipino children free and compulsory education at the elementary level and free education at the high school level. This is aligned with the provision in Article XIV, Section 5 of the 1987 Philippine Constitution which directs the state to protect the right of all citizens to quality education at all levels and mandates the same to ensure that such education is made accessible to all.

DepEd said that 56, 448 students and 4, 258 teachers were affected by this temporary closure of schools offering basic education programs. Public schools remain in operation throughout the country implementing alternative delivery modalities allowed by the existing health guidelines. This blended learning delivery implements limited face-to-face classes supported with modular and online instructions. According to UNICEF, the negative impact of the pandemic on the education sector of the Philippines is greater compared to neighboring Asian countries.

The second reason is that face-to-face classes have been suspended longer and remain prohibited or highly discouraged across the levels of education while neighboring countries were quick to slowly return to in-person classes BE-LCP is a package of education interventions that are responsive to the challenges in education delivery in the new normal setting brought by the pandemic. Before the approval to implement face-to-face classes, DepEd developed appropriate learning delivery modalities to let basic education learners continue education while containing the spread of Covid 19. Like most teachers, she has experienced the challenges caused by the abrupt shift in education delivery. The education crisis brought on by the Covid-19 pandemic has forced both teachers and learners to adapt to a setting they were not prepared for.

The difficulties in learning delivery are perhaps greater among the younger learners in contrast with students in the secondary level who are more mature and thus can

adjust better to the new normal. This chapter presents the results of this qualitative investigation. Significant research features are discussed to give a brief background on the purpose of this study and the activities carried out by the researcher before she was able to formulate the findings and conclusions. The researcher explicitly interpreted the experiences of the participants to establish the realities behind the authentic experiences of grade 3 learners in receiving education through modular distance learning.

Key Concepts

Among the alternative learning delivery modalities implemented by the Department of Education, printed modular distance learning (MDL) is considered the most feasible given that online instructions prove a great challenge with the poor internet connectivity in most schools, particularly those in far-flung areas. This research involved parents and teachers from the 14 schools in Bacon East District of Deped Sorsogon City Division. The authentic experiences of grade 3 learners were explored through the respective experiences of the 20 parents and 20 teachers who shared their involvement in the implementation of the modular learning delivery.

The researcher conducted a focused group discussion to solicit responses from the participants' parents and teachers. The participants assessed the effectiveness of the modular approach in terms of activities, assessment of learning outcomes, as well as value integration. The difficulties or problems encountered by the learners in utilizing the learning resource materials were identified through the recollections of the parents who facilitate the teaching and

learning at home, and the teachers who manage modular distance learning.

Research Questions

This study investigated the status of the implementation of modular learning delivery as can be explored through the experiences of Grade 3 teachers, parents, and learners. Specifically, this study sought answers to the following questions.

1. What are the authentic experiences of Grade 3 learners in using learning resource materials in developing their reading skills as assessed by teachers and parents?
2. What is the assessment of teachers and parents in terms of the effectiveness of modular learning materials to:
 - a. Activities
 - b. Assessment of learning outcomes
 - c. Values integration
3. How do learners engage in utilizing the learning resource materials in terms of:
 - a. Activities
 - b. Assessment of learning outcomes
 - c. Values integration
4. What are the problems and challenges encountered by learners in utilizing the learning resource materials in terms of:
 - a. Concepts
 - b. Content
5. What holistic learning innovation can be implemented based on the findings of the study?

Research Process

The phenomenological approach of Merleau-Ponty (2012) was taken into consideration by the researcher because it emphasizes the interconnectedness of perceivable realities through human experience and intersubjectivity as fundamental constitutive dimensions of subjectivity. This intersubjectivity is explored in the experiences of the learners, parents, and teachers. Instead of one-on-one interviews, the researcher used focused group discussion or FGD which facilitated the conversational data gathering with participant parents and teachers.

The researcher herself became a research instrument facilitating the data gathering using the FGD questions. She first established a conversational atmosphere that allowed the participant teachers and parents to feel comfortable and at ease in sharing their experiences relevant to the implementation of modular distance learning. This group interview strategy allowed for the interconnectedness of the responses of the participants being interviewed. Hayes and Singh contend interviewing is the most appropriate strategy for phenomenologists in exploring or examining social phenomena. The researcher's transcriptions resulted in the extensive exploration of the lived experiences of the participants which are necessary for establishing the truth of the phenomenon being studied.

Findings

The intersubjectivity of the experiences of the participant teachers and parents, and that of the learners who were the subject of the investigation, were explored through the analysis and interpretation of the responses provided in the focused group discussions. The purpose of this study was to establish

truth based on the lived experiences of parents and teachers involved in the implementation of modular distance learning. Sica cited Berger and Luckman who explained that reality is subjective since it is dependent on the personal and unique understanding of individuals of their own experiences as part of the living world. In addition, Ziakas and Boukas cited Gergen who argues that reality is socially constructed by and between the persons who experience it. The social construction of reality in the modular education setup was interpreted explicitly based on the responses of the parents and teachers.

The analysis in this chapter involves the discussion of the themes that emerged from the responses of the participants and the insights learned from cited literature. The interpretations based on the epistemological view allowed for the construction of knowledge and eventually the establishment of truth underlying the phenomena being studied. The emergent themes were identified through these processes.

Authentic Experiences of the Learners in Using the Modular Learning Materials

With the recollections and experiences of the participant's parents and teachers, the researcher was able to explore the experiences of learners in the implementation of printed modular distance learning. The grade 3 learners tend to answer the easy activities first before going to the difficult tasks, which in many cases they do not complete anymore. The learners prefer stories with pictures. The pictures facilitate comprehension of the passages read. Parent 7 shared that her child would first look at the pictures before reading the stories. Then, the

child would frequently go back to the passage while answering the evaluation questions that follow the text.

The learners can accomplish the tasks with the help and support of their parents. Teacher 9 said that the parents guide the pupils in completing the tasks in the modules and this results in the development of reading skills. Parents' support is crucial to the education of children. According to Garcia and Thornton, research has shown that the involvement of family in learning helps in improving academic performance, reduces absenteeism, and allows parents to closely monitor their child's progress in school. When parents or guardians are more involved in learners' education, they earn higher grades and test scores, have better social skills, and develop positive behavior. Kwatubana and Makhalemele contend that learners become more focused on their schoolwork when their parents are actively involved in monitoring their performance.

The learners do not like texts that are very long. Parent 3 said her child is demotivated by the stories that are too long and evaluation questions and activities that are too many. Module writers might not have considered the attention span and interest of the learners when they were crafting the modules. Young learners still require the presence of an actual teacher who is skilled in motivating the learners and in sustaining their interest in the lessons. Hornstra et al. explained that teachers have different and varying strategies for motivating students. In the new normal setting, teachers find it difficult to implement motivating strategies given that distance learning limits their contact with the learners. Relevant to this, Lawrence and Hanita cited Dweck who believes that a teacher has only to develop

goals that focus on mastery rather than on the performance of a task. Teachers need to consider activities that lead to mastery without overwhelming the learners with tasks to accomplish.

Effectiveness of the Learning Resource Materials as Assessed by Parents and Teachers

Many of the participant teachers are convinced that the modules are effective in facilitating learning in the distance setup. Some argue that it depends on how the modules are written. Teacher 18 said that there are modules that are effective and there are those that are not, and it depends on the content of the module and how the learning instructions are presented to the pupils. Many parents also have the same assessment saying that the modules are effective since their children are learning. Parents 1 and 7 shared that their children are even able to use the concepts and values they learned in playing with friends.

Others consider it ineffective based on the outputs submitted by the learners and the scores they get in the evaluation tests. Teacher 10 shared that her pupils frequently get only half of the items correct and many get even lower scores. Parent 6 considered it ineffective and said she wants that the learners to be brought back to school to receive face-to-face classroom instructions. Some parents say that the activities in the modules are too much for the learners. The Department of Education has to reconsider designing modular instructions that would suit the interest and capacity of the target grade levels. A review of the modularized curriculum is in order, and this would improve the implementation of distance

learning. Quinones defines distance learning as a learning delivery modality fit for the “geographically remote” teaching-learning process and underscored that the printed modular approach is more appropriate for learners in areas with limited access to technology. Gonzaga et al. suggested the conduct of scheduled home visitation and remedial instructions to the learners by purok. They added that the learning activities should be contextualized and simplified and that teachers should be able to assess the actual learning progress of the learners and not just rely on the scores in the activities.

How Learners Engage in Utilizing the Learning Resource Materials

The learners complain about the difficulty and bulk of the activities to be accomplished. They tend to answer the easy ones first, and at times the easy tasks are the only tasks they can accomplish. Parent 7 shared that her child would often feel disinterested upon seeing that there are too many questions to answer or too many tasks to complete. Teacher 13 reported that the more difficult items are left unanswered by her pupils.

To be able to complete the tasks, particularly those with long texts to be read, the learners would have to go over the text again and again. Parent 3 said her child can answer the questions by re-reading the stories over and over. The learners would ask for the assistance of their parents in answering the modules. Parent 19 said that her child's siblings would also help in completing the tasks.

Considering that many learners tend to show low interest in schoolwork, the parents must be able to motivate them and not resort to answering the modules themselves.

The interest of learners is one major factor in the effectiveness of modular learning delivery or any other modalities for that matter. Decades of research in the field of educational psychology suggest that motivation is developmentally linked to the academic achievement of learners. The survey conducted by Mak in India revealed that children were on average 10% less motivated to learn during the pandemic. Multiple factors influencing this level of motivation were identified and among them were household income, parents' employment status, academic achievement before the pandemic, and how much a parent enjoyed homeschooling. In addition, he found out that parents tend to use TV time to motivate their children, allowing them to watch TV only after they can complete their schoolwork.

Problems and Challenges Encountered by Learners

The problems encountered by the learners were categorized under concepts and contents and they resulted in the emergent themes in the findings of this phenomenological study. In terms of concepts, the modules seem to be too difficult for the learners. Since they are too difficult, they tend to be disinterested in completing the tasks. As a result, the parents would answer the modules just so they can be submitted to the teachers. Parent 11 remarked that the modules are too difficult and that even parents themselves have a hard time answering them. Even teacher 12 acknowledges that indeed some tasks are very difficult to accomplish especially if the pupils are not independent learners.

In terms of contents, the contents of the modules do not seem effective in getting

the learners interested in the activities. Parent 8 said that many times she and her child would argue over answering the modules. Many parents expressed that their children have a short attention span and would easily give up on the outputs. Both teachers and parents have observed that there are lapses in the modules or learning resource materials distributed in schools. In this regard, there is a need to improve them to make them more effective in facilitating learning. Some teachers like teacher 11 have noticed that there are tasks that are not related to the objectives of the lesson. Some parents also mentioned about evaluation and comprehension questions to the answer cannot be found in the passage in the module.

For learning delivery to be effective, regardless of modality, the learning materials should be of satisfactory quality. The importance of learning resource materials in facilitating learning cannot be undermined. Setiawan said that teachers will have a great deal of difficulty in improving the effectiveness of learning without teaching materials. Likewise, students will have a very hard time adjusting to the learning situations. The modules, as learning materials, provide the learning opportunities learners are missing from not being able to go to school. Abdurrahman suggested that modules should be equipped with various components to enable students successfully navigate through the learning process and successfully and independently master the target competencies.

Conclusions

Based on the findings and interpretations presented, the researcher formulated the following conclusions:

1. Although the aid of the module in the development of reading skills, the grade 3 pupils find the modules overwhelming at times. They tend to demonstrate a low interest in the activities. Several factors contribute to this negative attitude toward modular learning delivery which includes the difficulty of the outputs expected, the length of the texts to be read, and the bulk of tasks expected to be accomplished particularly when modules in different subjects are expected to be submitted on the same date.

2. The modules are relatively effective in terms of activities, assessment of learning outcomes, and value integration. However, both parents and teachers acknowledge that the activities are sometimes too much for the learners to handle. Some consider it ineffective since there are learners who score low on the assessment or evaluation tests. Some activities are not congruent with the lessons and values integration is not evident in some parts of the modules.

3. Learners engage in the modules most often with the help of their parents. They tend to start with the easy activities before going to the more difficult ones. Many learners do not continue answering activities that are too hard for them. In some cases, the parents finish the activities themselves so the modules can be submitted to the teachers with complete outputs.

4. Among the problems and challenges encountered by the learners is the perceived above-grade level difficulty of the learning instructions and expected outputs. There are activities that some consider not suitable for the level of the learners which in this case is grade three. Learners also find it tiring to read very long stories and passages.

5. A work plan focused on providing holistic learning innovation can be proposed to address these issues. The work plan should particularly include district-level activities considering that the issues and concerns are observed in the entire Bacon East District.

Recommendations

Based on the conclusions formulated, the research gives the following recommendations:

1. The Department of Education be able to consider the nature and interest of the learners in crafting the modules. The attention span, prior knowledge, and foundational skills must be taken into consideration to anticipate the success rate or progress of the learners in the modular approach.
2. The modules be improved to maximize their effectiveness. More intensive quality assurance of the learning resource materials is performed before they are reproduced and distributed to the learners.
3. The parents be trained to better facilitate the learning situation in their respective homes. Teachers should also conduct close monitoring of the learners' progress to ensure that learners still feel the presence and assistance of their teachers in their education. Home visitations are still highly encouraged in distance learning modalities.
4. The instructions in the modules be made clear and facilitative enough for the learners to carry out. The congruence of activities to the learning objectives should always be reviewed and given to the pupils.

5. The proposed work plan be carried out with the assistance of the Schools Division Office, particularly in the conduct of the proposed district activities.

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