

## Lived Experiences Of DepEd Junior High School Science Teachers in Basey National High School in Implementing Modular Approach of Teaching

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### ABSTRACT

This study utilized qualitative design, specifically phenomenological research design. Also, in analyzing the data, the researchers used Colaizzi's method. The study aims to understand the lived experiences of DepEd junior high school science teachers at Basey National High School in implementing a modular approach to teaching. The study findings generated eleven themes, which are: (1) Changes in the time schedule and quality of education. (2) Exposure to COVID-19 (3) Interaction between teachers and students. (4) Time management. (5) Teachers' flexibility strategies and techniques. (6) Incomplete self-learning material. (7) Student learning and well-being. (8) On-time retrieval of self-learning material. (9) Apathy of students in answering the SLM leads to an incomplete SLM. (10) Teachers have poor work-life balance. (11) paradigm shift in pedagogy.

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## **INTRODUCTION**

Within a few months, COVID-19 was proven to be a global health disaster. COVID-19 infected thousands of people in a relatively short period of time. This illness also caused significant breakdowns, such as travel restrictions, a global recession, and school closures.

The unavailability and lack of instructional materials and resources are one of many struggles in implementing a new curriculum, not just in materials but also in using technology in order to meet the needs of the students in the school year 2020–2021. COVID-19 changed how curriculum is being implemented. The massive effect of COVID-19 is incalculable, and it brought many difficulties and complications to students and teachers in the academic field. Teachers should make different preparations for the new normal of education and managing virtual classrooms.

The COVID-19 pandemic has taken everyone aback, ushering in an unexpected lifestyle known as the "new normal." Among the sectors profoundly impacted by this health crisis is education. With face-to-face classes suspended until the discovery of a vaccine, the Department of Education-Philippines (DepEd) has advocated for the continuation of education in the academic year 2020-2021 through online and other alternative modalities (Huang et al., 2020). Modular learning stands out as the predominant form of distance learning. In the Philippines, this educational approach is presently adopted by all public schools. A survey conducted by the Department of Education (DepEd) revealed that learning through printed and digital modules has emerged as the preferred distance learning method among parents with children enrolled in the current academic year (Bernardo, 2020).

Modular teaching has emerged as a novel instructional approach in classroom settings, garnering significant attention for organizing learning experiences in education. The adoption of learning modules has become ubiquitous across all levels of teaching. A learning module serves as a self-directed learning package focused on a specific subject matter or unit. It can be applied in any learning environment conducive to the learner and allows for completion at the learner's individual pace (Ali et al., 2010).

With education now extending beyond the confines of the school due to new modalities, parents have become integral partners in the educational process alongside teachers. Parents fulfill a crucial role as home facilitators. In modular learning, their main responsibility is to establish a connection with their child and provide guidance (FlipScience, 2020). The teacher assumes the task of tracking the learners' progress. Learners can seek assistance from the teacher through various means, such as email, telephone, text messaging, or instant messaging. Whenever feasible, the teacher may conduct home visits to assist learners in need of remedial support. Printed modules will be distributed to students, parents, or guardians either by the teachers themselves or through local government officials (Llego, n.d.). The goal of this research is to provide an in-depth description and understanding of the lived experiences of science teachers in implementing a modular approach to teaching. This study also aims

to identify the challenges and coping mechanisms of science teachers in teaching amidst the COVID-19 pandemic.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter provides an overview of previous research and studies which informs the researcher and has implication for the findings.

### **From face-to-face to distance learning approach**

The COVID-19 outbreak had a profound impact on the Philippines' education system. In response to the pandemic, the Department of Education transitioned from traditional face-to-face teaching to a Distance Learning Approach. This shift aimed to ensure continued access to education for learners during these challenging times. Various methods were employed, including Online Learning, Modular Distance Learning, Blended Learning, and Radio-Based Instruction. (Bagood, 2020)

According to Jansen (2004), face-to-face learning is often perceived as traditional and tends to overlook students' experiences. This approach typically involves a lecturer imparting knowledge to students within a defined classroom setting, utilizing conventional methods (lecturer-centered) and traditional resources such as textbooks, discussions, chalkboards, and other materials.

Face-to-face learning offers immediate access to resources and interactions with others, occurs within scheduled class sessions, and offers timely feedback to students. (Black and Wiliam, 2006; Waghid, 2018).

Liu and Long (2014) further argued that face-to-face learning is irreplaceable and serves as the fundamental pillar of every educational establishment, despite the prevailing discourse and technological advancements favoring the adoption of e-learning. Recent studies suggest that a dilemma persists between traditional face-to-face instruction, characterized by direct person-to-person interaction in a live synchronous platform, and e-learning, which offers self-paced learning in an asynchronous environment.

### **On Modular Approach of Teaching**

Distance Learning pertains to a method of delivering education wherein instruction occurs between a teacher and students who are separated by geographic distances. This approach encompasses three main types: Modular Distance Learning (MDL), Online Distance Learning (ODL), and TV/Radio-Based Instruction (Quinones, 2020).

Many nations globally have temporarily shuttered educational institutions to curb the virus's spread and minimize infections. Direct interaction between students and teachers on school premises has likewise been put on hold. Presently, the Philippines is undergoing a transition to the new normal in education, with ongoing innovations by educators and the active engagement of various stakeholders serving as pivotal factors for its success (Tria, 2020).

Barnett et al. (2004) contended that the curriculum is often given little attention in current discussions surrounding teaching and learning in higher education. However, they suggest that this might change within the framework

of quality assurance mechanisms and benchmarking. Regarding teaching methods, Modular Teaching has emerged as a novel approach in classroom settings, garnering considerable attention for its experiential learning encounters. The practice of utilizing modules has become integrated into all levels of education. Teaching via modules involves a self-directed learning package focused on a specific topic or unit. This approach can be employed in any conducive learning environment and allows learners to progress at their own pace.

As per Dunlosky et al. (2013), achieving the objectives of science education is partly contingent upon the instructional methodologies employed by teachers to convey fundamental concepts and skills essential for fostering students' comprehension of science. They further noted that the teaching techniques practiced by educators significantly influence students' abilities and potential for meaningful and authentic learning experiences. It is commonly acknowledged that the caliber of education students receive greatly hinges on the quality of instruction provided to them.

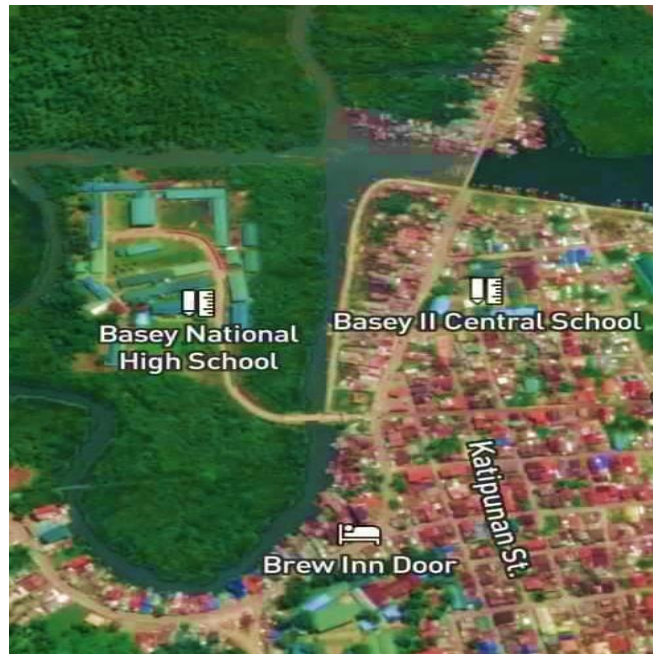
## **METHODOLOGY**

In order to understand the lived experiences and challenges encountered by the participants, this study used a qualitative approach, specifically phenomenological method. This method focuses on the experiences of a particular group in a specific phenomenon. Phenomenology is a form of qualitative research that focuses on the study of an individual's lived experiences within the world. It focuses in answering the 'what is it' question rather than questions of frequency or magnitude such as 'how much' and 'how many' (Giorgi, 2009). This study was conducted at Basey National High School Basey Samar, located at Brgy. Buscada and is situated in an islet 0.85 kilometers away from the town proper of Basey. It is one of the National High School of Basey 1-district with one thousand eighty-five male and one thousand eighty female students and one hundred forty-four teachers including the staffs with a total population of two thousand three, hundred nine for the school year 2020-2021.

The participants of this study were the Junior High School Science Teachers from Basey National High School. In terms of getting the sample participants, the researchers used non-probability sampling, specifically purposive sampling, the six participants. For this this study an open-ended interview guide questions were utilized, the procedure in collecting the data includes observations/field notes and audio recording. The six needed in the study were selected according to the needs of the study.

To ensure the validity and credibility of the instrument, the researchers conducted the pilot testing from a different school with different science teachers in Basey Samar, for the revision and development of the instrument. Science teachers in Valeriano C. Yancha Memorial Agricultural School participated in the pilot testing. After the pilot testing, the instrument underwent evaluation, validation and judgement by a research expert.

Figure 1. Shows the location of the study.



## RESEARCH RESULT

The personal experiences, and challenges of the participants were analyzed and interpreted using Colaizzi's methods. This method is a rigorous and robust qualitative method that the researchers used to find, understand, describe and depict the experiences of the participants, as well as reveal emergent themes and their interwoven relationships. (Wirihana et.al, 2018).

This method is consisting of seven steps.

- (1) Informants' descriptions of the experiences are read in order to acquire a sense of the whole.
- (2) After that, significant statements are extracted (coding).
- (3) Meanings are formulated from the significant statements.
- (4) Formulated meanings are organized into themes.
- (5) Themes are integrated into an exhaustive description.
- (6) The essential structure of the phenomenon is formulated.
- (7) And finally, for validation the informants will evaluate the result of the analysis, if it means the same as their original experiences were.

## DISCUSSION

### I. Worries on Covid-19 Interfering Work as a Science Teacher

**Theme 1. Changes in Time Schedule and Quality of Education.**  
According to participants 1, *"Just like what happened at this very moment there are changes of schedule, so sometimes the distribution of modules is delayed resulting to students na mawalan na ng gana sa pag sagot ng kanilang self-learning material, so I'm worried na I will not be able to deliver the quality of education that they need"*, while participant 4 said that *"There are times that there are work suspensions and that the schedule for the distribution and retrieval of modules are also cancelled, because of rescheduling and work suspension the topic that should be discuss or the covered topics*

*will not be covered all because of these suspensions". Due to changes in time schedules caused by class suspensions, they will not be able to cover all of the topics that they need to discuss in the module, and thus will not be able to provide the quality of education that they require.*

**Theme 2. Exposure to Covid-19 Virus.** One of the worries of our participants interfering their work is that being exposed to covid for both of them (teachers and students). According to participants 4 *"I am also worried that the parents are the one who get the modules, whenever they travel going to school claiming and retrieving the modules of their children, I am worried they might catch this covid virus and that they will be able to carry the virus in to their household"*, while participant 5 said that *"Well, my fear is the risk of being exposed to this virus especially that I am traveling every day to go to my work"*. They are worried that the parents who get the SLM might catch this covid-19 virus, also, since some the teachers are travelling every day, they are worried about the risk of being expose to this virus.

According to Madeline Will (2020) about her Surveys: Most Teachers Don't Want In-Person Instruction, Fear COVID-19 Heath Risks. In several places across the country, teachers are protesting a return to in-person instruction, and teachers' unions are putting pressure on districts to stay virtual in the fall. But if districts stick to their plan of a hybrid or fully in-person model, teachers who are nervous about returning will have to decide if they will come back to the classroom. Some teachers are considering quitting, taking an unpaid leave of absence, or retiring early.

**Theme 3. Interaction Between Teachers and Students.** According to participants 1, 2, 3 and 6, one of their worries on covid 19, interfering their work is that there is no assurance that students will learn, they need to make new teaching strategies, also one of the participants said that *"there is a big impact if there is the presence of teachers"*. With regards to science subject, one of the participants said that *"Without face to face we cannot perform laboratory activities"*. This means that an actual classroom interaction is necessary in science classes, and so, teachers are worried about the assurance that the students will not actually learn.

## **II. In Managing Time to Assess Number of Students Module**

**Theme 4. Teacher Time Management.** According to the data from the participants, it only implies that one important strategy in managing students' module is the time management which is a big factor in the new normal setting. Participant 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5 stated that they have to prepare the modules in advance and to follow their fixed time line. Time management is a misleading that cannot be managed, because it is an inaccessible factor that can be viewed as a monitoring and controlling the time (Eilam & Aharon, 2003). Many authors referred "time management" and supported that it is the process of determining needs, setting goals to achieve determined needs, prioritising and planning the tasks required to achieve the settled goals.

**Theme 5. Teachers' flexibility, strategies and techniques.** According to Participant 6, in terms of managing time to assess number of students module, "Sometimes it takes them two weeks or more than that to accomplish the module, so I think the most important technique or strategy in managing this issue is to how the teacher will communicate with the students". This only means that Teachers' Flexibility, Strategies and Techniques would be the best way to manage and assess number of students module.

### **III. On the Challenges Encountered by Teachers in Monitoring Student Learning and Retrieval of Modules**

**Theme 6. Incomplete Self-learning Material.** According to the answers of the participants, one of the challenges of the teachers in monitoring student learning and retrieval of modules are the empty self-learning material or Incomplete Self-Learning Material. They said that they received modules that's empty or no answer, which means it would be difficult for them to give an exact grade if the retrieve self-learning materials are empty. This is a big factor and challenge for them to monitor their students.

Participant 1 said *"The retrieved modules are empty; they say the students are throwing the modules in the river side I guess because of the situation we are experiencing now a days."* While participant 2 said that, *"So there is a big implication and big challenge for us on how to teach the students, it is very difficult for me to know or to monitor if they are really learning, because some of the self-learning materials don't have answers."* Participant 4 also said that *"there are times that our students do not claim their modules, and sometimes we receive modules that's empty or no answer, so that is really challenging in our part."*

**Theme 7. Student Learning and Wellbeing.** Participant 3 mentioned that *"It is hard for me to conduct home visit in order to have feedbacking on what had happened to the modules and answers of modules that I have distributed and delivered to my learners, because not at all times that it is safe for me to be traveling and meeting these parents and students in their homes, specially that there was an increasing number of positive COVID patients in the community"* while participant 4 stated that *"also, home visitation is very risky for both of us students and teachers, because sometimes, students happened to be a close contact of a covid patient, so it is very challenging in our part."* Since it's impossible for them to monitor students learning in an empty module, teachers also concern on the risk of conducting home visitation in order to monitor students learning.

**Theme 8. On Time Retrieval of Self-learning Material.** One of the challenges of the teachers is on time retrieval of self-learning material. They said that, there are students who do not return their self-learning materials on time, also they cannot force the students or parents to return the self-learning materials on time which is a big problem for them because since home visitation

is also risky, it's a challenge for them on how they will reach out or contact the students, since not all students have access to internet and gadgets.

According to participant 5, *"There are students who do not return their self-learning materials on time secondly other students have no gadgets so I am having a hard time to communicate with them but somehow home visitation is the best way to solve to problem"*, while according to participant 6, *"We cannot force students/parents to submit the self-learning material every week, so it's really a big challenge and how am I going to, you know, reach out to these students."*

#### **IV. On the Challenges Encountered by Teachers in Checking and Evaluating Students Answers in the Module.**

**Theme 9. Apathy of students in answering the SLM, leads to incomplete SLM.** According to participant 1, *"I cannot really give them an exact grade, because most of the returned modules don't have answers, so it's very hard for us on how are we going to grade and evaluate our students."*. Participant 2 stated that *"Some of retrieved modules don't have any answers or sometimes it has no answers, so it would be difficult to give them grades if they did not answer the module. In that way we know that students are not interested in answering their self-learning material"*. While participant 4 said that *"There are modules that do not have answers, whenever there is a meeting or the retrieval or distribution of learning materials, they have difficulty in understanding as to what is written in the module."* and participant 6 expresses that *"I cannot really ensure that they will answer to the best they can. Sometimes I could observe that some of the answers are not even made by them, and some of the SLM don't have answers"*. This situation is really very difficult for the teachers, because they will not be able to give exact grades to the students and evaluate the students according to their outputs.

According to Morin (2020), one out of her 5 reasons why students aren't engaging in distance learning is because, 1. Students' life circumstances has changed. In the midst of a pandemic, economic recession, and social unrest, your students' lives may have changed drastically since the day your school shut down. Many families are grappling with financial worries, illness, loss, homelessness, and/or food insecurity. Or they may be vulnerable in other ways.

**Theme 10. Teachers Poor Work-life Balance.** According to Rapanta, et al., (2020) The thin line between academic and private life of the teachers is thus disappearing and already having hard times to balance work and other aspects of their life. According to participants 3, and 5, due to conflicting time schedule and great number of students that they handled, they spend more time in checking students' LSM, experiencing also sleepless nights. This only means that some of the teachers are experiencing poor work-life balance because of great number of students that needs to be evaluated.



## V. On the Overall Experience of Science Teachers in the Implementation of Modular Approach of Teaching during Pandemic

**Theme 11. Paradigm Shift in Pedagogy.** Based on the answers of the participants, majority of the participants have the same experiences in the new normal education specifically in the modular approach of teaching. According to their responses, the new normal setting is really very difficult and challenging for them, since they have large number of students that needs to be evaluated. One of the participants also said that “this is something that is new, that we do not do before”. The teachers don’t have the assurance that the students will actually learn and become equipped with the competencies in the future.

### CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The following conclusions are drawn out based on the results of the study.

1. Time management is one of the challenges that teachers face in the implementation of modular approach of teaching during a pandemic. Teachers struggle to manage their time due to the large number of students they supervise. Incomplete self-learning materials are also one of their most difficult challenges when it comes to checking and evaluating students. Teachers are also concerned about becoming infected with this virus. Some topics require a face-to-face setting for a science teacher, and a modular approach of teaching is not an effective way to teach science concepts specially when it comes to laboratory activities.
2. Science teachers are also adopting this mode of learning, despite the fact that they have no guarantee that their students will learn. As a result, teachers' flexibility and strategy are critical in order to continue monitoring and evaluating students' learning.
3. Due to the large number of students who must be evaluated, science teachers have a difficult time balancing their work and personal lives. Teachers spend the majority of their time checking the self-learning materials, resulting in sleepless nights and working overtime.
4. Due to changes in teaching methods (paradigm shift in pedagogy), science teachers' overall lived experiences are way different from face-to-face settings; science teachers struggle with the delivery of science concepts, causing them a great deal of stress and pressure; and they lack time for their personal lives and responsibilities. However, science teachers see this as an opportunity to improve their work and develop new teaching methods and strategies in order to provide their students with the quality education that they deserve.

### ADVANCED RESEARCH

Based on the findings of the study, the researchers recommended that teachers should maintain regular communication and feedback with their students, as well as conduct limited home visits, if necessary, in light of the covid-19 virus. Also, be aware of and consider their students physical and

mental health, as well as their socioeconomic status. In this mode of learning, science teachers should also develop and implement new teaching methods or strategies. Provide an engaging activity and clearly stated instructions. For further studies, the researchers recommend to conduct related studies to the challenges of teachers in the new normal education and investigate more on the lived experiences of teachers in both online and modular approach of teaching.

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