

New normal educational system as a response to COVID-19 pandemic: Factors & outcomes

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Abstract: The world trembled as a contagious disease was anonymously spreading around the world. This so-called COVID-19 pandemic affected millions of lives, thousands of routine systems, and hundreds of economic factors that included the movement of educational systems all over the world. To follow the protocol of the nation one is in, one needs to stay at home to prevent the spread of viruses and follow the policies, including the prohibition of gatherings such as parties and sessions with multiple individuals in a group. This paper sought to understand the new normal educational system implementation and its hindering factors; the effectiveness of new pedagogical strategies; and most of all, the academic evaluation of learning that includes the response of the learners to the new educational system in the midst of COVID-19 pandemic happenings.

Keywords: Academic evaluation, COVID-19, Education, Factors, Pedagogical strategies

1. Introduction

At the start of the year 2020, huge news was blown out worldwide, and a certain contagious and mysterious disease was spreading all over the world named COVID-19. The pandemic made individuals suffer from respiratory illness, which can cause death. The virus at first was ignored, for this only happened in China, but when it spread all over the world, it became a global dilemma. According to World Health Organization records for the 2020 COVID-19 outbreak, the Department of Health in the Philippines reported the first case of COVID-19 in the country on January 30, 2020, with a 38-year-old female Chinese national, and the first local transmission of COVID-19 was confirmed on March 7, 2020. Hence, from a low-range population of the affected individual to an unknowingly and unstoppable increase in the affected population. The statistics regarding the affected individuals of the COVID-19 Pandemic are increasing as days pass. Due to this, it affects the movements of the factors that make up the individual's daily life, including economic factors, which have a huge impact on the cycle of a country's growth. The companies are forced to close, which affects the employees' jobs, and thus the schools' operations were done immediately as intended, which eventually led the government to sustain the individuals' needs and provide a certain amount of goods to every family in the country.

Moreover, this COVID-19 pandemic also affects school operations, which challenged the Department of Education and Higher Education to implement new policies to address the issue regarding the classes in the 2020. This policy is called a Flexible Learning System. The policy encourages the set-up of academic operations through two dominant pedagogical strategies: (1) Online Class and (2) Modular. The first pedagogical strategy is called Online Class, in which the demonstration of classes and presentation of learning or learning instruction is done through video conferences at the same time and pace with the teacher and learners using online platforms such as Google Meet, Zoom, and other educational platforms that accommodate the teaching-learning process (Toquero, Calago & Pormento, 2021). The second pedagogical strategy is called modular, in which the school or institution is expected to distribute a hard copy of a learner's module to the learners, and the learners are expected to give it back to their respective teachers before or during the deadlines given. Nonetheless, in delivering the learning competencies, these two pedagogical strategies embodied both enabling and impediment factors:

1.1. Enabling factor

The online and modular instructions are better alternatives for the continuation of the school operation in the 2020, since we are avoiding being in a crowd, especially since both teachers and students come from different families, municipalities, and cities. We cannot risk the safety of the individuals as of now, for the face-to-face teaching-learning process is quite risky, especially for those learners who have a poor immune system. Aside from that, a flexible learning system offers a lot of opportunities to the learners since the demonstration of lessons is intertwined with technology. It will provide various information and data and thus open a door for easy access to education despite the pandemic (Toquero, 2021).

1.2. Hindering factor

Learning on your own isn't as easy as it seems given the fact that learners have different levels of maturity, understanding, and comprehension—this may have a huge impact on their development. The hindrances that block a better acquisition of knowledge by learners could be the environmental factors that accommodate the equipment such as laptops, cellphones, internet connections, and printers in demonstrating the teaching-learning process. Aside from that, the emotional and social development of the learners, which is a salient part of their development, may be affected, especially those learners who aren't into self-learning.

1.3. Academic outcome

As the COVID-19 cases increase, the level of the intended outcome as embodied by the learning competencies is obviously decreasing. Because students have multiple intelligences, the aforementioned pedagogical strategies cannot meet the needs of all learners and cannot assess students' learning outcomes. Although the pedagogical approach provided is a better way to sustain the teaching-learning process, there are a lot of questions and arguments regarding this— What will be the extent of this given pedagogical approach? Will it be lifelong learning or not? How can a child learn meaningfully through this kind of teaching-learning process? Will the intended learning outcome be possible to meet or not? Will it be effective or not? These questions don't have concrete answers yet since the implementation is just a few months old and the measurement of academic outcomes isn't yet distributed and calculated.

In relation to this, when we go back to the past school years, the evaluation of learning outcomes in the years when there was no COVID-19 spreading around the world, teachers already encountered a problem in the cognitive development of their learners. Given the fact that it's already a face-to-face teaching-learning process, what else in this new normal education system wherein learners are expected to learn their lessons without their teachers? Because of the barriers that students face, the acquisition of learning competencies is on the verge of being eliminated, which will have a significant impact on their development, especially since learning competencies deal with a critical process of equipping students with the knowledge, skills, and attitudes that they will need to successfully navigate their journeys in learning, living, and working (Professional Development Resources, 2013). For instance, the answer keys are provided at the back of the modules; practically the learners' will eventually depend on their answer keys; and there is no such demonstration of competencies and skills in this kind of teaching-learning process.

In online classes, since learners have different ways of knowledge acquisition or learning styles, it is expected that some of the learners cannot cope with the learning process as expected. The crucial factor that fuels the learners to embody the learning competencies is motivation, but due to this kind of set-up, do learners gather enough motivation to fuel themselves into learning? The answers depend on the situation of the students in their physical and environmental factors (if they have motivated parents and relatives or not). Therefore, the academic outcomes of the students are unpredictable in this kind of setup, but when based on the given factors, some of the intended learning outcomes are impossible to achieve.

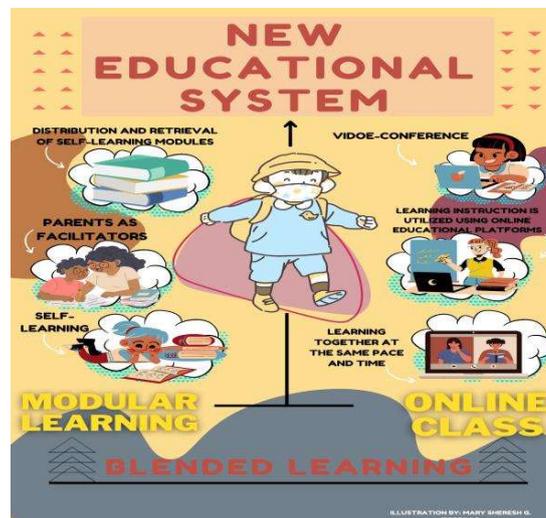


Figure 1: Blended learning system

4. Conclusion

Due to the COVID-19 Pandemic, each individual is forced to change their routine system to sort out the situation they're facing. The new educational system in response to the COVID-19 Pandemic became a gateway for learners and educators to continue their goals in terms of the acquisition of knowledge and achieving a certain goal or degree. However, many have disagreed with this as based on the observation that there is a huge difference when it comes to quality education, the session online class is different from the face-to-face class sessions. Nevertheless, as a student who is also into this pedagogical approach, this experience puts us at a new level of challenge and situation in which we are motivated to force an attribute on ourselves into learning, which leads us to a lot more new opportunities. Thus, we are able to pursue some characteristics and competencies such as self-reliance and a sense of responsibility that we can apply to society as a whole. In fact, what the students are doing right now is already an application of what we had learned from the Kto12 Program Enhanced Basic Education Curriculum adaptation, and this switch up of set-ups intertwined us into a new kind of dimension that makes us adapt to the changes that are happening in society. Furthermore, the government should monitor the progress of this pedagogical strategy as a banner for the COVID-19 Pandemic to what should be enhanced and put into priority because there are a lot of hindering factors that may block a learner's acquisition of the three domains, such as the cognitive domain, affective domain, and psychomotor domain. Therefore, we can't conclude that this program implemented by the government to address the problem of education is effective and relevant since the evaluation is not yet done.

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