



Problems Encountered by BEEd Teachers and Students of Apayao State College in Using Modular Distance Learning Modality: Basis for Intervention

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Authors' contributions

This work was carried out in collaboration among all authors. Author MTS designed the study and conceptualization, managed the literature searches and data analysis, and manuscript writing. Author RAT managed the literature searches and survey design and manuscript writing. Author SPLSE managed the formatting and structuring of the research paper and manuscript writing. All authors read and approved the final manuscript.

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ABSTRACT

This study used a descriptive phenomenological approach to identify the problems encountered by teachers and students in implementing modular distance learning, as well as the possible solutions to the identified problems. The study was conducted among the teachers and students of Bachelor of Elementary Education Department (BEEd) of Apayao State College – Luna Campus. Four (4) BEEd program mainstay teachers and ten (10) BEEd students were approached to request their voluntary involvement as key participants to the study. The participants were chosen using convenience sampling and then interviewed individually via video conference to learn more about their experiences as a data-gathering tool. Data were analyzed using a thematic analysis approach to find any patterns in the participants' responses by transcribing, organizing, and coding. Findings revealed that teachers identified four (4) themes of problems related to the preparation of printed learning materials; management in the distribution of printed learning materials; retrieval of students' activities and outputs; and checking of students' activities and outputs. Students also identified two (2) themes of problems they had in using modular distance learning that is related to the submission of their activities and outputs, as well as their capability to learn independently. School administrators can use the findings of this study to develop interventions, programs, and activities to address issues in the implementation of the modular distance learning modality.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The occurrence of the Covid-19 pandemic paved the way for the temporary closure of different schools entire the globe [1] (Bond, 2020). The traditional model of classes, which is the face-to-face interaction of students and teachers, has been shifted to distance learning [2] (He et al., 2020). Distance learning became the immediate response of academic institutions to sustain the learning continuity of the students. This learning delivery modality has different types that include online distance learning, TV or radio-based instruction, and modular distance learning [3] (Quinones, 2020). Moreover, the modular distance learning modality is more accessible as a learning mode in basic education as well as to higher education institutions in most places in the country, especially in the areas that are hardly reached by internet connectivity [4] (DepEd, 2020).

According to a study conducted by [5] Ambayon and Millenes (2020), modular instruction is more effective in the teaching-learning method than traditional teaching methods because it allows students to learn at their own pace. It is an unrestricted self-learning panache in which students are stimulated and their curiosity is piqued by instantaneous reinforcement, such as a comment on a practice exercise. As a result, this type of learning modality promotes a student-centered learning approach. However, the implementation of modular instruction fostered various challenges for teachers and students. According to studies, this new normal has created problems and obstacles, particularly for learners [6] (Hebebcı et.al, 2020). Hence, it is evident that there are struggles associated with the implementation of modular distance learning modalities.

Students are worried about their distance learning classes, particularly if they are using modular distance learning. Not all students are well-suited to this method of instruction, and not all subjects are best taught in this manner. When compared to students in basic education, college students are less likely to have issues with distance learning. To be a successful student, they must possess the following qualities: tolerance for ambiguity, a desire for autonomy, and the ability to be flexible [7] (Threkeld & Brzoska, 1994). When using distance learning, [8] Hardy and Boaz (1997) discovered that

"students are required to be more focused, better time managers, and capable of learning independently".

[3] Quinones (2020) found out that the parents and students preferred using modular distance learning over other learning modalities due to poor internet connectivity. The different Department of Education (DepEd) schools in Apayao utilize modular distance learning because most learners have no gadgets to use. Moreover, they are not yet familiar with using computers/ laptop for them to learn.

The only higher education institution in the province of Apayao, Apayao State College (ASC), uses a variety of teaching methods, including online learning, radio-based instruction, blended learning, and modular distance learning. However, because most ASC students do not have gadgets to access their lessons online and are from areas with poor internet connectivity, modular distance learning became the most widely used learning modality of ASC to present and discuss lessons during the Covid-19 pandemic.

During the Covid-19 pandemic, the implementation of modular distance learning in ASC caused some problems for teachers and students. As a result, this study is being proposed to identify the problems faced by the Bachelor of Elementary Education (BEE) teachers and students of Apayao State College - Luna Campus.

The main objective of this study is to identify the problems encountered by the teachers and students in the implementation of modular distance learning modality in the BEE Department of Apayao State College – Luna Campus. Also, this study aims to determine the possible solutions to resolve the problems encountered by the participants of the study. Specifically, it seeks to answer the following questions: (1) What are the problems encountered by BEE teachers and students in using the modular distance learning modality? and (2) What are the suggestions and possible solutions that can be proposed to resolve the problems encountered by the participants?

This study focused on identifying the problems encountered by BEE teachers and students in

implementing modular distance learning modality and determining the possible solutions to resolve the identified problems. The study had fourteen (14) participants: four (4) BEEd teachers and ten (10) BEEd students at ASC – Luna Campus. This study will not cover other problems of teachers and students that are not associated with using modular distance learning. Only teachers who are teaching in the BEEd department and students who are officially enrolled in the BEEd program are selected to be the participants in the study.

2. METHODOLOGY

This study made use of a descriptive phenomenological approach as its research design which focused on identifying the problems encountered by teachers and students and determining possible solutions to the problems in the implementation of modular distance learning modality.

Qualitative research focuses on the human experience as it occurs in social life and looks to make sense of social practices [9] (Lochmiller & Lester, 2017). Qualitative research can help researchers access the thoughts of participants, which can give the researcher a better understanding of how people react to their experiences [10] (Sutton & Austin, 2015).

Phenomenology is a sort of qualitative research that focuses on a person's interactions with the environment [11] (Neubauer, Witkop, & Varpio, 2019). The researcher was able to discover the problems that BEEd teachers and students encountered when using the modular distant learning modality by using a phenomenological qualitative study approach. As a result, it provides a clearer picture of the potential solutions to the study's difficulties.

The BEEd program includes seven (7) mainstay faculty members responsible for 122 BEEd students in the school year 2021-2022. There are fourteen (14) participants that were approached to request their voluntary involvement as key participants of the study; only four (4) mainstay teachers of the BEEd program and ten (10) BEEd students are selected; because a large sample size will not be necessary when using a qualitative study [12] (Patton, 2014).

The researchers selected the participants by using convenience sampling. Due to the challenges, dangers, and restrictive protocols

brought on by the Covid-19 pandemic, the researchers used convenience sampling, which considered the availability and accessibility of the faculty and students in participating in the study. Convenience sampling is a technique that qualitative researchers use to recruit participants who are easy to reach and convenient to the researcher.

In the present situation, due to the Covid-19 pandemic, a face-to-face interview is not an easy task for the researchers to obtain answers from the participants; therefore, the researcher used individual interviews through video conference to explore the experiences of the participants involved as data gathering tools. The researcher scheduled an online interview for each participant of the research. Google Meet, Facebook Messenger, and other social media platforms were used in the interview and retrieval of data. The individual interviews were recorded via online video conference, particularly using guide questions with open-ended questions. Guide questions with open-ended questions allow participants to explain experiences in-depth, allowing the researcher to thoroughly examine the responses [13] (Padilla-Diaz, 2015). The confidentiality of the participants' profiles was carefully considered by the researchers. The participants gave their permission for the talks to be recorded. The complete data collecting process took about ten (10) minutes, from introductions to data collection for each participant.

To accurately represent the participants' experiences, the researcher must analyze all data collected equally [14] (Creswell, 2014). In phenomenological qualitative research, data analysis entails looking through all of the data collected in interviews to see if there are any patterns in the participants' responses [15] (Green et al., 2007). The data were analyzed by transcribing, organizing, and coding it using a thematic analysis approach to find any patterns in the responses. The thematic analysis was used to produce a list of themes that were mentioned in the gathered responses.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The findings are presented under the following major headings: Problems Encountered by Teachers and Its Possible Solutions in Using Modular Distance Learning Modality in Terms of Preparation of Printed Learning Materials, Distribution of Printed Learning Materials,

Retrieval of Student's Activities and Outputs, and Checking of Student's Activities and Outputs; and Problems Encountered by Students and Its Possible Solutions in Using Modular Distance Learning Modality in Terms of the Submission of Activities and Outputs and Independent Learning. After the collection of responses from the fourteen (14) participants, four (4) from the teachers and ten (10) from the students, the researchers tabulated and presented each item correspondingly.

3.1 Problems Encountered by BEEd Teachers and its Possible Solutions in Using Modular Distance Learning Modality in Terms of Preparation of Printed Learning Materials, Distribution of Printed Learning Materials, Retrieval of Student's Activities and Outputs, and Checking of Student's Activities and Outputs

Four (4) themes emanated from the teachers' responses on the problems they encountered during the implementation of modular distance learning as a learning delivery modality in Apayao State College – Luna Campus. These include the problems in the preparation of printed learning materials, distribution of printed learning materials, retrieval of students' activities and outputs, and checking of students' activities and outputs. The participants also suggested possible solutions to the problems they encountered.

3.1.1 Problems in the Preparation of Printed Learning Materials

Participants of the study point out that there are problems encountered during the preparation of the printed learning materials in the implementation of modular distance learning modality. Table 1 shows the problems encountered by the teachers during the preparation of printed learning materials.

Based on the table above, the preparation of printed learning materials is one of the problems of the teachers in using the modular distance learning modality. This is attributed to the inadequate amount of time to prepare printed learning materials and the scarcity of needed supplies to reproduce all the learning materials for all the students. The result of the current study was partially supported by [16] Castroverde and Acala (2021) who found that the

problems in the preparation of the printed learning materials are related to time, materials, and supplies. Preparation of printed learning materials requires a lot of time especially if they have too many students. In one of the responses obtained, it is difficult to prepare all the learning materials in the set schedule given that they only have limited time. Participants also mentioned that due to scarcity of the supplies such as bond papers and inks, they spend their own money to reproduce the learning materials to finish printing the learning materials on the set schedule given to them. Furthermore, the lack of printing materials and scarcity of supplies affect the productivity of teachers in the preparation of printed learning materials [16] (Castroverde & Acala, 2021). Similarly, sometimes supplies are not available on time which makes difficult for the teachers to print all the learning materials for the whole semester, as an alternative, they only print the learning materials per four (4) units on the schedule of each distribution of the printed learning materials.

3.1.2 Problems in the Distribution of Printed Learning Materials

Participants of the study also considered that there are problems encountered during the distribution of the printed learning materials to students. Table 2 enlists the participants' responses on the problems they encountered during the distribution of the printed learning materials.

The findings show that in modular distance learning, managing the distribution of printed learning materials is a problem. It is worth noting that the problems in the distribution of the printed learning materials to the students were attributed to not following strictly the schemes on the distribution of learning materials, as well as issues with the coordination to LGUs and selected distribution sites. Findings revealed that some students do not get or are late to get their printed learning materials on the distribution site. A study done by [16] Castroverde and Acala (2021) shows that the reason for the late submission of activities and outputs is attributed to students' late claiming of their printed learning materials. In addition, the participants noted that some of the individuals in-charge in the distribution of printed learning materials are not fully aware of the schemes that were implemented in the school. One of the responses revealed that there are LGUs who are too strict in the implementation of the protocol which

sometimes delays the distribution of the printed learning materials.

3.1.3 Problems in the retrieval of student's activities and outputs

The participants of the study narrated that there are activities and outputs that they haven't received although the students claimed that they have submitted them. Table 3 shows the responses of the participants on the problems they encountered in retrieving students' activities and outputs.

Based on the table above, retrieval of students' activities and outputs is one of the problems encountered by the participants in using a modular distance learning modality. This is attributed to students' accountability of their learning concerning submitting all of the activities and outputs they are required to complete. This result is congruent to the study of [16] Castroverde and Acala (2021) who noted that

one of the problems of the teachers is the collection of the students' activities and outputs which is associated with the student's responsibility in complying with all the requirements specified in the learning materials. Failure of students to submit completed answers in all activities specified in the learning materials on time has an impact on the teachers' set schedule and limits their time to check students' outputs. As a result, the teacher's ability to thoroughly examine the students' submitted activities and outputs is negatively affected. In addition, the findings revealed that there are misplaced or lost student's activities and outputs. As stated by one participant (faculty 2), "Many of my students claimed that they have already submitted their activities and outputs, but I did not receive anything from the team-in-charge to retrieve student's outputs and we cannot determine how it was misplaced or lost." This is the reason why teachers sometimes require the students to make another activity and outputs and submit it again.

Table 1. Interview responses on the problems encountered by the teachers in using modular distance learning modality in terms of the preparation of printed learning materials

Participants	Problems encountered	General theme
Faculty 1	It takes so much time on my part to organize and sort the printed learning material because I have too many students. Sometimes I have to spend my own money when necessary, just to prepare and reproduce my module on time.	Problems in the Preparation of Printed Learning Materials
Faculty 3	There are times that I don't finish printing my learning materials for all of my students because the supplies I need such as bond papers and inks are not available on time.	
Faculty 4	It is difficult to print all the modules before the set schedule because I have too many students.	

Table 2. Interview Responses on the problems encountered by the teachers in using modular distance learning modality in terms of the distribution of printed learning materials

Participants	Problems encountered	General Theme
Faculty 1	I have a few students who claim that their modules are lost on the distribution site, but I know that I submitted it to those who are in charge of distributing the modules.	Problems in the Distribution of the Printed Learning Materials
Faculty 2	It is stressful when there are times that the scheduled days for the distribution of the printed learning material are not strictly followed. I also learned from one of my colleagues that there are Local Government Units (LGUs) that require our distribution team to have an antigen test before they can enter their municipality, which may delay our team-in-charge of the distribution to distribute the modules to our students.	
Faculty 4	I found out that few students who do not get their modules or are late to get them to the distribution site.	

Table 3. Interview responses of the problems encountered by the teachers in using modular distance learning modality in terms of the retrieval of student’s activities and outputs

Participants	Problems encountered	General theme
Faculty 2	Many of my students claimed that they had already submitted their activities and outputs, but I did not receive anything from the team in charge to retrieve students’ outputs, and we cannot identify how it was misplaced or lost.	Problems in the Retrieval of Student’s Activities and Outputs
Faculty 3	Some students submit their activities and outputs late than the given schedule, but I understand their situation.	
Faculty 4	I observed that there are some of my students who don’t submit their outputs and activities on time which affects my other commitment to other tasks. There are times that the retrieved student’s outputs are not organized/sorted properly when it is submitted to the advisers. I also observed that there are students who failed to submit all their activities and outputs.	

Table 4. Interview responses of the problems encountered by the teachers in using modular distance learning modality in terms of checking the student’s activities and outputs

Participants	Problems encountered	General theme
Faculty 1	I have too many subjects and students which I think affects my efficiency to check their outputs. I observed that some of my student’s outputs are copied by another student or copied on the internet.	Problems in the Checking of Student’s Activities and Outputs
Faculty 2	The handwriting of the students used in answering the activities was difficult to understand and recognize which makes it difficult for me to check it properly. My time to check all the activities of my students is limited because there are other paper works that I need to accomplish.	
Faculty 3	There are outputs and activities without the student’s name that is why it takes time to identify whose output is being checked.	
Faculty 4	When I check the outputs and activities of my students, some of them are incomplete or with no answers.	

3.1.4 Problems in the checking of student’s activities and outputs

After retrieving the students' activities and outputs, the participants are expected to check and evaluate them. Table 4 shows the responses of the participants on the problems they encountered in the process of checking students' activities and outputs.

Students' ethical behavior and commitment, teachers' limited time to check students' outputs due to other paperwork, and they also have too many subjects and students were all cited as reasons for the difficulties in checking students' activities and outputs. Due to ineligible penmanship, teachers sometimes have difficulty understanding or recognizing the answers of students. Aside from these, some students

submit activities and outputs that are incomplete or have no answers. This supports the study of [16] Castroverde and Acala (2021) who found out that teachers are having difficulty checking and recording students' activities and outputs because of students' negligence. [17] De Villa and Manalo (2020) stated that the validity and trustworthiness of students' responses is an issue in distance learning especially in the implementation of modular distance learning since the teachers cannot provide real-time facility when giving examinations and making activities and outputs. Students who copied their answers or outputs from their classmates or copied their answers word for word from the internet were confirmed by participants. One of the participants elaborated on the experience of encountering students' activities and outputs that are copied from another student and the internet.

The teacher states, "I am surprised that while checking the submitted activities and outputs of my students, I found out that there are students' outputs who have the same outputs from another student. I also observed that some of the essays that I gave them are copied from the internet without citing their sources and at least re-articulate and restructure their output. This happened not only once, and I am disappointed by the audacity of these students to do those unethical actions."

3.1.5 Summary of the possible solutions to resolve the problems encountered in terms of preparation of printed learning materials, distribution of printed learning materials, retrieval of student's activities and outputs, and checking of students' activities and outputs

If there are problems, there were also proposed solutions suggested by the participants. Table 5 shows the summary of responses of the teachers in question number 2 which is, "What are your suggestions and possible solutions you can propose to resolve each problem you have encountered?"

The teachers experienced difficulties in their work during the implementation of modular distance learning modality, despite of this, the data shows that there are still solutions available that could be used as a basis for intervention. Having a support system on which they can rely when they need assistance can help solve problems in the preparation of printed learning materials. To minimize problems in the preparation of printed learning materials, time management and contingency plans must be included. Similarly, problems with managing the distribution of printed learning materials and retrieving students' activities and outputs can be addressed by developing schemes for how students' printed learning materials, as well as their activities and outputs, will be distributed and retrieved. Avoiding misunderstandings in the management of the distribution of printed learning materials and the retrieval of students' outputs requires frequent communication with students and other concerned agencies and offices. By focusing on the ethical issues of cheating and informing students of the policies and guidelines through an online meeting at the start of the semester, the problems in checking students' activities and outputs may be reduced. Taking advantage of available technology also provides an opportunity to relieve the burden of

checking, computing, and recording the students' outputs. Finally, be considerate of the students' circumstances, give them ample time to complete their activities, and demonstrate to them that teachers are willing to assist them. Encourage them to submit their work as soon as possible.

3.2 Problems Encountered by BEE Students and its Possible Solutions in Using Modular Distance Learning Modality in Terms of the Submission of Activities and Outputs and Capability to Learn Independently

There were two (2) themes that emanated from the responses of the students on the problems they encountered during the implementation of modular distance learning modality in Apayao State College – Luna Campus. The problems derived from the responses were the submission of activities and outputs, and their capability to learn independently. They also suggested possible solutions to the problems they encountered.

3.2.1 Problems in the submission of activities and outputs

The participants of the study narrated that some activities and outputs were misplaced or lost, and they are required to do it again. Students also mentioned that they are having a hard time beating the deadline to submit their outputs because some of their learning materials contain too many activities considering that they have at least seven (7) subjects per semester. Being in remote locations poses a problem because there are few options for transporting their activities and outputs to the chosen retrieval site. Table 6 shows the responses of the participants on the problems they encountered in submitting their activities and outputs.

According to the deduced responses of the participants in the table above, it was found out that there are problems in the submission of activities and outputs of the students. The problem is attributed to misplace or lost submitted outputs of the students, limited time to submit their outputs due to too many activities in the learning materials per subject, and limited means of transportation to submit their activities and outputs. The participants of the study narrated that some activities and outputs were misplaced or lost, and they are required to do it

Table 5. Summary of the interview responses of the possible solutions to resolve the problems in the preparation of printed learning materials, distribution of printed learning materials, retrieval of student’s activities and outputs, and checking of students’ activities and outputs

Problems encountered	Possible solutions to the problems encountered
Preparation of Printed Learning Materials	<p>Ask for the assistance of other teachers or assist other teachers when they need your help.</p> <p>Prepare and make the learning material ahead of time so you can print it earlier.</p> <p>The supply office should consider making a contingency plan for unexpected circumstances.</p> <p>Formulate a “contingency time” for unexpected events.</p> <p>Plan and write the things you need to prioritize to meet the demands of your work. Carefully planned scheduling will help teachers to accomplish things on time.</p>
Distribution of Printed Learning Materials	<p>Give a copy of the transmittal letter to the team in charge of the distribution of modules as proof that you already gave the printed learning materials to the students.</p> <p>Subject teachers should inform their students before the schedule of distribution that their printed learning materials are ready to be distributed.</p> <p>Plan and formulate a scheme on how the student’s printed learning materials are to be distributed.</p> <p>Forge a Memorandum of Agreement to the concerned municipalities and barangays.</p> <p>Include in the budget the expenses of rapid testing of the team in charge of distributing the learning materials.</p> <p>Inform the students of the schedule of distribution.</p> <p>After formulating a meticulously planned scheme of the distribution of printed learning materials, upload it to the ASC FB Page to give more information and updates to all ASCian students.</p>
Retrieval of Students’ Activities and Outputs	<p>Plan and formulate a scheme on how students’ activities and outputs are to be retrieved and to be given to their subject teachers.</p> <p>Contact those students who submitted their outputs late than the set schedule. Motivate and encourage them to submit their activities and outputs even if they did not meet the deadline.</p> <p>Devise a contingency plan. Do not be discouraged if your expected plans did not happen.</p> <p>Ask the students the reasons for not submitting their activities and outputs</p> <p>Instruct them to take pictures of the answers of their activities and outputs as proof that it was already accomplished.</p> <p>Teachers may instruct students to submit the pictures of their answers thru an online platform (messenger or email) if their outputs are lost or misplaced.</p>
Checking of Students’ Activities and Outputs	<p>Teachers may take the advantage of learning the tools and technology to perform office works like computation of scores, checking and recording of student’s activities and outputs.</p> <p>Plan carefully the workload and number of preparations of the teachers per semester.</p> <p>Conduct orientation that emphasizes the ethical issues of academic dishonesty.</p> <p>Remind students to write their answers legibly so that they will be checked easily.</p> <p>Plan and write the things you need to prioritize to meet the demands of your work. Carefully planned and well-executed time management will help teachers to accomplish things on time.</p>

Problems encountered	Possible solutions to the problems encountered
	Remind the students via social media platforms to include and legibly write their names including their course and section and the course subject they are enrolled in a week before the set schedule of the submission of students' activities and outputs. Provide adequate time for the students to answer all their activities and outputs. You may also give them guidance on how to answer their activities.

Table 6. Interview responses of the problems encountered by the students in using modular distance learning modality in terms of submission of activities and outputs

Participants	Problems encountered	General theme
Student 1	Unfortunately, we are from a remote area. We are far from the selected retrieval site of our outputs/answers.	Problems in the Submission of Activities and Outputs
Student 2	We are bombarded with too many activities considering that we have many subjects which force me not to submit my answers on time. There are few vehicles to take me to the retrieval site of our outputs.	
Student 4	I submitted my activities and outputs, but my teachers have not received them.	
Student 5	My teacher told me that I did not submit my outputs, but I explained that I already submitted them. I found out that my outputs are still in our selected retrieval site that is why my teachers did not receive them yet.	
Student 8	I submitted my answer sheets, but my teacher told me that I did not submit them because she did not received anything.	
Student 9	It is hard to beat the scheduled deadline to submit my answers because they gave us limited time to accomplish all the activities.	
Student 10	Many of the students, like me, experienced that our envelopes where our answer sheets are placed were submitted to other teachers or were misplaced.	

Table 7. Interview responses of the problems encountered by the students in using modular distance learning modality in terms of independent learning

Participants	Problems encountered	General theme
Student 1	Independent learning is a challenge for me, especially since I don't have adequate knowledge of the lessons in my subjects.	Problems on Capability to Learn Independently
Student 3	I am having a hard time understanding the tasks given to us because no one explains to us what to do.	
Student 6	The modular approach is challenging on my part because we have limited guidance from our teachers.	
Student 7	Without the assistance of my teachers, I am having a hard time understanding my lessons and as a consequence, I cannot answer some of my activities.	
Student 9	I feel like we are answering the learning materials just to comply with the requirements of our subject.	

again. Students also mentioned that they are having a hard time beating the deadline to submit their outputs because some of their modules contain too many activities considering that they have other subjects. According to the study of

[18] Dangle and Sumaoang (2020) reveals that modules with a lot of exercises are a major problem on the part of the students. The excessive amounts of activities in the learning materials cause distress to students. Accounts

from the responses revealed problems in the submission of activities and outputs is attributed to distance, remoteness, and few vehicles. In addition, students are struggling to submit their outputs to the selected retrieval site because of the strict protocols during GCQ and ECQ. As stated by one participant (student 1), “Ang layo namin sa lugar kung saan namin pwedeng ipasa ang aming mga sagot”. This is the reason why students cannot submit their activities and outputs on time. In addition, students are struggling to submit their outputs to the selected retrieval site because of the strict protocols during GCQ and ECQ.

3.2.2 Problems on capability to learn independently

The participants of the study stated that they are having a hard time understanding the lessons on their own. Their responses revealed that the communication between their teachers is limited in modular distance learning which affected their understanding of their lessons. Table 7 shows the participants’ responses on the problems they encountered in learning independently their lessons during the implementation of modular distance learning modality.

Based on the table above, the capability of the students to learn independently is one of the problems they encountered during the implementation of the modular distance learning modality. One of the participants (student 1) made this evident by saying, “Mahirap po mag self-study. Lalo na at marami po kaming hindi alam tungkol sa mga subjects po namin.”

Another participant (student 3) expressed this in the following statement, “Nahihirapan po ako kasi hindi ko po maintindihan ang iba naming gagawin at walang nagpapaliwanag sa amin ng dapat naming gawin.” The problem is attributed to the limited communication between the teacher and students, as well as limited assistance from the teachers to explain the content of the learning materials. These findings are contrary to the study of [19] Nardo (2017) which claimed that modular approach encourages independent study among the students. He also emphasized that students are empowered by learning how to learn on their own. In one of the responses obtained, the reason why students submit incomplete activities and outputs or with no answers is because they do not understand their lessons.

3.2.3 Summary of the Possible Solutions to Resolve the Problems Encountered in Terms of the Submission of Activities and Outputs and Independent Learning

If there are problems, there were also solutions suggested by the participants. According to [20] Barcenas and Bibon (2021), the identified sources of problems are serious threats to educational quality, and well-planned interventions must be implemented as soon as possible to minimize the negative impact on students’ learning. Table 8 shows the summary of responses of the students in question number 2 which is, “What are your suggestions and possible solutions you can propose to resolve each problem you have encountered?”

Table 8. Summary of the interview responses of the possible solutions and suggestions to resolve the problems in the submission of activities and outputs and capability of the students to learn independently

Problems encountered	Possible solutions to the problems encountered
Submission of Activities and Outputs	Take a picture of the answers to your activities and outputs as proof that it was already accomplished, and you may submit it online if your outputs are lost or misplaced.
	Extend the deadlines of the submission of the activities and outputs because we have too many tasks to get done.
	When we submit our answers, there must someone who is in charge of sorting and recording the submitted outputs coming from the selected retrieval sites.
	Teachers should inform us as soon as they have received our activities and outputs.
	Teachers should give us adequate time to finish our outputs, they should consider the difficulty of the activities they gave to us.
	Do not give activities that are impossible to be done or accomplish in

Problems encountered	Possible solutions to the problems encountered
	a limited time and resources.
	Coming from a far-flung area, the school should think of ways like having more than one distribution and retrieval site to lessen our problems in getting our printed learning materials and submitting our outputs considering the distance away from our location to the selected distribution and retrieval site.
	Submit our activities thru an online platform so that we still have a copy of our outputs if ever it was not yet recorded.
Capability to Learn Independently	A limited face-to-face class or a limited online class so that we can clarify to our teachers the lessons we don't know.
	Do not bombard us with too many activities because it will limit our time to understand other lessons in different subjects.
	Upload recorded instructional videos that explain our lesson so that we can go over it whenever we want to learn our lessons.
	We should meet in online meetings at least twice a month to discuss to us briefly our lessons
	Teachers may suggest tutorial sites or links to give more insights and as a supplement to the lessons.

As students encountered different problems in the implementation of modular distance learning modality, the result of the study shows that there are available solutions that can be used as a foundation for intervention. Teachers should be considerate of their situation, according to the participants. From extending the deadline of submission of the activities and outputs to reducing the number of activities they need to accomplish. Taking pictures of completed activities and outputs can be used as a backup plan if the submitted outputs are misplaced or unavailable. The problem of student distribution and retrieval may be solved if each municipality has multiple distribution and retrieval sites. Teachers should also allow students to submit their activities and outputs via online platforms such as messenger and email, according to the participants. In relation to the problems on students' capability to learn independently, the participants suggested having a limited face-to-face class or limited online meetings to briefly discuss the lessons. Using digital technology to learn the lessons, such as recorded instructional videos and tutorial sites or links, may be beneficial. The quantity and level of difficulty of the activities to be given can be determined by considering the students' competency and ability to complete the tasks.

4. CONCLUSION

This phenomenological research aimed to identify experiences of the BEEed teachers and students in using the Modular Distance Learning Modality in the New Normal. Emerging themes

were derived related to the problems of the teachers and students, as well as their suggestions for the possible solutions to the problems they encountered. Based on the findings, the following conclusions were hereby drawn:

1. As teachers and students utilized modular distance learning in the new normal as a learning delivery modality, they encountered different problems. Four (4) themes were identified related to the problems of teachers in using the modular distance learning modality. These include problems in the preparation of printed learning materials, management in the distribution of printed learning materials, retrieval of students' activities and outputs, and checking of students' activities and outputs.
2. Two (2) themes were also identified related to the problems of students in using the modular distance learning modality. These include problems in the submission of students' activities and outputs and their capability to learn independently.
3. Teachers and students were optimistic that there are still available solutions to the problems which may serve as a springboard for intervention. These suggestions may help teachers avoid or lessen their problems in the implementation of the modular distance learning modality. These include time management, contingency plans, having a support system, meticulously formulated schemes on the management of distribution and retrieval of students' learning material and outputs, frequent

communication between the teachers and students, and conducting orientation meetings to discuss guidelines and policies of the class.

4. Suggestions from the students to address the problems they encountered includes extending the deadlines of submission of outputs, lessening the number of activities, taking pictures of their outputs before submitting the hard copy of their outputs, to have more than one distribution and retrieval site per municipality, allowing them to submit their outputs thru online platforms (messenger or email), uploading recorded instructional videos or tutorial sites and links, and conducting limited face to face or online meetings to discuss briefly the lessons.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the above conclusions, the researchers come up with the following recommendations:

1. The identified problems need to be recognized and addressed by the concerned offices and authorities to help the teachers and students to continue their tasks during the implementation of modular distance learning. Supervisors may use the results of this study as a basis in developing interventions, programs, and relevant activities to address the problems encountered in the implementation of the modular distance learning modality.
2. Teachers may formulate contingency plans and implement suitable strategies to meet the demands of using modular distance learning as a learning delivery modality.
3. College administrators may work with the teachers and other stakeholders in planning, formulating, and implementing a scheme in managing the distribution of printed learning materials and retrieval of students' outputs.
4. The supply office may purchase and provide in advance the necessary supplies and equipment to reproduce the printed learning materials.
5. Schools may conduct relevant training, seminars, and workshops for teachers and students to upgrade their knowledge, skills, and competence in implementing modular distance learning modalities.
6. Class advisers or subject teachers may conduct an online meeting with the parents at the start of the semester, after the Midterm, and after the semester to orient

them to the class policies and to give feedback on the student's progress.

7. Teachers may conduct a limited time of online classes or upload recorded instructional videos to discuss briefly the lessons.
8. Parents may also set a different designated schedule for their children to accomplish school-related work and household chores.
9. The registrar's office may provide a list of enrolled students in every subject for easy student tracing.
10. Further related studies including all students and faculty in the different programs/units of Apayao State College.

CONSENT

As per international standard or university standard, Participants' written consent has been collected and preserved by the author(s).

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COMPETING INTERESTS

Authors have declared that no competing interests exist.

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