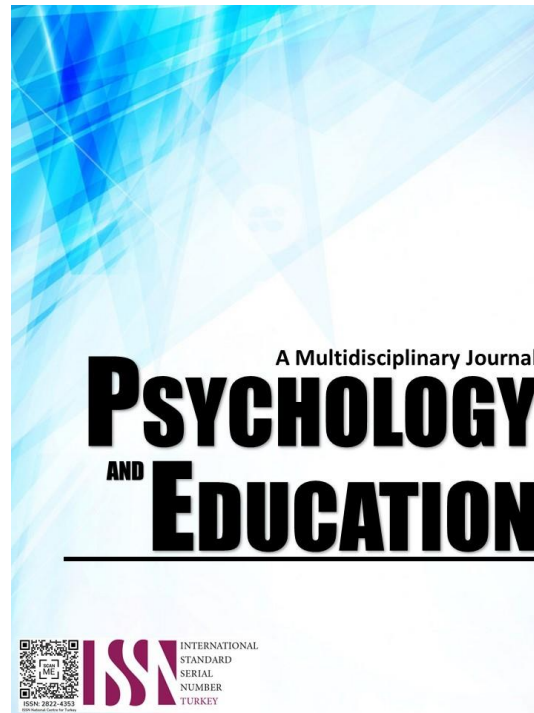


# **TRAVAILS OF HINTERLAND EDUCATORS IN FACILITATING MODULAR LEARNING MODALITY FOR LEARNERS WITH SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS**



**PSYCHOLOGY AND EDUCATION: A MULTIDISCIPLINARY JOURNAL**

2023

Volume: 9

Pages: 752-795

Document ID: 2023PEMJ785

DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.8025885

Manuscript Accepted: 2023-10-6

## Travails of Hinterland Educators in Facilitating Modular Learning Modality for Learners with Special Educational Needs

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### Abstract

The travails of hinterland educators in facilitating modular learning modality for learners with special educational needs are the struggles during distribution and retrieval of learning materials, assessment, strategy, and delivery of instructions in the new normal. This qualitative phenomenological study explored the lived experiences of teachers working in far-flung areas who received learners with disability. Validated semi-structured interview guide was used for individual in-depth interview and focused-group discussion. Colaizzi method was utilized for data analysis. The results helped the researcher interpret and organized the data into themes. Hinterland teachers experienced challenges in adapting the new learning modality and challenges in assessing and facilitating learning. Their coping mechanisms were done by providing flexible schedules and adjustments, delivering individualized assessment, and cultivating commendable deportment. They learned to develop teachable hearts, valuing other's welfare, advocating humanitarianism and implementing time management. Possessing good attitude, relationship and commitment by school leaders and teachers helped in maintaining a direct guidance while working in unity with care for the literacy of learners with special educational needs. With this, school administrators can provide appropriate planning, budget, support and comfort to the teachers as the primary movers in this pandemic time because teachers sacrificed their lives and performed for learners' excellence.

**Keywords:** *educational management, travails, hinterland educators, modular learning, learners with special educational needs*

### Introduction

The largest commotion in the landscape of the Department of Education (DepEd) in history was exceptional upon the flared-up of the shocking Corona Virus Disease (CoViD-19) crisis. Contingency management and readiness of school heads and teachers' continuous efforts outshine amidst the highlight of the outbreak. School governance needs to deal and adapt quickly while remaining focused on the teaching and learning delivery for the learners and to achieve the best possible materials, environment and outcomes for students. Strengthening collaboration on the continuity of education for the learners addresses the educational needs. Teachers selflessly offered their services even to the distant mountainous and hazardous areas. Hinterland teachers who received learners with special educational needs in class courageously explored and exhausted all other possibilities to ensure the delivery of quality education in the midst of this emergency, and that no one will be left behind.

Far-flung schools still faces scarcity of teaching resources and teachers are continuously challenged in delivery quality basic education. This required passionate committed teachers to provide the much needed services. The school, students and the community exhibit poverty. Schools lacked the much

needed teaching and learning resources. Many students are slow learners, and some are non-readers. To facilitate learning, teachers shed a portion of their salaries to buy school supplies for classroom use. They need to ride a motorcycle and walk for kilometers in muddy trails to reach the school. Some students come from adjacent place to reach the school. Giving money for food and school supplies for students is also common to them. Despite these experiences for serving a deprived community, teachers are looking forward to a much better assignment in the future (Quejada & Orale, 2018).

Moreover, the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) and United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) highlighted that teachers and education staff have played a key role in the response to the pandemic. Most teachers have not only had to re-plan and adapt education processes including adjusting methods and curricula, designing materials, and diversifying the media, formats and platforms used but have also had to take part in activities to safeguard the material safety of pupils and their families. They have had to face the demands of providing socio-emotional and mental health support to pupils and their families, which is an aspect of their work that has become increasingly important during the pandemic. In performing their teaching activities and meeting these new demands teachers often find themselves

with inadequate training and resources to address the challenges of adapting teaching content and formats to pupils in disadvantaged situations (United Nations, 2020).

In the Philippine news article cited by Ramos (2020), DepEd lamented that the whole education sector was under very intense pressure as the country shifts to distance learning amidst the pandemic. An extremely huge challenge for education sector, aside from helping learners cope up with the changes of the learning system, they are putting also additional emphasis on the upskilling of teachers nationwide.

Cabardo (2020), in his study, also said that language differences and insufficient instructional materials were the highlights on teachers' experiences on highlands. Teaching on hinterland is difficult which needs necessary support for learners, teachers, and school leaders. Internal and external stakeholders may also address the problem.

In the hinterlands of Davao region, there are communities that need concentration on the delivery of new normal education. Learners need proper guidance by the immediate family members, teachers and stakeholders in order not to hamper their literacy and to instantaneously provide their needs. Children with disabilities much more needed full attention, intervention and patience for them to cope with the time. There are also parents who do not know how to read and write. In fact, they were just affixing their fingerprints whenever signatures are needed. DepEd teachers reach out these communities. They are regular teachers who are designated to teach in far-flung areas. They travelled using the habal-habal motorcycle, struggled on roads with cliff and landslide and traversed raging rivers. They are staying in the village for a week and return in their permanent homes during weekends. As the government mandated, still, in these far-flung area, modular learning for children is also a new modality in a new normal education.

Moreover, as the only Special Education (SpEd) teacher in the hinterland in our district catering various learners with diverse exceptionalities, I have not come across qualitative researches done specifically on the travails of the non-Indigenous People (non-IP) hinterland receiving teachers in facilitating modular learning modality for learners with special educational needs. It is in this spirit to cater all students in the hinterland such as those learners with difficulty in hearing, difficulty in remembering and difficulty in applying knowledge. I am very much inspired to venture into this study with the hope that this may

contribute to fill the gap for school preparedness, leadership and management. There is a need to examine more closely how and what are the preparations and strategies of hinterland teachers and school administrators in the new normal modality.

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to discover the travails of the hinterland educators in facilitating modular learning modality. At this stage in the research, the travails of the hinterland educators in facilitating modular learning modality for learners with special educational needs was generally defined as lived experiences of regular teachers in distributing and retrieving of self-learning modules, assessing of output and delivering of desired instructions to the learners during the pandemic time including the probable struggles that they can profess aside from following health protocols. And since learners are being taught only by their parents considering that not all parents know how to read and write.

It is my desire that the Department of Education officials, school administrators, teachers, parents and learners and future researchers will benefit from this study.

The results of the study will be used to revisit the various existing strategies in the learning module that works best and enhance the learning material to fit the learners.

Likewise, DepEd officials can utilize the results of the study for educational responses to learner with special educational needs, conduct trainings on how teachers will react on their different experiences in the new normal education.

School administrators can make strategic plan where trainings are included that builds strong relationship with fellow workers, accountability, and trust and communication. They will become aware on the clamor of their teachers in the field. They can find ways to alleviate their sentiments in delivering quality education. They can help them in aiding solutions on the present situation of the schools where they are leading.

The findings of this study will help the teachers in assessing pupils. This may further be a motivating factor to adapt measures and new strategies for the improvement of instructions in adjusting literacy in the new normal set-up.

The result of this study will serve as bird's eye view of the parent. This will also give them the knowledge as to the needs of their children and in the overall support

of each child in facilitating modular learning modality in this new normal time.

This study is also designed for the pupils to alleviate their struggles in the new distance learning. This can also help them in interacting positively on what is happening in the education system while adjusting to the modular learning modality.

This will serve as reference of future researchers and will serve as their guide in framing their literature and design. At the same time, this can encourage them to conduct lateral study within their area of preferences.

### Research Objectives

The study aimed to describe the travails of hinterland educators in facilitating modular learning modality for learners with special educational needs. Specifically, this study answered the following objectives:

1. to explore the lived experiences of hinterland educators in facilitating modular learning modality for learners with special educational needs;
2. to describe the coping mechanisms in facilitating modular learning modality for learners with special educational needs; and
3. to discover the lessons and insights gained by the hinterland educators in facilitating a modular learning modality that they can share with their families, community and school leaders.

### Methodology

In this section, I expressed my chosen research design. I gave details on the criteria in selecting my participants, discussed my role as a researcher, mulled over ethical considerations, enumerated the process of data collection, and talked about the preparation of the semi-structured interview guide and the mode of analyzing the data collected. In this study, I used qualitative research design since it dug out the perceptions and facts in facilitating modular learning modality by the regular teachers assigned in the hinterland in this new normal education set-up. Phenomenology was used because this described the development of human consciousness and self-awareness (Su, 2013). It illustrated the experiences of my main participants, the regular teachers, explored in-depth reasons regarding the topic and was confirmed by another group of teachers since I

conducted a triangulation activity. I chose to have data triangulation for more robust and strong validated facts. Objectively, it was used to reach the true meanings through engaging in-depth into reality, utilizing in-depth interviews with appropriate subjects to understand the phenomenon being studied. This research involved on the understanding the essence of experiences related to a phenomenon or situation (Tichapondwa, 2013). I deciphered more and get abundant information from my qualified participants about my research because through the presented open-ended questions, many brilliant ideas and experiences came out from their mouths. Verbatimly, I presented clearly and show the impact so that majority of my readers can relate to this study.

### Participants

I set standards in choosing my four participants for in-depth interview and four participants for the focus group discussion. They were very limited in the location of my study because only few schools had implemented special education program in the hinterland, thus, few number of teachers have experiences in catering learners with special educational needs. I intentionally selected individuals who can dig up the phenomenon. Purposive sampling met my requirements useful for the quality assurance of my study. Purposive sampling enabled me as a researcher to squeeze a lot of information out of the data that I have collected. This allowed researchers to describe the major impact their findings have on the population. According to Alchemer.com (2021), a purposive sampling is a popular method used by researchers due to the fact that it is extremely time and cost-effective when compared to other sampling methods. Purposive sampling may be the only appropriate method available if there are a limited number of primary data sources that can contribute to the research.

I believed that they were the right participants for my research. They were the four non-IP hinterland teachers in Davao del Norte who have credible experiences in receiving learners with special educational needs. These teachers are of legal age, capacitated to answer the interview questions because they do not have disorders and special needs. They were very limited in my research location because there are only few SpEd implementing schools in the hinterland due to the fact that only few learners have formal assessments by licensed doctors or occupational therapist, thus, my participants were very limited. The following were my inclusion criteria: the research participants were of legal age, they do not

have special needs or disability, not member of the tribe and they were regular teachers who are assigned in the far-flung area with at least two years in public service. They were receiving teachers of the learners with disability under the special education program of the DepEd. They had permanent residency in the lowland or urban place and travelled weekly from their home to school. I identified four participants for my in-depth interview.

I identified participants for my focused group discussion. Still, I also used purposive sampling. The inclusion criteria was the same with the inclusion criteria for in- depth interview which means that the participants should be regular teachers in legal age, with sound mind, who have experiences in receiving learners with special educational needs, they travel to the hinterland through single motorcycle, and stay in the school for a week and return back home every weekends. Since only few schools in the hinterland have assessed learners with special education needs, my teacher participants for group discussion were very limited. Thus, I identified four participants for focus group discussion. The total participants were eight, with four teachers in in-depth-interview and another four teachers to participate in the focused group discussion. According to Creswell (2018), the participants for a qualitative-phenomenological research should be five to 25. Hence, eight participants were adequate number for this study.

### Instruments of the Study

I utilized the semi-structured interview guide as my main research instrument in gathering relevant information for my study. I, myself, was another instrument for this study. I personally prepared the interview questions per objective with four probing questions to uncover how my participants think and feel in every situation. The semi- structured interview guide as affirmed by Thorne (2016) was an essential instrument in qualitative research. Most recognized that the relevant reality as far as human experience is concerned, is that which takes place in subjective experience, in social context, and in historical time. As a qualitative researcher, I was more concerned about uncovering knowledge about how my participants think and feel about the phenomenon around them than they were in making judgments about whether those thoughts and feelings were valid. The semi-structured interview guide was validated by three internal validators in Holy Cross of Davao College and one external validator. The validation result was summarized with 4.33 final rating.

The semi-structured interview guide had five interview questions per objective with another four probe questions to unearth more the possible relevant responses. This interview guide helped me in focusing and organizing my line of thinking and questioning. It was essential to point out that the semi-structured interview guide really was just an instrument for researchers' direction. As a researcher, I do not have to follow the exact ordering and there was nothing wrong with going off script at times if a particular line of questioning that I had not anticipated seems worthwhile.

### Procedure

I asked an endorsement letter from the graduate school office and forwarded it to the Schools Division Superintendent of the DepEd Division of Davao del Norte and they gave me the approval to conduct the study. During my vacant time, I asked permission from my school head to interview individually the teacher-participants in the school. I observed health protocols like sanitizing, social distancing, wearing mask and using face shield for safety purposes.

The data collection was done through individual in-depth interview using semi- structured interview guide. This did not aim to assess or measure the performance of the subjects, but instead aimed to collect material which allowed in-depth exploration of the personal perspectives of the subjects being investigated (Pama, 2016). I prepared four interview questions with three probe questions per objective during the interview. Establishing friendly and open approach to the teacher participants was the most ideal and built direct and continuous response regarding the topic. I assembled a line of communication by not disrupting or contradicting on the view of the participants. I presented to them the informed consent form. I made clear their rights that they participated in my study in their own free-will and that no coercion was done for them to participate. I emphasized that they may decline to participate at any time and for any reason during the conduct of the study. They may also withdraw or take back any information that they had given to me. Hence, before I conducted the interview, the teachers were acknowledged on their willingness to participate and allowed me to interview them signing the form. This led to immense giving of natural insights.

Moreover, I conducted focus-group discussion. This was from the views of another group of teachers in the school. The same with what I did in the individual interview. Shosha (2012), lamented that qualitative



study will be conducted, face-to-face interview using the prepared semi-structured interview guide. The same questions were asked in this group. Teacher participants were encouraged to talk or write freely and told stories using their own words. I informed them that they participated in the research with their own free-will and that no coercion was done for them to participate. I used paper- pencil written for recording, or for the participants who allowed, I used my mobile phone recording app. I emphasized that they may quit or withdraw from participating at anytime and for any reason during the conduct of the study. They may also withdraw or take back any information that they had given to me. At the end of each interview, I reminded the participants about the need for a second contact with them face to face or via messenger to discuss the study findings and made sure that the study findings reflected their own experiences. This targeted the audience's range of behavior and the perceptions that drove them with reference to specific topics or issues. Building confidence and connection towards the participants resulted into a positive outcome of the interview.

This study used Colaizzi method of data analysis. This approach helped me interpret the qualitative research data, identified meaningful information and organized it into themes or categories. The approach followed steps in data analysis.

The individual in-depth interview used semi-structured interview guides uncover how people think and feel in certain situations (Shosha, 2012). I applied Colaizzi's steps to analyze the data that was collected in the interview. As a researcher, I read a description of each person that participated in the study to gain the senses of my participants. Next, I extracted statements with significance to the research question, such as descriptions. To analyze the significant statements, I became articulate and scrutinizing on what the statements mean and created themes from the meanings. I grouped similar categories together and organized them into themes. Lastly, I integrated the results into a comprehensive description of the topic and return them to each participant for the verification of the results regarding the study on the experiences of hinterland teachers in facilitating modular learning for learners with special educational needs.

In addition, the focused-group discussion, Thorne (2016) stated that data analysis in qualitative research is the most complex and mysterious of all of the phases of a qualitative project, and the one that receives the least thoughtful discussion in the literature. For neophyte researchers, many of the data

collection strategies involved in a qualitative project may feel familiar and comfortable. In order to generate findings that transformed raw data into new knowledge, I engaged in active and demanding analytic processes throughout all phases of the research. Understanding these processes was therefore an important aspect not only of doing qualitative research, but also of reading, understanding, and interpreting it.

### Ethical Considerations

I ensured the safety and protection of the teacher participants by observing ethical standards. I waited for the validation of my interview questions. I also attended the Research and Ethics Committee orientation and had some revisions of my manuscript according to the minutes. The nine elements for ethical consideration were clearly presented below.

**Social Value.** This study has a social value because it was very relevant to the community where my teacher participants were working. I discussed to the participants the importance of this study in the real field. Since only few schools in the hinterland had implemented special education program, other schools may replicate this in the years to come. They can also follow and reflect on the challenges and lived experiences of the hinterland educators. Parents and learners can also benefit from this because they can have the courage to enroll their learners despite of the disability. It has scientific validity because my participants were designated by the national government to render service in the hinterland even if they have permanent addresses in lowland areas. They were staying in their station for service and return home every weekend. The national government will also be informed on the travails of hinterland educators in facilitating modular learning because teachers are the ones who are making actions on the programs of the government and handling them to the recipients of whom they are the prime movers making parents and learners the direct field beneficiaries of this study. The government can address school readiness issues to ensure the delivery of safe, accessible, and quality education for all students.

**Informed Consent.** Since my core participants were non-IP regular teachers who were designated to teach in far-flung area, in legal age, in sound mind and had the capacity to answer the questions, I presented to them the informed consent form. In the informed consent form, I made clear their rights that they were participating in my study

in their own free-will and that no coercion was done for them to participate. I emphasized that they may decline to participate at any time and for any reason during the conduct of the study. They may also withdraw or take back any information that they have given to the researcher. Hence, before I conducted the interview, the teachers were acknowledged on their willingness to participate and allowed me to interview them through signing the form. The manner of distribution and collection of the informed consent was face to face. IATF health and safety protocol was followed like sanitizing, wearing of face masks or face shields, getting the body temperature and maintaining social distancing.

**Risks, Benefits and Safety.** I also discussed to my participants the risk, benefits and safety. I ensured that the participants were free from risk during the data gathering since it was required protocol of the IATF. The gathering of the data was done through face to face interview. Whenever they felt uncomfortable on the questions, they had the option not to answer the said questions and the interview proceeded to the next lined-up questions. I also included the benefits in participating in my study of which they may be able to share in the expansion of new knowledge base on the phenomenon of the study. The results of the study will be used to revisit the various existing strategies in the learning module that works best and enhance the learning material to fit the learners. Safety on not divulging their names and specific locale was also realized. Their responses did not affect their individual performances in the school.

**Privacy and Confidentiality of Information.** This study embodied respect for rights to privacy and mechanisms to protect confidentiality. Following the data privacy act, I did not divulge the names or any identification or characteristics of the participants and even the specific locale of the study. I included in my discussion the safe-keeping of data while the study was being conducted. I used separate files on the data and that only me and the participants had the access to see. After the data was consumed or used, I shredded it to pieces or burned it so that any information may not be read anymore. The soft copies were also deleted from the gadget.

**Justice.** The selection process in choosing my participants was fair enough because I did not force them to join. I acknowledged that their presence greatly helped me personally to finish the manuscript in the scheduled timeline. It was their free-will to participate in my study. My participants were suited to the criteria and they were the ones capable and

credible enough to answer the questions thus, justice was manifested in my study. Upon confirming their participation, the researcher gave them a simple token of appreciation after the interview because the study was made possible because of the precious time that they spent in revealing their travails in the hinterland of which it were also unearthing their mission in the field.

**Transparency.** Transparency was presented in my study. After I conducted the research, I went back to my participants and share to them the transcript of their responses. I discussed whether it was the correct information I held base on the interview. Honesty in participation was observed and proper disclosure of the research results was done. I informed them on the accuracy of their statements intended in their disclosures in case I will share my study to a bigger venue like forum, research congress and publication.

**Qualification of Researcher.** I am qualified to conduct this study because I have a technical knowledge in research base on the subjects I have undergone in my schooling. I am also selected as a data analyst in my assigned school and I attended virtual research capability building for district coordinating team. I also knew how to handle and mingle with my participants during the interview. In addition, I was a graduate of Holy Cross of Davao College. I conducted my thesis writing in the said school and finished the course Master of Arts in Special Education. My enrolment in the graduate school made me more credible to conduct this study.

**Adequacy of Facilities.** It was rest assured that I and my participants followed the guidelines of the IATF on health and safety protocols imposed in the school and the government during the conduct of this study. This included the scanning of QR code and gauging of body temperature, wearing of face masks and face shields, sanitizing of hands, and observing physical distancing during the interview. I used paper and pen in recording the responses. For those participants who allowed, I made used of the mobile recording app as a recorder during the interview.

**Community Involvement.** This research embodied respect to local tradition and culture, community empowerment and acknowledgement of participation. The conduct of the study did not violate any law practiced in the land and since the participants were non-IP regular teachers, they were acknowledged to participate and even had the right to decline in the conduct of the research. The participants were given the opportunity to review their transcript documents to

ensure the accuracy presented in their intended disclosures. The community can receive the benefits and they will be involved in the practices.

## Results and Discussion

This chapter presents the collected results and analyses on the topic concerning the travails of hinterland educators in facilitating modular learning modality for learners with special educational needs. Discussions were also provided to give a wide-range explanation of the themes that were created in lieu of the objectives proposed in this study.

### Lived Experiences of Hinterland Educators in Facilitating Modular Learning Modality for Learners with Special Educational Needs

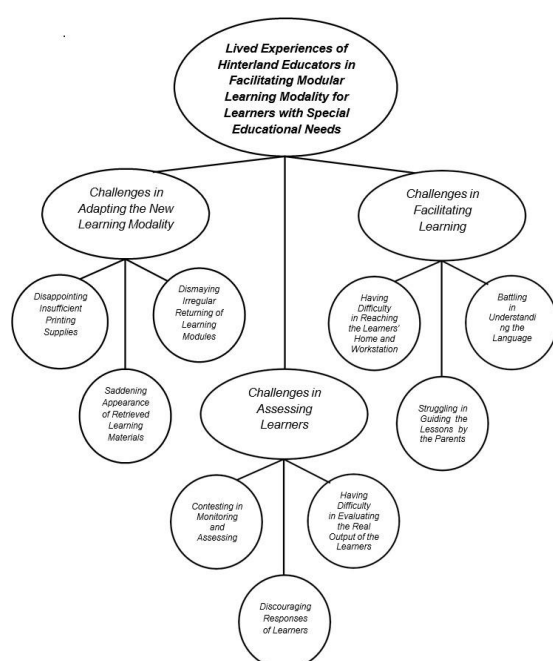


Figure 1. Lived Experiences of Hinterland Educators in Facilitating Modular Learning Modality for Learners with Special Educational Needs

In my study, I was able to come up with three categories: These are challenges in adapting the new learning modality, challenges assessing learners and challenges in facilitating learning. Under each category are the specific challenges experienced by hinterland teachers. Under the new normal learning continuity, basically, parents get the learning materials in school direct to the teacher adviser of their children.

Teachers also do home visitation in children's houses needed for actual distribution and assessment. To identify my participants' quoted responses to the interview, R is used with its corresponding number as seen in the appendices.

### Challenges in Adapting the New Learning Modality

The first category in the lived experiences of hinterland educators in facilitating modular learning modality for learners with special educational needs is challenges in adapting the new normal learning modality. Although school administrators are used in handling smaller emergencies such as fights of children, infuriated parents or disagreement and budgetary constraint, most leaders have never encountered predicaments of this extent caused by pandemic. As part of the national public agency, hinterland schools too are doing its best maintenance to prevent the spread of the plague, still to deliver quality education.

Academic leaders have been charged with restructuring their systems, ensuring instructional quality while operating with significantly diminished resources in the unprecedented pandemic. For department heads of units with leadership preparation programs, the complexity of this crisis is layered upon fundamental scholarship about leadership, which reports the effectiveness of leadership as a collective incorporating the shared and diverse talents of faculty, students, and program stakeholders. This work of educational leadership rests on a public and democratic ethic promoting social justice and equity as the practices and outcomes for schooling at any level. In this article, three department heads of educational leadership units in major research universities use dialogic inquiry to reflect on our responses to complex demands brought forth by the pandemic (Kruse, Hackman, & Lindle, 2020).

**Disappointing Insufficient Printing Supplies.** Major burst in the educational management regarding the immediate provision of supplies and materials for the learners in this new normal education triggered the attention of educational leaders. Education planners and movers in all levels were tasked to provide learning materials for the home schooling of the learners in the newest modular learning modality. Government funds were exhausted to supply all the resources available for the children. But due to the sudden shift of the delivery of quality education, there is lacking supplies of printing materials like bond papers, inks, printers, laptops and duplicating machines. With this, Teacher Mar and Teacher Ali



shared:

*“Ug sa pagprint sa module lisud siya kay mailang kung naay kanang materials nga bond paper, ink, kompleto tanan nga materyales aron makaprint jud para makompleto jud ang module anang semahana nga mahatag sa mga bata”.* (It is difficult to print hoping that there are supplies like bond paper, inks, complete materials to completely print the needed modules for the entire week.) IDI-Mar, R2

*“Reproduction of modules and availability of supplies kay naay time mahutdan og bond paper so dili tanang modules amoang ma-print”.* (There are times that we lack bondpapers and supplies during the reproduction of modules that is why we cannot print all the modules.) IDI-Ali, R2

It can be surmised from the responses of Teachers Mar and Ali that there were lacking supplies of printing resources for the reproduction of learning materials. The study of Magsombol (2020), as the Philippines continues to struggle with the pandemic, a heated debate about when and how to reopen schools continues to rage. And it is playing on the anxieties of teachers. It appears that modular learning an alternative to the traditional face-to-face classes supposedly meant to eliminate the risk of contracting the deadly virus could turn out to be unsafe after all. Teacher Jan and Ney shared the same experiences. The experiences of the hinterland teachers were not an isolated case. Majority of the hinterland teachers I have interviewed shared similar experiences. In their responses they mentioned insufficient supply of materials for the reproduction of learning module for the learners.

*Then ang lisud is ang kulang sa supplies labi na tong first pa gyud na pagmodular. Pag first pa gyud niya nga year, lisud kaayo siya kay tungod kulang og supplies like walay bondpaper, kulang ang printer.* (It was difficult because we lack supplies especially during the first time of the modular implementation. During the first year, it was very difficult because we lack printing supplies like bond paper and printers.) FGD-Jan, R33-34

*Kay tungod sa amoa, dili tanan sa amoa naay mga printers sa balay. Tapos ang supplies sa school igo igo lang pud sya.* (In our part, not all of us have printers at home and the supplies are just but very enough.) FGD-Ney, R31-32

In addition, teachers must be able to address the

sentiments of some parents and students, which is to be patient enough in attending to the needs and to respond to the queries immediately with regards to learning. The DepEd and the government must collaborate together towards the success of Philippine educational system despite the pandemic. It is imperative that every school must be provided with support and enough funds. DepEd should give autonomy and freedom to teachers in every school to do their own modules. However, the modules must be validated for the quality assurance and the progress will be monitored (Dangle & Sumaoang 2020).

*Saddening Appearance of Retrieved Learning Materials.* One of the tricky senses in this pandemic era was returning the educational prints into unsterilized copies. Teachers are making sheets overtime, sorting pages leniently, binding each of the content patiently to deliver the clean and uncontaminated SLM to the primary users. However, it turned out the other way around when the pages are taken back.

*Ang uban kay naay missing pages, nabasa sa ulan, mangawala na ang module nga maong hinungdan nga dili na sila mukuha og balik sa module.* (Others have missing pages, wet due to rain, missing modules the reason why they cannot go back to get another module.) IDI-Ali, R10

*Usahay ang modules dili najud maitura. Hugaw kaayo, nagkagisi-gisi and syempre lapis dapat gamiton sa pag-answer pero naay uban nga ballpen ang naa sa module nga gisulat.* (Sometime, the modules have no value at all. It became very dirty, pages are torn, and others are using permanent markers instead of pencil.) IDI- Rhe, R22-23

Teacher Ali and Rhe were disgusted when the SLM that were returned were full of dirt, crumpled and needed to be sanitized because the appearance was very much opposite from the day it was distributed.

*Nawala og namisplace ug ang uban giuli na daw.* (Materials are gone and misplaced.) IDI-Mar, R15

During the retrieval, I am disappointed on the appearance of the module because it is very dirty already and some pages are also missing. IDI-Pro, R20

Majority of the participants released their disappointment on the face value of the learning materials from the time these were distributed compared when they were retrieved. The possibility of learning modules to become a mode of transmitting

CoViD- 19 is a valid concern of school administrators. With this, one of the public schools in the Philippines created modified autoclave room to have an efficient and effective way to disinfect learning modules sent out and retrieved from the learners (DepEd RoXI, 2020).

*Sa akoo during sa retrieval of modules and learning materials... naay uban bata nga kanang pag-uli sa module kay kanang naay kulang, hugaw. (In my case, during the retrieval of modules and learning materials, children are giving it back with missing pages and the appearance is very dirty.) FGD-Jay, R28*

*Inig pag-abot sa school, ang mga modules kulang nag mga pages, basa na sya, hugaw na kay tungod sa ilang pagbyahe gikan sa layo. (When these modules reached back in school, they have missing pages, ruined by the rain, dirty and wrinkled during their travel.) FGD-Ney, R298*

*Pagkuha na nako sa module, hugaw na. (When I get back the modules, they are very dirty.) FGD- Uki, R9*

In the group discussion, Teachers Jay, Ney and Uki were very saddened because the appearance of the learning materials is not clean anymore. Due to heavy rain, creased while traveling or maybe the negligence of learners on where they store their supplies at home are some of the reasons why this happened.

*Dismaying Irregular Returning of Learning Modules.* Classroom management involves diversified tasks of effective presentation of subject, involvement of students in discussion, to hold the attention of every child in the classroom, productive learning by children, discipline in the class, etc. A teacher must know the names of all the children in a class to develop a good rapport with them. A teacher with good classroom management skills involving dealing with varied children can manage the family, friends and relatives with ease (Nayani, 2020).

Parents and teachers agreed when to get the learning materials on-site and when to return them back. Teachers are anticipating for the return of materials in the scheduled time in order for them to check the performance of the child and therefore they can give rating to the tasks in the materials. Sadly, Teachers Rhe, Mar and Ali gave some revelations with regards to this.

*Usahay man gud naay parents nga dili up to date muhatag. (Sometimes, there are parents who cannot return the modules on the specified dates.) IDI-Rhe,*

R2

*Yes, ang isa sa mga problema sa pagdistribute sa modules sa bata dili mauli sa tamang schedule. (Yes, one of the problems in distributing the module to the children is not giving it back on the schedule.) IDI-Mar, R19*

*Yes, naa juy problema like dili nila mabalik on time ang module. (Yes, there is a problem like the modules are not returned on time.) IDI-Ali, R13*

Participant Rhe mentioned regarding the parents who cannot get the learning materials on time. The same sentiment can be heard from Teacher Mar and Ali.

Moreover, based on information and analysis derived from past consultations, there is a need for mechanisms to ensure that education offered to and accessed their aspirations and community vision; contributes to the sustainability and well-being of the ancestral domain; and enables them, individually and collectively, to face various social realities and challenges; need for appropriate delivery and management of education or learning systems; need for policy environment and support system conducive to the sustainability of education efforts; and, lack of data for effective planning (DepEd, 2020).

*Problem with the distribution of the learning module is kanang dili sila mutunong ug kuha sa ilang learning modules. Dili pud sila mutunong og balik sa ilang modules. It takes weeks pa. (The problem with the distribution of learning modules is they cannot get them on time and they cannot return them back on the schedule.) FGD- Chem, R40-42*

Teacher Chem mentioned this as one of her major problem because there was a domino effect if they cannot return the materials on the timetable set, meaning the releasing of new modules is affected.

Most of the time, parents did not return the modular learning materials on the scheduled dates. Teachers are waiting for them to return so that they can check the activities of the children. Majority of the parents did not follow their assigned schedule in getting and retrieving of modules. This resulted in unnecessary reporting to schools of teacher as they went back and forth just so they could entertain the parents. This was such a huge health risk for them given the circumstances of the CoViD-19 infection (Melorin, 2021).

## Challenges in Assessing Learners

The second category in the lived experiences of hinterland educators in facilitating modular learning modality for learners with special educational needs is the challenges in assessing learners. As the CoViD-19 pandemic spread rapidly across the globe, many schools struggled to react both quickly and adequately. Schools were one of the most important societal institutions to be affected by the pandemic. However, most school leaders have little to no training in crisis leadership, nor have they dealt with a crisis of this scale and this scope for this long (McLeod & Dulskey, 2021). In the new normal education, teachers still served as school facilitators of learning. They were the one who reproduced copies of SLM and handed to the home facilitators, the parents.

*Contesting in Monitoring and Assessing Learning.* Distance learning in times of pandemic was more applicable where pupils were advised to stay at home for safety purposes. Most of my teacher-participants have the same lines on the retrieval day. These were their views base on their responses shared.

*Hmm... sa pagmonitor sa child's progress sa mga bata kay dili tanang estudyante nga sila mismo ang mu-answer. So ang hard, we can't monitor the students if sila jud ba nag nag-answer sa ilang module or nagstudy jud ba sila og nakasabot jud ba sila sa ilang giansweran ug gistudyhan* (In monitoring the child's progress, pupils are not the ones answering. It is very hard to monitor if they are the ones doing it, whether they learned or understood their responsibility.) IDI-Ali, R1, 11

The delivery of quality education in this time of pandemic is a great challenge because I cannot properly assess my learners' performance if they are really the ones answering the modules. What makes facilitating modular learning hard for me is during the assessment of learners. I cannot really tell the performance level of the child because they are not the ones answering the modules. IDI-Pro, R2, 21-22

*So dili mamonitor ang bata kung unsa gyud ang ilang matun-an sa module.* (We cannot monitor the children if they learned something from the modules.) IDI-Mar, R17

Teacher Ali conveyed the reality that students are not the ones answering the SLM. Monitoring the progress was easier said than done. He cannot assess whether they learned base on the activities in the materials. The same discourse from Teachers Pro and Mar because the performance level of the child was at stake.

*Uhhh, ang akong isa jud sa mga struggles sa new normal distance learning modality is dili everyday maassess ang learning sa bata kay dili man sila everyday makaadto sa school. Dili namo sila makumusta everyday asa sila naglisud nga part or asa sila nasayunan nga part. What makes is hard is siguro para sa akoo is difficult jud siya iassess kay dili... Kanang lisud siya i-assess kay dili ta sure kung sila gyud ang gaanswer.* (One of my struggles in the new normal distance learning modality is we cannot assess daily the learning of the child because they are not allowed in school. We cannot directly ask what lesson is hard for them and where are the easy ones. Assessment is very hard because we do not know who really answered the modules.) FGD-Chem, R1-2, 30-31

*What makes it difficult is dili maassess ang performance level sa bata.* (What makes is hard is we cannot assess the performance level of the child.) FGD- Uki, R11

Furthermore, Center for Development Program in Cordillera (2020) narrated that learners who have different needs have their own challenges. The beginners need more attention and understanding considering that most or all of their lessons require the presence of facilitators. They have to be watched to make sure they are learning. Some pupils do not pay attention to their parents or facilitators because they prefer learning from their teachers. Some even argue with their parents or facilitators on how they should teach. Some students can attend to their modules independently but some badly need assistance to understand even just some of the lessons in the prescribed modules.

*Ang masulti nako is kanang lisud siya karon magfacilitate sa learning kay tungod ang bata wala kaayo nato siya na-guide kay dili man face to face ba. Kung mag adto mi. Wala man gud kaayo namo sila nahimamat og maayo kay panagsa ra magkita and dili pud nato masulti kung sa module nakalearn ba sila. So siguro kung atong isa-isahon in terms sa monitoring, dili nato mameasure kung ang bata nakalearn ba siya pinaagi lang sa modules nga akong ginahatag.* (All I can say is facilitating learning is very intricate because we haven't guided the child face to face. We seldom see each other and if we go visit them, we cannot say that they learned from modules. In terms of monitoring, we cannot measure the knowledge of the child.) FGD-Jan, R16, 20, 41

Sentiments were also shared by Teacher Chem wherein she struggled on the children's assessment because learners were not allowed in school. The performance level of the child is teacher Uki and Jan's concern too. Facilitating learning is very intricate because they haven't guided the child face to face. They seldom see each other and if they conducted home visitation, assessors cannot say that pupils learned from modules. In terms of monitoring, they cannot measure the knowledge of the child.

Schools shall determine the appropriateness of learning system or educational platform in the delivery of instruction. Learning modules must be user-friendly to be able to execute a variety of functions that work together to provide a seamless experience for both teachers and learners. These functions include the capability to disseminate lessons in the simplest way possible for learners, assess learner competency, organize records of learner achievement, present assignments or enrichment activities, and provide tool for communication between the teachers and learners and facilitate learner collaboration (San Antonio, 2020).

*Discouraging Responses of Learners.* Children were fond of playing and doing other irrelevant errands at home. They enjoyed fooling around with friends, swimming in rivers and harvesting crops in the field. They oftentimes, neglected their tasks as learners.

*Syempre kanang i-kuan pa nimo sila kay ilang erason permi kay ang bata daw kanang dili muanswer ana gud maam.* (Parents said that their child doesn't want to answer.) IDI-Rhe, R3

*Sa learners nga nagremind na ka pero wala gihapoy response. Gihatod na ang module, mao lang gihapon.* (I already remind them, still no replies. I bought them straight to their home, same happened.) IDI-Mar, R3

*Hmm, okay kuan, sa paghome visit nako sa ilaha kay napansin nako nga lahi ang nag-answer sa module unya ang tag-iya sa module kay nagdula og nagdula-dula anay.* (As I conducted home visitation, I saw that somebody made the tasks and the child just roams and plays around.) IDI-Ali, R4

*Most of them kay mga once a week lang makaadto. Ang uban gani kay dili makaadto in a week.* (Most of them can come once a week only. Other cannot even come.) FGD-Chem, R3-4

Teacher Rhe pointed out that the learners were not interested to comply with the tasks in the module. The

span of answering is just but very short and they don't want to accomplish them. Teacher Mar didn't lack any reminders on the students. She even delivered the materials at home but still the module was neglected. Teacher Ali conducted home visitation but when she checked the actual scenario, the child is just playing around and somebody is completing the materials. The guts of getting the modular materials once a week only but others are not interested to get them.

Moreover, unlike technology-based learning solutions, well-designed paper-based materials are in a format most children will be familiar and comfortable with. Paper-based learning kits need to be carefully designed, age appropriate and consider that many children who stand to benefit the most with limited or no access to technology may have little or no parental support. For these reasons, many countries included paper-based approaches as part of their CoViD-19 education response, despite the challenge of rapidly designing and producing learning kits and delivering them during lockdowns (UNICEF, 2020). It is important that teachers continue to engage and interact with their students, provide assignments, and, importantly, provide timely feedback.

It is mandatory in the DepEd to prepare the learners' learning module and in each learning area, attached in the last page, answers key are provided. This helps home-bound learners to refer their answers for the purpose of individual checking of knowledge.

*Sa pagkuha sa module, gitagaan na silag instruction nga asa didto ang answeran ug asa nga page basahon pero kasagaran nagcopy gihapon sa answer key.* (Upon the distribution of the learning modules, they were already given instructions where and what part only that needs responses but commonly they just carbon copy in the answer key.) IDI-Mar, R14

It can be surmised from the response of Teacher Mar regarding the reliance of the children to the given answers key of the SLM. The teacher already gave instructions but still it was done effortlessly by the pupils. Due to the CoViD-19 pandemic, remote-learning students were running into all sorts of barriers to learning. Instructors are seeing that previously learned study strategies and habits are falling by the wayside as a result of too much unstructured time and relatively isolated campus living therefore creating challenges for even the best-equipped and disciplined students (Bresnick, 2020).

*And kasagaran pagtan-aw nako sa ilang answer kay gicopy lang sa likod. Lisud siya kay gikopya ra sa*



*likod iyahang answer.* (It is very common that responses were all copied from the back. Difficult for me because answers were just copied.) FGD-Jan, R29-30

*Para sa akoo, ang extra ordinary incident is same kay sir nga copied from the answer key.* (I have the same extraordinary incident; responses were all copied from the answer sheets.) FGD-Chem, R23

Jan and Chem stated almost the same idea. As Jan scanned the answers of the learners, it was absolutely the same in the attached answers in the assessments. They considered this as the most dreadful occurrence in the new normal. Education in times of pandemic involves helping a novice develop strong and readily accessible background knowledge. It is important that background knowledge be readily accessible, and this occurs when knowledge is well rehearsed and tied to other knowledge. The most effective teachers ensured that their students efficiently acquired, rehearsed, and connected background knowledge by providing a good deal of instructional support (Rosenshine, 2012).

Children in the special education program lack mental capacity to do things on their own. They are commonly shadowed by their teachers, older siblings and parents in order to fully accomplished tasks. They need guidance for them to relate and understand things happening around them.

*Kuan sa akoang pagfollow up sa mga bata naa juy mga bata gihapon nga dili sila kasabot bisag unsaon silag pasabot.* (During my follow-up session, there are still children who cannot fully understand on what to do.) IDI-Ali, A5

Children have different abilities. They need proper supervision to communicate things that are needed to be realized. Repeating from time to time the tasks made them more aware and careful. This will depend on the capacity of the child to acquire the information instructed to them.

Also, Pacheco (2020) in a complex and unequal world, the well-being of students requires diverse and even conflicting visions of the world, its problems, and the forms of knowledge we study to address them. Others, even with facilitators, still have difficulty comprehending the lessons and thus can hardly proceed to the next lessons. Submission deadlines for modules further create pressure on students, especially when they fail to meet them. Since the modular approach situates students to learn in the comfort of their homes, there is also the possibility that they work

on the modules for mere compliance, not for the sake of learning. Learning during these trying times has brought different challenges to both educational institutions and students and their families. Learning is seen as an opportunity for everyone but the CoViD-19 pandemic has put others in disadvantageous and harder situations (Center for Development Program in Cordillera, 2020).

*During follow-up session sa mga estudyante is kasagaran gyud sila kay dili makasabot kung unsay tubag or bisan gani sa pangutana, halos dili sila makasabot unsa to ang pangutana sa tanang nga mga activities nga naa sa sulod sa module.* (During home visitation, most of them cannot understand, they do not know the activities reflected in the module.) FGD-Ney, R11

Children and youth need continued interaction with their teachers, including guidance and feedback on their work. Continued teacher involvement is important for learning continuity, for students to feel supported during school closures, and to help establish a sense of routine and normality for students as well as for parents. For teachers, continued interaction with their students is equally important. Connecting with students regularly provides a sense of routine and purpose and helps them maintain their professional identities amidst uncertainty. These connections will help both students and teachers to re-establish relationships, and will also provide teachers a better sense of how much their students have learnt while being away from school. It is also important to have teachers' involvement in adapting and delivering the curriculum and lessons for home and distance learning, and in supporting student and parent uptake of these modalities (UNICEF, 2020).

*Kana ganing dili sila kabalo musabot or mubasa sa kung unsa ang pangutana sa module, unsa bay buot pasabot ato. So mao na sya in terms sa monitoring. Labi na kay dili kaayo sila kasabot* –(Upon monitoring, they do not know how to read and write on what is seen in the module, they cannot understand easily.) FGD- Jan, R43-44, 74

*Wala silay idea kung unsay juy sulod sa module.* (They do not have ideas on what are inside the module.) FGD- Chem, R39

According to the responses of teachers Ney, Jan and Chem, most the learners do not know how to response. They cannot even fully comprehend the tasks in the module. There are also learners who do not know how to read and write so definitely they cannot react on the

questions. Teacher Chem added that children were also children who are really so innocent on what was in the module itself.

As cited by Spector (2021), teachers were probably moving heaven and earth to help their kids learn to read and write and it is reflected in the gains. It is important to recognize the differential impact on the student. In general, it seems that these students didn't develop any reading skills. Growth stalled when schooling was interrupted and remained stagnant.

*Having Difficulty in Evaluating the Real Output of the Learners.* In behalf of the learners, there were other people who directly wrote the responses of the learners in the learning module. Their intention is very helpful but the actions seemed inappropriate. They are the ones writing. They affixed their own handwriting in the activity sheets. For lower grade level, it was acceptable that pupils can write it simply. But what happened was the child in special education can magically legibly write in cursive and completed all the tasks in just a day. This was not ideal because learners should be the performers of the tasks not the older sisters or parents.

*Unya usahay mapansin pud nako sa ilang module hmm, dili jud agi sa bata ang nakasulat. Ilhan kaayo nga dili sya ang nanswer.* (I can see that it is not the child answering. It is very visible in their modules.) IDI-Rhe, R6,24

*Hhmm. ug dili mismo ang estudyante ang gaanswer sa module.* (Students are not the ones answering.) IDI-Ali, R13.

It is there older siblings accomplishing the tasks. IDI-Pro, R23.

Teacher Rhe said that children were not the ones writing because the penmanship is absolutely not theirs. Teacher Ali affirmed on this. Pro narrated that it is their older sisters doing the tasks. The DepEd said that the pandemic is the perfect time for parents to teach their children honesty in answering learning materials (Bernardo, 2020).

*Dili sila makatubag kay diay siguro naay mga rason nga ilahang ate, kuya or mama ang nag answer. Isa gyud sa problema sa learning module sa akong estudyante kana gyung dili akong estudyante ang gaanswer. Mailhan man gud nimo ang agi pa lang daan.* (They cannot relate because their mother, sister or brother answered the module. This is one of the

problems. We can say it because the handwriting is very different.) FGD-Chem, R7, 36-37

*During monitoring and distribution of learning modules, about sa akoang pagmonitor sa mga modules sa mga bata, akong gyud mamatikdan nga kasagaran, tama tong giingon ni maam og ni sir kay dili gyud sila ang gaanswer sa ilang modules.* (During the monitoring and distribution of learning modules, I can really notice that learners are not the ones answering.) FGD-Ney, R37

The major problem in the education of learners in this pandemic was the dishonesty of the parents and responders because they are doing the task in behalf of the learners. This was visible in the report of teacher Chem. She exclaimed that the handwriting is very unbelievable on their level. This was also attested by Ney.

According to Ruth Estacio as cited by Sumangil (2021), children would never learn if parents kept on answering modules. Parents may only help and teach their children on answering the modules. Children and parents honesty is a huge challenge for modular learning. She plead to parents that they must not answer their children's module under the blended learning approach of the DepEd for the duration of pandemic.

### Challenges in Facilitating Learning

The third category in the lived experiences of hinterland educators in facilitating modular learning modality for learners with special educational needs is the challenges in facilitating learning. By now it is evident that the global pandemic has created an unprecedented challenge for school leaders. Although principals and superintendents are used to handling smaller crises such as fights in the hallway, a leaky boiler, irate parents, disagreements over budgetary choices, or even a scandal concerning a local educator, most school leaders have never dealt with a crisis of this scale and this scope for this long (McLeod & Dulskey, 2021).

Teachers were advised to adopt strategies that respect the unique contexts and diversity of learners in terms of their readiness, learning interest, and learning profile. Differentiated instruction may be manifested by giving respectful activities interesting, engaging, challenging to various groups of learners. This allowed routes of access at varying levels so that every learner is appropriately challenged and comes away with pivotal skills and understanding.

*Having Difficulty in Reaching the Learners' Home and Workstation.* The teachers' geographic location was strongly correlated to readiness to adapt to distance learning education amidst the threat of CoViD 19 pandemic in the Philippines, the educators, students, and the school are still coping and adjusting to the distance learning education.

*Sa pagbyahe pa lang daan, naglisod nako kay tungod sa kalayo sa station.* (In my travel, I find it hard because my station is very far.) IDI-Mar, R1

The distance from my home to my workstation is my first struggle because the road is hazardous and prone to landslide along cliffs. I also experienced landslide along the road of which I tumbled down from my motorcycle because of the super slippery paths. There are houses that needed to cross the river and traverse mountains and another sitio. IDI-Pro, R1, 8, 19

According to Teacher Mar and Teacher Pro, their station was very far from the main municipality. They travelled from home and struggled along the road because the paths were prone to landslide and there were cliffs along the way.

*Distance travel sa mga estudyante kay naa may mga estudyante nga nagpuyo sa lagyo og dili dayon makaanhi sa eskwelahan.* (There are learners that need to travel because they are living on distant mountains, and that they cannot easily reach the school.) IDI-Ali, R3

*Okay, so first ang distance jud no gikan sa balay padulong sa eskwelahan and pagdistribute. Pero mubaktas gud ka pero muagi jud pa jud kag sapa. Usahay danlog pang dalan mga ingun ana.* (The distance from home going to school and the distribution. We need to walk and cross rivers. Sometimes, the way is very slippery.) IDI-Rhe, R1, 9-10

According to Teacher Ali there were also learners who lived far from school that need to traverse mountains in order to get the learning materials. Teacher Rhe added that she needed to cross the river. The path was very slippery that made the way very challenging for her.

*Usa pa pa pud kanang dili nako malimtan kanang magbyahe mi mutabok sa sapa labi nagtaas ang sapa. Naay time nga maslide or mangabasa amoang mga gamit.* (I cannot forget the times when we need to cross raging rivers. There are instances that we slipped

and the materials we carry became wet.) FGD-Jan, R9-10

*Katong nagtabok mig sapa naghatod og modules kay naa sa hilit ang balay sa bata.* (When I crossed the river in order to reach the homes of learners located in a very secluded place.) FGD-Uki, R7

*Kay taga lagyo sila, ginatagaan nakog priority ang taga lagyo kay lisud man ang pagbyahe ug ang pagkuha sa module So ang ilahang ginabuhat, magbaktas. Mao gani ng dugay kay tungod sa kalayo gyud sa ilang baktasunon padulong eskwelahan.* (In giving learning modules, I prioritized those learners who lived very far from school because they need to walk kilometers away.) FGD-Ney, R6, 27-28

Lapada (2020) explored teachers' awareness about the CoViD-19 pandemic and their opinion on their respective schools' readiness, including the vicinity of learners' home as well as their response to the challenges of conducting distance learning education in the Philippines.

Teacher Jan's most unforgettable travail was when he crossed the raging water of the river. He lost his balance and the materials he was carrying for the learners were soaked in the water. Same with Teacher Uki who needs to reach the learners who were living in the very sneaky areas of the mountain. Teacher Ney prioritizes the learners who need to walk. He gave them complete materials so that their efforts in reaching the school will be equally compensated.

### **Struggling in Guiding the Lessons by the Parents.**

Parents or any responsible adults who are in-charge of guiding and supporting the learner at home shall be encouraged to come to the community learning space to confer with the teachers about the learner's progress. In modular distance learning the learning delivery was in the form of individualized instruction where learners use SLM in print or digital format, whichever is applicable in the context of the learner, with the guidance of any member of the family or other stakeholder in the community trained to serve as learning facilitators.

*Dili kabalo ang ginikanan mubasa ug musabot sa module.* (Parents do not know how to read or write.) IDI-Mar, R16

*Ang ubang parents kanang dili sila mismo kasabot sa module kay naay dili kabalo mubasa og musulat. Naay uban parents na dili kasabot or dili kabasa or kasulat.*

(Some of the parents cannot relate to the modules because they themselves do not know how to read or write.) IDI-Rhe, R18, 28

Teacher Mar said that some parents in the hinterland do not know how to read or write. Teacher Rhe added that parents cannot relate because they too lack basic education.

Parent's involvement is also a challenge because many parents in the hinterland do not know how to read and that they cannot assist. Parent's illiteracy is also hard for me because they cannot assist their children and choose to be in the farm to provide the family's needs. IDI-Pro, R3, 24

Parent's involvement was very necessary to motivate learners to become skilled even in times of pandemic but sad to state that the illiteracy of parents became a great factor why learners are struggling to adapt the new normal education.

They themselves do not even know how to read and write. FGD-Uki, R13

*Uhhh... ang akong struggles ma'am sa karon na new normal distance learning kay unang una kaning lack of parents involvement in answering kay tungod naay mga ginikanan nga dili sila kabalo or dili sila kabalo mubasa or musulat. Maglisud ang bata. Maglisud sila"ng tabang sa bata regarding sa pag-answer sa module. Dili sya matubag kay tungod ang mismo nga ginikanan kulang siya or dili kaayo siya kabalo magbasa or magsulat. (My first struggle in the new normal is the parent's involvement in answering the modules because there are parents who do not know how to read and write. Children have difficulties. It is hard for them to help in answering because parents do not know basic reading and writing.) FGD-Jan, R1-3, 39*

It was the desire of the parents to help in facilitating the home learning for their children but the barrier being non-educated parents became a hindrance for continuous acquisition of knowledge. This was the heartfelt disclosure of Teacher Jan which was also attested by Teacher Uki. Mortola (2020), DepEd had found out that learners who can't do independent learning and have illiterate parents find it difficult to grasp learning especially that the elders that they depend upon, cannot teach them because they don't know the concepts inside the module. This was one factor that hinders the effective implementation of modular learning, especially if the parents don't communicate with the teacher. Parents lacked of basic

teaching strategies. They were the new normal teachers of our learners. They were home-based learning facilitators that aid the children in responding to the self-learning modules. They were the ones who instructed the learners on what to do with the activities and assisted the pupils in accomplishing tasks.

*Dili kabalo so unsaon pud nila pagtudlo sa ilang anak. (Parents do not know so how will they teach their children too.) IDI-Rhe, R29*

Parents lack basic styles in teaching basic reading and writing. IDI-Pro, R24

Base on what Teacher Rhe has said, parents do not know how to teach their children. This was affirmed by teacher Pro because parents lacked basic styles in teaching basic reading and writing.

*Ato nga sitwasyon lisud gyud ang pagfacilitate sa module or ang pahatag sa module especially sa mga bata gyud kay bisan gani ang ginikanan maglisud pud gani og pagsabot kung sila mismo ang mupasabot sa ilang mga anak about sa nakasulat sa akoo. (In our situation, it is hard to facilitate modular learning because parents do not understand on what is written and there is difficulty too in relaying to their children on what to do.) FGD-Ney, R14*

*Ang parents dili sila kabalo. (Parents do not know.) FGD-Jan, R36*

The problem is their parents do not have enough strategy on how to teach children at home. FGD-Uki, R12

As lamented by Teacher Ney, the difficulty of teachers to understand on what are indicated in the modules made it hard for them to edify for their children. They lacked styles on what to do. According to Teacher Uki, the problem was their parents do not have enough strategy on how to teach children at home.

Moreover, UNICEF (2020), pointed the importance of continuity of learning needs to be communicated to parents and caregivers, along with guidance on home learning modalities. It is important to raise awareness of the learning programs being rolled out and how to access them, for example, through a combination of multiple strategies. The most marginalized children including those with disabilities, struggling learners, poor children, children from ethnic minorities, children on the move, children in the most rural hard-to-reach and poorest communities, and girls tasked with significant household responsibilities such as caring



for siblings or ill family members are least likely to be able to access and benefit from distance learning opportunities. Approaches to reach the most marginalized children include rolling out low and no-tech learning modalities, translating and adapting materials to a diverse set of mother tongues, closed captions and live signing interpretation in video or television lessons for children with hearing impairments, and ensuring materials are culturally appropriate and do not reinforce negative gender stereotypes. Communication, sensitization and media campaigns on the value of girls' education can be effective to encourage communities and families to support girls' participation, and for this, it is important to work with women's organizations and community leaders.

Learners lacked parental guidance and support. Breadwinners of the family strived hard to support the daily needs despite of the pandemic. Majority of the parents were farmers. Most of their agricultural lands were situated in steep mountain ranges. They toil early without considering that in this CoViD-19 captivity, they are the facilitators of learning at home.

*My experiences as a hinterland educator first ang bata dili kaayo maguide sa mga ginikanan kay busy sa panginabuhì or daghan ra kaayo og anak nga ginaatiman pud ug dili kaayo sila matudluan. Dili dayon nila maatiman kay kesyo busy.* (My experiences as a hinterland educator first, the parents cannot guide their children because they have errands to do or they have many children to attend to. They cannot give the attention because they are busy.) IDI-Rhe, R17, 21

*Sa ilahang performance dili kabalo mubasa ug walay muassist sa ilaha.* (Base on their performance, they do not know how to read because there is no one to assist them.) IDI-Mar, R20

Parents' occupation can also hinder children's time in studying. Parents cannot give quality time to the children in aiding the education process. Hinterland parents are at work in the field. Children are sometimes ungrateful of the neglected indications they've had at home.

Parents and other family member have major roles in assisting young children. However, the level of literacy and formal schooling in adults tends to be low, making this role more challenging. These were quoted below:

*Katong mga learners nga need unta ug guidance sa ilang ginikanan, dili siya macater.* (There are learners

who need parental guidance, they need to be catered.) FGD-Jan, R38

*Kay ang reklamo kasagaran sa ginikanan naa silay trabaho.* (Most of the parents' clamor is they do have other works to do.) FGD-Ney, R20

*Unforgettable travail during sa akong pagfollow up kay ang bata pag-adto nako sa ilang balay kay wala jud intawon naatiman sa ginikanan. Wala pa kaligo, bulingit pa kaayo.* (My unforgettable travail during my follow-up session in their homes is the child was not given attention by the parent. The child haven't took a bath, and was very filthy.) FGD-Uki, R4-5

Parents begun scanning the modules over the weekend so they could anticipate the lessons that their children had a hard time understanding in the modular classroom their parents would become their teachers and the usual complaint has been that the parents have not been trained to teach subjects. They were not actually ready to deal with it (Adonis, 2020).

Teachers Jan divulged that there is a need of support, involvement and guidance of parents in nurturing children at home. Teacher Ney expressed that most of the parents tell that they have other things to finish, thus children were neglected. Teacher Uki added that even in home-schooling parents need to give time, take good care of the children and prepare the children. They shall prepare the children ready for the day.

**Battling in Understanding the Language.** Hinterland people have their own native language which is not familiar for teachers who are living in lowland that are assigned in far-flung areas. There was communication gap in presenting to the parents regarding the tasks that was needed to be done by the learners. When the teacher gave instructions, they do their best to impart the required assignments to be accomplished. On the contrary, the parents cannot easily grasp all the ideas endowed by the educator.

Also is the language difference between me as a teacher and to the parents because they have their dialects in hinterland. Another experience is that the giving of instructions to the parents. Because of our language difference, they are not able to get the desired directions. Oftentimes they misunderstood and the responses in the learning materials are affected. IDI-Pro, R7, 12-14

The people's dialect living in the hinterland was respected by the teachers. But sometimes, both parties understood each other. This is the hindrance in

communicating to the parents or learners the desired literacy suited for them.

*Para sa akong ma'am, most unforgettable travail during follow-up session sa mga bata kay kanang ginatawag nato nga language difference. Dili kaayo mi magsinabotanay. Dili magkasinabot kay naay times nga akuang gamiton ang akoang language nga naandan. Dili mi magkasinabot kay lahi man ilang inistoryahan.* (The most unforgettable for me is the so called language difference. We hardly understand each other. We cannot easily understand especially when I will speak using my language. The parents cannot understand because they have their own language also.) FGD-Jan, R5-8

*Unya pagstorya nako sa ginikanan dili pagyud dayon mi magkasinabot kay lahi ilang sinultihan sa bukid.* (When I talk to the parents, we do not easily understand each other because they have their own dialect in the hinterland.) FGD-Uki, R8

The line of communication due to language difference became the barrier in delivering quality education for the learners in the hinterland. Parents served as the bridge of communication. Poignant to say that learning is hampered due to its difference. Parents cannot acquire the desired instructions and the responses of the learners in the modular learning are affected too.

Also, providing a curated and organized list of resources in relevant languages ideally aligned to the curriculum and grade-wise educational objectives are essential. The programs as well potential educators can facilitate and make the activity interactive. This requires that the instructions for doing so are clear, simple and in a language they can understand. These kinds of learning modalities could continue to be run once schools reopen (UNICEF, 2020).

### Coping Mechanisms in Facing the Challenges in Facilitating Modular Learning Modality for Learners with Special Educational Needs

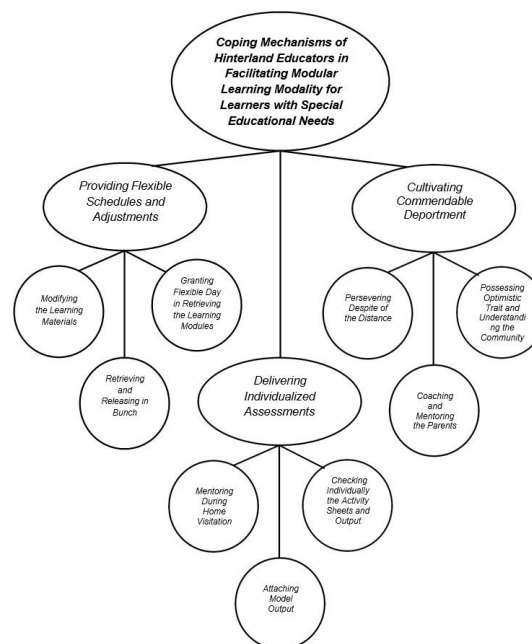


Figure 2. Coping Mechanisms of Hinterland Educators in Facilitating Modular Learning Modality for Learners with Special Educational Needs

In this study, I came up with three categories: These are providing flexible schedules and adjustments, delivering individualized assessments and cultivating commendable deportment. Under each category are the specific coping mechanisms by hinterland teachers in facilitating modular learning modality for learners with special educational needs. To identify my participants' quoted responses to the interview, R is used with its corresponding number as seen in the appendices.

### Providing Flexible Schedules and Adjustments

The first category in the coping mechanisms when facing the challenges in facilitating modular learning modality for learners with special educational needs is cultivating commendable deportment. Like no other crisis before, the CoViD-19 pandemic has illustrated the deficiencies of our educational systems and the lack of administrator preparation regarding crisis leadership. Unfortunately for many school leaders during the first months of the pandemic, policymakers and often the administrators above those leaders in the organizational hierarchy often lacked an accurate picture of what was occurring, nor did they share what they knew with others in ways that enabled effective leadership responses and partnerships. Anecdotal stories abound of frontline educators and administrators struggling to get information and

guidance during the pandemic's first few months from those above them in the school system or from their local (McLeod & Dulskey, 2021).

*Modifying the Learning Materials.* Supporting kids with special needs works best when both regular education and special education staff work together. That's why it is helpful for all teachers to understand how they can modify and accommodate for students in their classrooms. For newer teachers, the learning that needed modification for kids of various levels can be a bit overwhelming. Even teacher who were highly experienced might struggle with how much to modify (Kristina, 2016). There was balance because they were constantly trying in finding out what was just tough enough to push students, with it still being at an appropriate level that can help them grow. Too easy and the work does not really challenge them. Too difficult and kids might shut down, causing them to not learn anything at all. It was okay and actually good to fine-tune the level of modifications over time.

I gave them a modified activity sheets. I see to it that it is the simplest task for them. I modified the the learning sheets base on the abilities of the child. IDI-Pro, R32-33, 39

*Simplify the instruction para makasabot gyud sila.* (I simplified the instruction for them to understand.) IDI-Ali, R18

Teacher Pro modified the activity sheets. She made sure that it was the simplest task for learners. She modified the learning sheets base on the abilities of the child. This was the same style with teacher Ali for the learners to easily grasp the concept of the tasks.

*Ginatagaan ra sad nako silag mga simple nga mga buluhaton kung dili nila kaya answeran ang naa sa module para maencourage jud sila nga mag-answer or magbuhat sa module para dili sila mawalaag gana. Tan-awon nako kung sa module asa ang kaya nila buhaton. Mao naman na ilang strength na kabalo na gyud sila ana so nagalevel up, nagalevel up sila.* (I gave them simplified activities if they cannot answer the modules for them to be encouraged and to eliminate boredom. I see to it that in the modules, they are capable of doing them to upgrade their level.) IDI-Rhe, R50-52

Apart from this, Dangle and Sumaoang (2020) narrated that teachers should re- evaluate the modules, and they must make sure that all the lessons or activities are appropriate to the needs of the learners. The instructions in every exercise must be clear

enough for the learners to understand. The topics must be simplified, and teachers must give more examples. Printed pictures in the modules should be clear.

Participant Rhe mentioned that she gave the learners with educational needs the simplified activities whenever they cannot answer the modules. This is for them to be encouraged and to eliminate boredom. She made sure that in the new learning modality, the learners are capable of doing them in order to upgrade their level.

*Another one is i-simplify or modify the task. Meaning, nagahatag kog task sa ila, or evaluation in a way nga masabtan pud nila in their own. Kanang dili pud kaayo lisud. Syempre magbase pud na sailing capacity as estudyante.* (Another is simplifying the tasks. I gave tasks or evaluations that they can understand.) FGD-Chem, R59-62

Participant Chem mentioned on the modified learning materials she was giving to her learners. The materials were based on the level of the learners so that they can access and relate to the activities presented to them.

Moreover, as teaching and learning become more personalized, educators need to come up with innovative teaching methodologies on a case-to-case basis to suit the learner's requirement. From preparing a personalized curriculum for courses to being a content creator to mentoring students on real-world projects to ensure that they are job- proof, and upskilling themselves to stay abreast of emerging technology and skills, today's educators dabble in many things. From being facilitators of learning, educators have also turned to be innovators (Saxena, 2020).

*Depende pud sa capacity sa bata. Maghatag napud mig simplified or modified performance task nga answeran or mameasure lang man namo kung asa na dapit sa iyang learning.* (Depending on child's capacity. I gave them simplified performance tasks to measure their learning.) FGD-Jan, R54, 69

*At least man lang, mapakita nila ang ilahang 100% nga performance about anang gipabuhat sa ilaha.* (At least they can show their 100% performance on the things they do.) FGD-Ney, R49

*Gimodify na nako. Pinakasimple na jud para makarelate jud sila. modified modules. Kanang simplest na jud.* (I modified. Simplest for them to relate. I modified the modules to the simplest.) FGD-

Uki, R16,19

The discussion highlighted on the capacity of the learners to respond to the modular materials that the teachers had printed. It seems to it that the children can perform their activities suited for their level of disability.

Most importantly, if a child requires a modification according to their IEP, the teacher needs to provide it. The IEP is a legal document and those modifications and accommodations were agreed upon the child's planning team. Some modifications are specifically listed, such as having a word bank or being able to use a calculator. Other times, modifications are left up to the discretion of the teacher. If there is something unsure about in the child's list of modifications, talk to the special education teacher (Kristina, 2016).

**Retrieving and Releasing in Bunch.** Location of the learners to the school hinders them to visit every week. They cannot go to school regularly because of the distance. There were some who live in another mountain that needs to walk and traverse kilometers just to reach school. For this, their strategy of getting the learning materials in bunch resolved their difficulty and they also saved time and effort.

*Katong mga lagyo kay kuan gitingob og hatag ang mga modules sa mga bata like ang modules nga good for two weeks para after two weeks para after two weeks pud, para after two weeks pa pud sila mubalik, mao to.* (To those who are living far, we released the modules in bunch, good for two weeks, so that they can go back in school two weeks after also.) IDI-Ali, R14

Taken into consideration that there were learners who lived on secluded areas, hinterland teachers released modular learning materials in bunch for the learners to be updated with the latest release. Additional materials were carried out by the learners back to their homes that saved more time and effort in fetching weekly the modular materials in school.

*So akoang ginahimo, ginatagaan nako sila og advance. Usahay tag three week nga module akong iadvance at least sa isa ka bulan, makasubida man galing sila sa school and then bali ang ilahang attendance masunod lang gihapon, wala silay absent.* (I gave modules in advance. Sometimes for three weeks or one month they can return them. Their attendance is still followed without absences.) FGD-Ney, R8-10

*Ginatingob gyud nakog kuha or pagdistribute tapos ginahatagan pud namo silag enough time para mag answer og modules kay syempre daghan man silag mabitbit and dili pud siguro enough ang one week para mag-answer ato.* (I distributed in bunch. I gave them enough time to accomplish them because one week is not enough to answer all of those.) FGD-Chem, R47

*Mahulog siya nga by bunch kay tingob man kasagaran ang paghatag labi na tong lagyo nga usahay ra kaadtog school.* (For those who living far from school, I gave them modules in bunch.) FGD-Uki, R14

Secretary Leonor Magtolis Briones (2020) mentioned that DepEd is going into a new normal because the department is creating a brave new world and have to start with the children to give them courage, to give them initiative, to help them look at problems realistically, and to continually have hope and confidence that they will overcome and so on to the brave new world. DepEd has come out with variety, with menu of options, online is not the only answer, there's a huge debate in the Philippines on how useful or whether or it is really a good way of teaching learners, online, televisions and radio. If all else fails, then learning modules are being printed so that these will be delivered in various pick-up points or either parents or for the village officials to distribute to the learners.

The group of teacher-participants discussed on their tactics on how their learners can cope with the distance learning. They are releasing modular materials tied up for weeks. Parents returned the materials after many weeks the same with the number of materials released to them.

*Granting Flexible Day of Returning the Learning Modules.* Every beginning of the school year, teachers prepared individual class program of which it was like the schedule in a week as to distribution and retrieval of literacy modules indicating the learning area that the child was suppose to answer in a specific day. Commonly, Monday is the distribution day and Friday is the retrieval day of the week. But hinterland educators revealed the following:

*Hatagan pa og extension time ang bata.* (Give the child extension time.) IDI- Mar, R28.

*Ug tagaan siyag enough time or extension time to cope on his or her works.* (Give the child enough time or extension time to cope on his or her works.) IDI- Ali,



R21

Another is, I am giving extension time to the learners for them to fully finish their works. IDI-Pro, R49

The hinterland teachers are flexible and not in a hurry to collect the learning sheets from the parents. They made some adjustments on the days of the week disregarding the approved days of retrieval in the class program.

*Tagaan sila "g consideration labi na katong bata nga naa sa lagyo nga lugar. Tagaan nato sila og time allowance para naa pa siyay time nga mabuhay to niya nga work or assigned task. Dili nato siya epressure ky kung ipressure pa nato siya, dili na sya ganahan mutiwas tungod ang isa ka module, gitagaan nasad nato siyag another nga module magtambak na tanan. (Give them consideration especially those learners who live in far areas. give them time allowance to finish the assigned tasks. We should not pressure them and if we won't, they will lose the eagerness to work if we will give another set of modules to them.) FGD-Jan, R70, 79-80*

*As a teacher in a remote area, dapat sabton ang sitwasyon sa bata. For example, layo ilang balay from school so maunang naay times nga dugay siya makakuhag module. By that hatagan namo silag time allowance para maaccomplish ilang trabaho. (As a teacher in a remote area, we should understand the child. For example, if they are settled in mountainous areas, they cannot easily go down from another hill to get a module. With this, we will give them time allowance to accomplish the tasks.) FGD- Chem, R63-65*

*Uyon ko sa tubag ni Maam og ni sir nga tagaan gyud og time allowance. (I affirm to the response of the teachers that we should give time allowance to the learners.) FGD-Ney, R56-59*

Patient as they were, the participants were giving time allowances to the learners who were living kilometers away from the school. Because of the location, each one should consider that much of the learners or parents desire to get the learning materials, they cannot always do so because of the distance and hazards.

To make learning manageable for learners, they may be given a set time frame to undertake a lesson or accomplish an activity. The setting of the time frame shall be guided by the suggested time allotment a MELCS can be mastered. Learners who are not

meeting expectations shall be provided with remediation while those who may accomplish the tasks as contained in the SLM shall be given enrichment activities (San Antonio, 2020).

Parents can return the learning materials in school depending on the learning area the child independently finished. Parents were not forced to return all the SLM in a week. Most of the learners that were settled in the remote areas were also considered. Hinterland teachers were very empathizing relating to the location and time allowances needed by learners. In fact, learners were happy for the stretchy time their teachers had given to them.

### Delivering Individualized Assessments

The second category in the coping mechanisms when facing the challenges in facilitating modular learning modality for learners with special educational needs is delivering individualized assessments. Though children are tutored by parents at home, the SLM were checked and verified and should be accomplished by the enrolled child.

Another consistent element of leadership is effective communication, and numerous scholars have emphasized the leader's role in communicating with both internal and external audiences. During a crisis, school leaders like their counterparts in other institutions must engage in effective communication, facilitate sensemaking in conditions of uncertainty, be flexible and adaptive, and pay attention to the emotional wellbeing and health of employees (McLeod & Dulskey, 2021).

*Mentoring during Home Visitation.* Home visitations of the teachers to the learners provide a great impact to the learning and assessment of pupils. The time given by the mentors was so precious that they deliver education to the doors of their primary clientele. They prepared the materials they needed and conduct remediation, intervention and enhancement activities to the place where the pupil resides.

*First is ga-home visit mi. So magdala kog worksheet tapos one on one mi sa bata. Tudluan nako siya or pangutan-on nako siya kung kaya na ba niya ni buhaton tong gidala nako. (First, I conducted home visitations. I bring worksheets and I tutor the child. I teach him and I asked if he can do and willing to perform the tasks that I'd brought.) IDI- Rhe, R42-44.*

During the home visitation, I grabbed the opportunity of talking to the child face to face and mentoring them

on what to do on the activity sheets that I have given. IDI-Pro, R30

*Then during pud sa home visit, mag instruct mi sa bata or mangutana mi kung asa sila nalisdan asa dapita nga part. That time makahatag pud mig gamayng guidance sa ilaha.* (During the home visitation, I gave instructions. I asked what part of the module is hard for them. By this, we can give guidance to them.) FGD-Jan, R61-62

Many of the world's primary and secondary education systems face unprecedented challenges in meeting students' academic needs. Financial strain and uncertainly from the pandemic coupled with the need for social distancing had undermined the role of traditional classrooms in student learning and increased the burden on parents. When it comes to intervention that can help students get back on track, tutoring as one-one or small group instructional program readily comes to mind. As educators will attest, tutoring ranks among the most widespread, versatile and potentially transformative instruments within today's educational toolkit (Nickow, Oreopoulos & Quan, 2020).

Hinterland teachers conducted home visitation. They brought with them the activity sheets good for their students. It was the most vital chance for them to talk to the child face to face. They conducted tutorials and can personally assess the child. They provided direct assistance. They taught the child in a way the learner and parents wanted. Proper assessment can be conferred to the special appearance of teachers in the community of the beginners.

*Attaching Model Output.* Teachers provided guides for the learners to easily accomplish the tasks in the worksheets. Outputs led the learners to the nearest desired outcome of the activity. Learners strived to perform. The process was much more importance than the appearance of the results

*Hmmm, kasagaran nagbuhat jud ko og model output para guide sa bata.. Hmmm, example naghatag ko og, isa pa pud naghatag ko og page number sa module nga mao ilang guide sa pag-answer. (I made model output for the learners' guidance. Like for example, I gave the page number in the modules where all the samples are reflected.)* IDI-Mar, R26-27

I also provided them the model outputs for their guided in doing the tasks. IDI-Pro, R42.

The responses of Teacher Mar were also confirmed by

Teacher Pro. These pave way for the easy accomplishment of tasks. She gave the desired output that channeled the production of the needed upshots.

*Ako mismo ang nagapangita og way para dili kaayo sila lisdan sa pagprovide anang akoang project nga akoang gipangayo sa ilaha. Pareha anang magpahimo ko og portfolio sa ilaha. Ako mismo ang gaprovide sa ilahang front page.* (I made it sure that there is no difficulty for students to provide the materials needed in their tasks. Like for example, if they have the task to make a portfolio. I personally provided the front page for them.) FGD-Ney, R46-48

Model output is any data that has been produced by executing a model. In learning this is synonyms for model prediction (Barata, 2020). Samples given by teachers gave ideas to the learners in performing assignments. This served as their motivation to finish the works handed over to them. Ney was so street-wise so that there are no complications in the part of the learners. He even provided the needed bits and pieces for the learners' school project.

*Checking Individually the Activity Sheets and Output.* Assessments were conducted by the teachers to track and measure learners' progress and to adjust instruction accordingly. These were done in paper-based, offline, or online assessment format, whichever was appropriate to the context and needs of the learners, to enable them to participate fully in the assessment process and be assessed fairly.

*Kung pagmonitor sa performance sa bata, tan-awon nako sa module sa activities nga kaya nagyud nila buhaton. Example kanang magcolor, kaya naman na nila. Magtrace og mga letters and numbers. Nagapangutana ko sa mama mismo or sa mga bata kung sila gyud ba gaanswer or kung kaya na ba sa ilang anak magsulat, mag-ihap, magcolor.* (Upon monitoring the performance of the child, I see to that they are ones who did the tasks in the module are on the level of the child. For example, coloring or tracing of letter and numbers. I asked the parents if they are the ones answering them of if they can already write, count and do artworks.) IDI-Rhe, R39-41

*Hmmm, individualized checking of output sa bata.* (Hmmm, individualized checking of output of children.) IDI-Mar, R36

I do one-on-one assessment during my home visitation with parent's permission. I do individual checking to the retrieved activities. IDI-Pro, R35-36

My three teacher participants revealed the same strategy in assessing. This view of assessment acknowledges the unity of instruction and assessment. Assessment is a part of day to day lessons and extends the day-to-day classroom activities that are already in place in the K to 12 curriculum.

While a person might be particularly strong in a specific area, such as musical intelligence, he most likely possessing a range of abilities. For example, an individual might be strong in verbal, musical and naturalistic intelligence. In order to capture the full range of abilities and talents that people possess, Gardner theorized that people do not have just an intellectual capacity but have many kinds of intelligences, including musical, interpersonal, spatial-visual and linguistic intelligences (Cherry, 2021). My teacher participants accepted the strength and weaknesses of the children despite of their disability. They were taught and loved as regular learners by giving them the right to learn in all ways and molded the child in their best.

*Everytime na nagafollow-up ko sa ilaha, ginapangutana nako sila. "Kumusta man ni? Kumusta man inyong pag-answer?"*. (Everytime I do follow-ups, I asked them how are they. How did you feel while answering?) FGD-Chem, R5-6

*So ginapangutan namo, kumusta man sila sa pag-answer sa module, naansweran ba nila, nasabtan ba nila.*(We asked if how are they while answering in the learning module, or did they accomplish all and ask if they understood.) FGD- Jan, R60

During the monitoring and evaluation of learners, teachers asked the learners on their feelings while doing school works at home. Upon retrieving, they scrutinized the works of the children and accomplished thorough checking on the returned materials and asked who did the tasks.

DepEd Order No. 8, series of 2015 or the Policy Guidelines on Classroom Assessment for the K to 12 Basic Education Curriculum mentioned that summative assessment measures whether learners have met the content and performance standard. Teachers must used methods to measure student learning that have been deliberately designed to assess how well students have learned and are able to apply their learning in different context. The results of summative assessments are recorded and used to report on the learner's achievement. Primarily the results of summative assessment are reported to the learners and their parents or guardians. In addition, this are reported

to principals and teachers who will receive the child in the next grade level and guidance teachers who should help students cope with challenges they experience in school.

It is recommended that a learning facilitator or a household partner like parent, guardian, sibling, or other community members considered as a responsible adult should be available to guide and support the learning progress of the child at home as well as providing guidance in accomplishing the required home learning tasks.

I do inquiry on the parents on who really made the activity and who assisted the child in doing the work. IDI-Pro, R34

*Inig mag-uli na sila sa module sa school, giask nako sila kung sila ba gyud mismo ang nag-answer or gipaansweran ba nila sa kaila.* (When they returned the modules in school, I asked them if who did the works.) FGD-Ney, R12

The learning facilitators shall be capacitated on their roles through a capacity building program that shall be organized by the schools through the supervision of the DepEd offices. The school-level capacity building program shall be part of the cascade model of training that shall commence at the national level where school heads and supervisors are trained first about the roles of the learning facilitators to be rolled out to the school level before the school year opens (San Antonio, 2020). Teacher participant Pro scrutinized the family on who assisted the child in doing the tasks at home. This was the same with teacher Ney of which she asked on who really responded on the activity sheets.

### Cultivating Commendable Deportment

The third category in the coping mechanisms when facing the challenges in facilitating modular learning modality for learners with special educational needs is cultivating commendable deportment. A good attitude towards works and people is a good indicator that helped a person in a day to living. Harmonious relationship within a community will be maintained when peace and good approach will be exercised.

School leaders should have values, belief systems, personality traits, skills, and areas of expertise. They should also include leaders' visioning work as well as fostering collaboration, building trust, enabling empowerment, and building a sense of community. Another essential tasks to remember and do is understanding both the past and immediate contexts,

adapting to changing needs, thinking creatively, treating everyone humanely and providing direction for the organization (McLeod & Dulsky, 2021).

*Persevering Despite of the Distance.* Resilience training important. By making a conscious choice to reframe failures, redirect negative thoughts, and regulate tough emotions, you can improve your resiliency (Soken-Huberty, 2021). Perseverance is not an inbred trait that some people have and others don't. Life experiences and community have a big impact on how someone moves through the world, but if you want to be more perseverant, it is a learnable skill.

*Continue working. Dili tanan teacher magdugay og tudlo diri sa bukid so makahatag og quality education diri sa hinterland og makaproduce og professionals diri sa bukid.* (Let us continue working. Not all teachers can stay in the hills for so long. Let us continue giving quality education in the hinterland so that we can produce future professional.) IDI-Mar, R30-31

*Gusto pud nako i-prove nako sa uban kay syempre kung muingon tag nagtudlo sa bukid negative man gyud ang ginaingon sa ubang tao kay sa kalayo pud. Gusto nako ipakita sa ilaha nga bisan pa man sa kalayuon, kaya lang.* (I want to prove to others that teaching in the hills is not always negative because of the distance. I want to show them that even if it is very far still I can do it.) IDI-Rhe, R64-65

Mar was persuaded to continue working knowing the fact that not all teachers can stay in the hills for a long period of time. Teachers ought to continue in giving quality education in the hinterland so that their will be future professional in the near future. Teacher Rhe wanted also to prove to others that teaching in the hills is not always negative because of the distance. She wanted to show to the people that even if the location is very far still Teacher Rhe can surpass it.

*Motivate myself to work despite sa kakapoy. Bisag layo, magtudlo lang gihapon ta sa mga estudyante para sa ilahang future.* (Even if I am tired sometimes, I still motivate myself to work. Even if far, let us still teach children for them to have a good future.) IDI-Ali, R28-29

*Kung kapuyon, ginaencourage or motivate nako akong self nga kaya ra. Mag- ampo lang gyud sa Ginoo nga hatagan tag kusog ug kabaskog sa imong mga trabahuon. Thankful lang pud ko kay naa poy muencourage nga mga colleagues nga laban lang*

*bisan pa man sa kakapoy, makaya lang gyud ni ang tanan.* (I encourage myself, I motivate myself that I can do it. I always pray that God will give me more strength to work. I am also thankful for the encouragements of my colleagues to continue despite of everything, together we can accomplishment thing.) IDI-Rhe, R67-69

Hinterland teachers, Ali and Rhe revealed their approach in order to live free from mental diseases and pressures in time of pandemic. Perseverance has a big role in their lives. Looking into a positive perspective stimulated them to surpass all the turmoils they are facing in work and in their home. Motivation triggers them to look forward and to disregard negativities that surrounded them.

I am praying for strength. I even sang songs for motivation while personally driving my own motorcycle for two hours going to the hills for work. IDI-Pro, R57

Teacher Pro is a religious person because she prays for undending strength. She is doing things with cheerfulness through the songs that she sang while driving with motivation going to the hinterland.

*Self-motivation. Ako nalang ginamotivate akong self nga kinahanglan nako ni kay trabaho nako ni. Tapos naay mga learners nga naghulat sa akong didto. Kinahangalan para mamotivate ta sa atoang trabaho, bisan bisan pa mag face to face or dili, kay naa man kay personal goal, magmotivate ko nga magbuhat sa akong mga trabaho.* (Self-motivation. I motivate myself that I need this because this is my work. There are also learners who waited for me there. It is needed so that we will be motivated at work, face to face or not, because we have personal goals, I am motivated to do my duty.) FGD-Jan, R94, 117

*And another is of course, walay laing makatabang og motivate sa akong isang akong lang pung sarili. So every day ginaremind nako akong self sa akong goal. Ginaremind nako akong self sa akong purpose ngano nako ni ginabuhay. (Another is, no other person that can help me motivate but myself. Everyday, I am reminded of my goal. I remind myself about the purpose of why I am doing this.) FGD-Chem, R90-92*

According to teacher Jan, he motivated himself so much because this is his work. There are also learners who waited for him in the mountains. It is a must in order for the teacher to be more motivated at work, face to face or not, because everyone has personal



goals. Chem also implied that no other person that can help her motivate but herself. Everyday, teachers should be reminded of their goal and be reminded about the purpose of why hinterland educators are doing this.

According to Soken-Huberty (2021), all goals require effort. Sometimes, very little is needed, though most of the time, goals take quite a bit of work. Perseverance is continuing toward a goal no matter what, while resilience is the ability to bounce back from challenges. Teachers needed resilience and patience to persevere. There were very few good things in life that come quickly. Perseverance carries you through failures. Trying again even when it is risky is another opportunity for growth. School-aged kids face a lot of challenges. They not only have to navigate complex social interactions, but they're constantly learning new things and dealing with pressure about their futures. Perseverance helps them build their self-confidence and find healthy ways to deal with failure. Teachers play an essential role in building a student's ability to persevere. Students should be praised for effort not just success and never shamed for failing.

**Coaching and Mentoring the Parents.** In the context of the present crisis, dialogue with parents and the wider community is a key step to ensure that the school, parents/guardians and the wider community have reached a degree of shared accountability and responsibility for the learning delivery modality chosen. Mouthing positive thoughts to clientele was done by Teachers Rho, Mar and Pro.

*Kung ang parents pud dili kabalo, one on one coaching mi sa parents kung unsaon pagtudlo, unsay buhaton sa module kung unsaon pag-answer.* (If the parents do not know, I do one-on-one coaching with the parents. I tell them what to do and how to answer.) IDI-Rho, R45

*And coaching pud sa parents.* (And parent's coaching.) IDI-Mar, R25

Coaching the parents on what to do in my absence is also my key for them to facilitate the child's education at home. IDI-Pro, R38

Teachers were jack-of-all-trades. They transformed from being educators to guidance counselors real quick. Strong school, home, and community partnerships were implemented to ensure the effectiveness of any distance learning modality chosen.

*Lastly, let us guide also the parents, not only learners para makabalo sila sa ilang buhaton unsaon pagtudlo ang bata sa pag-answer sa module sa ilang balay.* (Lastly, let us guide also the parents, not only learners so that they are oriented on what to do at home with the kids.) FGD-Uki, R45

Uki mentioned that parents should be guided also so that they can relay to their sons and daughters the desired things to do in the new normal modality of learning.

School administrators, teachers, parents or guardians, and community partners shall provide adequate and appropriate guidance and support for the learners to ensure that their new experience with these learning modalities shall be properly transitioned both at home and in school. While mass gathering is not yet allowed by the IATF, schools shall initiate online orientation program for parents, online trainings for learning facilitators, and webinars on home-school partnership (San Antonio, 2020).

Motivating factors for the learners while doing the distance learning was pushing them to continue and giving prizes upon accomplishing. This invited them to drive more in their literacy. Children were persuaded to run the race with patience and perseverance. This was the tactic of participants Pro and Ney. They shared their initiative.

Upon scrutinizing on their activity sheets, I gave rewards to the learners who really spend their time responding on the activities. For us, so easy but the effort they have exerted, they truly deserved applause and rewards. IDI-Pro, R37, 77

*Tagaan lang gihapon nato sila og bali reward kay at least ma-appreciate pud nila nga bisan kapoy diay kaayo mag-answer og module, giapprecite pud ni sir ug ni maam ang amoang pag-answer bisan pag-uli sa module.* (Let us give them reward for them to know that we appreciate their works in responding to the modules. They can also say that the teachers were pleased also because of their effort.) FGD-Ney, R92

Participant Pro scrutinized the learners' activity sheets. She gave rewards to the learners who really spend time responding on the activities because they truly deserved applause and rewards. Ney also gave them rewards to know that learners are appreciated in their works when responding to the new learning modality. This is also for the learners to say that the teachers were pleased also because of their efforts.

Also, Toquero (2020), in his study, articulated the effectiveness of distance education, highlights the possible challenges in emergency remote education, and recommends emerging remote learning platforms along with policies for the utilization of emergency remote teaching and protocols for the prevention of CoViD-19 in Philippine learning institutions. There is still a continuing research of innovative strategies, virtual learning experiences, and the transition from the physical classroom into an emergency remote education environment during the pandemic.

Teachers scheduled on-site and home visitation. Face to face teaching in school is not yet fully allowed in the Philippines. Teachers made initiatives to personally meet the child. They were scheduled for on-site distribution and retrieval of learning materials. They take time to conduct home visitation. This is to be acquainted with the things the child is doing and to see the real learning environment of the children with special educational needs.

In facilitating learning for learners with special educational needs, I conducted home visitation to personally see the children's improvement and activities. In times when parents cannot return the modules on-site, I am tasked to retrieve them in their homes. IDI-Pro, R9, 18

*Hmm, home visitation. Ihatod sa balay sa bata ang module.* (Home visitation, I deliver the modules in the children's house.) IDI-Mar, R21-22

In facilitating learning for learners with special educational needs, Teacher Pro conducted home visitation to personally see the children's improvement and activities. In times when parents cannot return the modules on-site, she retrieved them in their homes. Teacher Mar also do home visitation of which she delivers the learning modules in the children's house in the new modality of learning.

Likewise, the former led to a greater need for learners to engage in multivendor environments, and the latter, for people to share experiences with others. The teacher takes the responsibility of monitoring the progress of the learners. The learners may ask assistance from the teacher. Where possible, the teacher shall do home visits to learners needing remediation or assistance. Printed Modules will be delivered to students, parents, or guardians by the teachers or through the Local Government Officials (Benavides & Guan, 2021).

*Sa modular lang, kami nga mga teachers naay time*

*nga maghome-visit mi. Ang akoang experience didto is wala kaayo silay attention during homevisit. Ang ginabuhat gyud nako is kanang maghome visit.* (In modular learning, we teachers do home visitation. I saw in their homes that they have no attention during the visitation. I really do home visitation still.) FGD-Jan, R18-19, 59

*About ani nga sitwasyon, sa una ang akoang ginabuhat pag walay mukuha og module diri sa school, usahay ginahatod gyud nako sa ilahang balay ang ilahang module.* (With regards to this, even before, whenever they cannot get their learning materials in school, I go and deliver them in their houses.) FGD-Ney, R42

*Para sa akona, upon encountering problems with learners who cannot fully comprehend who cannot comprehend and parents who cannot manage to teach their children is, wala gyud koy laing mabuhat kundi iconsider og sabton ang ilahang situation kay knowing nga dili pud ta tanan nahatagan og chance to have the proper educ ation,... So i-consider and sabton ang ilahang sitwasyon.* (For me, upon encountering problems with learners who cannot fully comprehend.. who cannot comprehend and parents who cannot manage to teach their children, I always consider and understand them, their situation, because it is a privilege to give proper education.) FGD-Chem, 57-58

In modular learning, Teacher Jan also conducted home visitation. There he saw in the pupil's houses that they have no attention during the visit. But despite of this, Teacher Jan still continued doing this. Anent to this, Teacher Ney also go and delivered learning materials in their houses of the learners with special educational needs. The same with teacher Chem when he encountered problems with learners who cannot fully comprehend and parents who cannot manage to teach their children, she always give consideration and understood their situation, because for her, it is a privilege to give children proper education.

*Possessing Optimistic Trait and Understanding the Community.* To view the world magnificently, we can have positive aura in all walks of life. Being optimistic amid pandemic creates a good aroma of blessings that can be acquired and can be inherited by the people around us. Diverting negativities into positive outlook made people productive in life.

*Important lesson, ang pinakauna gyud nakong natunan ron kay be positive lang gyud nga bisan pa maningon ani , naay pandemic, naa gihapoy paagi*

*para makatuon ang mga bata. Syempre ang mga bata makamotivate sila nga naningkamot gihapon sila bisan ingon ani ang panahon. Para sa mga aspiring teachers nga gusto mag teacher sa bukid, dapat positive thinker ka, dili nega.* (My first lesson is to be positive despite of the pandemic. There are still ways in order for the children to learn. Even learners can motivate us to continue. For those aspiring teachers who want to teach here in the hills, we should become optimistic, do not be negative-minded.) IDI-Rhe, R70, 78, 88

Be a positive thinker, maintaining composure and instilling patience in facilitating learning despite everything. IDI-Pro, R65-72.

Participant Rhe's lesson is to be positive despite of the pandemic. There are still ways in order for the children to learn. Even learners can motivate teachers to continue living. He even mentioned for those aspiring teachers who want to teach in the hills, being optimistic help out. Pro added that being a positive thinker, maintaining composure and instilling patience in facilitating learning despite everything aids in facilitating modular learning modality in the hinterland.

*I learned that kabalo ta mu-adjust sa time para sa trabaho ug para sa pamilya ug para sa kaugalingon.* (We should learn how to adjust our time at work, time for family and to ourselves). IDI-Mar, R34

Participant Mar highlighted that teachers should learn how to adjust their time at work, time for family and for themselves.

However, due to the incredible resilience and determination, educators were quick to adapt to the new normal. Instructors and educators have had to upskill themselves almost overnight to adjust to the new modes of teaching, ensuring that learning remains accessible to students even in the current circumstances. With learning shifting from the public space to a more personal area, the role of the educator has also evolved. As the demand for personalized learning and online courses continues to snowball, instructors are required to learn or upskill as much as, or even more than their students to deal with the new demand for future-proof courses (Saxena, 2020).

*Another is always look in the brighter side of the coin kung бага, stick to the positive side of every situation. Walay kapoy-kapoy . padayon lang gihapon ta sa atong serbisyo. No room for negativity*

*as long as you are doing your work.* (Look into the brighter side, stick to positive. Don't be tired, continue giving excellent service. No room for negativity as long as you are doing your work.) FGD-Chem, R82-83, 85

*Maging positive sa life lang ta always.* (We should be positive in life always.) FGD-Uki, R38

Teacher Chem laid emphasis on viewing life into the brighter side, sticking to positive. Never get tired and continue giving excellent service. And there should be no room for negativity at work. Uki added that hinterland teachers should be positive in life always.

The CoViD-19 pandemic altered almost every aspect of life as we know it. Common habits like seeing family and friends, and going to work and school in person became luxuries that we could no longer afford. People across the globe began to feel a variety of different emotions ranging from frustration to anxiety, doubt and even fear. This became particularly evident in Pre K-12 education, as teachers, students and their families entered uncharted territory. The field of education has had its fair share of obstacles over the last year. Longstanding challenges in proficiency, well-being and equity were only exacerbated by the pandemic. But in the midst of uncertain and unprecedented times, a new sentiment emerged optimism (Cambium Learning Group, 2021).

Teachers embraced mission-oriented work. Walking extra mile, teachers discover and appreciate their calling more, following the Great Teacher who gave His life so others may live. Fortunately for our teachers, most of their students already know basic reading since it was their paramount goal last year – to make every pupil a reader (Diaz, 2021).

Since only few teachers can serve in a long period of time in the hinterland, it is my calling to embrace those learners with special needs while I am still breathing for service. I call to serve longer for learners who needs special attention is what I am missioned of. IDI-Pro, R56, 59

*Ang nagamotivate sa akong ginapahinumduman lang gyud nako akong self nga naa koy purpose or naa koy mabuhay para sa ubang tao especially sa mga bata nga na silay kadaganaan or naa silay kadepondan nga teacher.* (I am motivated with what is instilled in me, my purpose or the good deeds I've done for other people.) IDI-Rhe, R74

*Hmmm, ginaisip lang nako nga naa koy mission diri*

*sa bukid.* (I am thinking about my mission here in the hills.) IDI-Mar, R32

Participants Pro, Rhe and Mar highlighted this. According to Teacher Pro, since only few teachers can serve in a long period of time in the hinterland, it was her calling to embrace those learners with special needs while she is still breathing for service. She was called to serve longer for learners who needed special attention is what she believed her missioned of. This was the same with teacher Rhe. Rhe was motivated with what was instilled in her, her purpose or the good deeds she've done for other people. Teacher Mar also reflected on her mission in the hinterland.

*Lahi gyud baya ang sitwasyon kung ang mga bata i-treat nga kapareho sila tanan sa paghatag og edukasyon. Antuson nimo kay kanang pagtudlo mao na ang imuhang passion.* (The feeling is so great when you treat all learners the same and equal. You have to sacrifice because of your passion.) FGD-Ney, R73, 72, 76

*Dili tungod kay dako ang sweldo sa teacher gusto ko magtrabaho kundili, gusto nako mahatag sa mga kabatan-onan ang kanindot sa kahintang pag ikaw makaeskwela. Unsaon na lang kung dili ko ko maabot didto naghulat sila. Unsaon nalang kung wala tay goal, wala tay direction* (Not because of my salary but because I wanted that the child can harvest the benefits of being educated. What will they do if I will not be in duty for them? What is life without a goal, no direction at all.) FGD-Jan, R89, 96, 116

Participant Ney expressed that the feeling was so great when teachers treat all learners the same and equal. Hinterland teachers have to sacrifice because of passion. Teacher Jan also tells that not because of his salary he is serving but because he wanted that the child can harvest the benefits of being educated. If not him, then who else can? Life without a goal is no direction at all.

*Mao man ning purpose nga Iyang gihatag sa ato ang pagtudlo, makatabang sa mga bata para makatuon. So sa Iya ra pud ta makapangayog tabang.* (This is the purpose of my life, to teach and to help children to be educated. We can only ask God for help, no other.) FGD-Chem, R80-81

*Dapat ang bata atong focus sa pagtulod. Sila ang sentro, ilang strength and weaknesses atoang hatagag pansin.* (Children should be our focus. We should give attention in their strength and weaknesses.) FGD-Uki,

R35-36

According to participant Chem, this was the purpose of her life, to teach and to help children to be educated. People can only ask God for help, not to other being. Uki also mentioned that children should be the focus. Hinterland teachers should give attention in their strength and weaknesses.

There were teachers that are designated to teach in the hinterland. They were educators that were assigned in the schools located in the mountainous far-flung areas, without electricity to power TV and radio, the only feasible learning delivery modality to be used is modular. Without textbooks, the modules serve as the primary reading material for the pupils. The regular visits by the teachers to retrieve and hand over new modules were used as opportunities by teachers to provide feedback to pupils for their modular work (Diaz, 2021).

Hinterland teachers have goals of nurturing holistic learners with disability. Learning is not a place. It's a relationship between teacher and student. Nothing drives engagement more than a positive relationship. We can't expect kids to learn without being connected. Connection fuels engagement both in person and online. Any teacher can tell that building a positive rapport with a kiddo is an essential ingredient for motivation and effort. And we can cultivate this positive relationship. Here are three ways to boost engagement, connection, and support with learners with special needs. Most importantly though, connect with the parents. Parents are doing the best they can with the tools and skills they have at home, under stressful circumstances. When educators partner with parents, especially now, when the parent is the primary source of support during the day, that's where the real change can happen for our students. It's a sincere hope that no parent ever feels like the parent who had given up (Branstetter, 2020).

*Continue working heartily kay dili pud baya tanan magdugay og tudlo sa bukid so ug kuan... para macater ang tanang learners especially sa mga learners with disability.* (Continue working heartily because not all teachers can stay and teach long years in the hills, cater all learners especially with disability.) IDI-Ali, R26- 27

*Gapadayon kog trabaho heartily tungod sa mga bata. Makainspire sila, pagmakit-an nimo ilahang mga smile, pagmakita ka or mubisita ka kanang makita nimo ilang happiness kung naa silay matun-an or matudluan sila. Para ma-cater ang tanang bata para*



*sa education nga dapat nila matagamtaman. (I continue working heartily because of the children, they give inspiration to me. When I see them smiling, if they look at me or if I visited them, I can see their happiness when they learn. This is to cater all children for the education they deserved.)* IDI-Rhe, R61-63

Teacher Ali mentioned to continue working heartily because not all teachers can stay and teach long years in the hills and cater all learners especially with disability. This was also affirmed by Teacher Rhe. She continued working heartily because children give inspiration to her. When she sees them smiling, Teacher Rhe can see genuine happiness when they learn. This is to cater all children for the education they deserved.

My driving force is my mission to reach out those learners with special needs and to give them the attention that they deserved. They are mostly forgotten, they are humans too that need our love and care. I also want to tell the community that they too have something to share. They have skills that needed to be flourished. Thus, quality education even for them is a must. It is very fulfilling to see that someday they will become successful graduates despite of their disability. IDI- Pro, R54-55, 60-63

Teacher Pro's driving force was her mission to reach out those learners with special needs and to give them the attention that they deserved. These children were mostly forgotten. They too are humans that needed love and care. She is eager to share that they have flourishable skills. Highlighting that quality education even for them is a must. It is very fulfilling to see that someday they will become successful graduates despite of their disability.

*Inspires me to continue working heartily is the situation of the students here...Knowing nga naglisud ang uban. Makita nimo sa ilang dagway nga gusto jud sila makatuon og makeskwela. Samot na tong mga estudyante namo nga lagyo pa. (The situation of my learners inspires me to continue to work heartily. They tried very hard. You can really see in their eyes their eagerness to learn. How much more our learners who lived very far from the school.)* FGD-Chem, 72-75

*Pero kung imong heart naa gyud sa pagtudlo, naa gyud sa pagtabang sa bata. Unsaon nimo pagmold nga mahimo pud intawon siyag professional. Mai nalang ang mga bata muabot og pipila ka tuig, makaremember gyud siya sa ato nga nakahaman diay sya sa iyang gusto nga abuton. Ug makatabang pud*

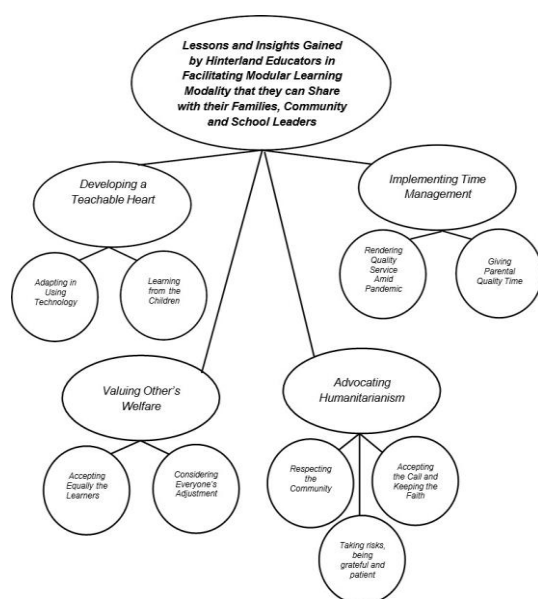
*siya sa iyahang pamilya pagkahuman sa iyang pag eskwela. (If your heart is in teaching and in helping the child, you really tried your best to hone them to become future professionals. Someday they can remember us. They can help their family too when they finish schooling.)* FGD-Ney, R68-69, 78-79

Majority of the focused-group discussion participants affirmed on this. The situation of Teacher Chem's learners inspired her to continue working heartily. They tried very hard and visible in their eyes the eagerness to become skilled especially those learners who lived very far from the school. Teacher Rhe added that if one's heart is in teaching and in helping the child, educators should really tried their best to hone them to become future professionals because maybe someday they can still remember the goodness. They can help their family too when they finish schooling.

*My experiences as a hinterland educator in facilitating learning for learners with special educational needs is teaching them or visiting them unya naay nakakita nga givisit ilang anak, ma-amaze pud intawon ang silingan kay naay diay ga- educate og mga bata nga naay special needs sa bukid. (My experiences as a hinterland educator in facilitating the learning for learners with special educational needs is I teach them or visited them. When somebody sees me that I am with the child, they were amazed because only few teachers educate learners with special educational needs in the mountain.)* FGD-Uki, R6

The landscape is constantly changing, so we shall take measures to adapt, in the best way we can, with the tools we have available. While we can't smooth out the ocean of challenges altogether to provide an ideal learning experience in a pandemic, we can figure out ways to ride out the waves together, so we are providing the best educational experience for our students as we possibly can. The only way we will get through this is together (Branstetter, 2020). Participant Uki mentioned that she even visited them for home teaching. When somebody sees her with the child with disability, the community was amazed because only few teachers educate learners with special needs in the mountain.

**Lessons and Insights Gained by the Hinterland Educators in Facilitating a Modular Learning Modality that they can Share with their Families, Community and School Leaders**



*Figure 3. Lessons and Insights Gained by Hinterland Educators in Facilitating Modular Learning Modality that they can Share with their Families, Community and School Leaders*

In this study, I was able to come up with four categories in lessons and insights. Lessons gained by hinterland educators in facilitating modular learning modality for learners with special educational needs includes developing a teachable heart, valuing other's welfare, advocating humanitarianism and implementing time management.

### ***Developing a Teachable Heart***

The first lesson gained by hinterland educators in facilitating a modular learning modality that they can share with their families, community and school leaders is to develop a teachable heart. Teachers were willing to acknowledge others new trends or schemes using the technology. Education is a two-way process which is the learner learns from the teacher, and the teacher learns from the student.

Core values surfaced early in the crisis response process for many schools. In addition to identifying the importance of relationships as school leaders framed their planning and decision-making processes, teachers' connectivity, collective wisdom, collaboration, empathy, adaptation, and risk-taking as values that drove their responses to the pandemic. The importance of maintaining and strengthening relationships and connectivity between students and

teachers, administrators and teachers, and administrators, teachers and families, became a clear first priority for many educational institutions. Relationships and connectivity resonate throughout educational settings because these values form the foundation of strong school communities and student success (McLeod & Dulskey, 2021).

**Adapting in Using Technology.** Various adjustments in the new normal distance education were faced by our hinterland educators. Among them are technologically literate 21<sup>st</sup> century teachers, collaboration, commitment, and competence are critical skill and values, the need for the new normal pedagogies, difficult to monitor, feedback, and assess learning, online and offline platforms, applications, software as support, acquired skills in writing modules and self-learning kits, reaching out to students and parents a challenge, and CoViD-19 a threat in the workplace (Boholano & Jamon, 2021)

Teacher Pro mentioned below that hinterland educators also should learn to use computer gadgets including the use of different portals and online platform in order to become competitive for this generation. This is due to the fact that most of the works and teachers' reports now are transmitted through internet already.

I also learned to use gadget like laptops and using different portals and online platform in order to become competitive for this generation. It is also because most of the works and teachers' reports now are transmitted through internet. IDI-Pro, R68-69

*We should be computer literate para dali ra sa atoa ang makabuhay sa atoa mga reports or unsa bay ginapabuhay sa atoa, especially na halos karon paper works na , with all the printing na. (We should be computer literate so that we can easily make our reports or whatever we needed to accomplish because nowadays we always have paperworks to be printed.) IDI-Rhe, R82*

Teacher Rhe also continued her revelations regarding the normalization of using new technology. She said that educators should be computer literate too so that they can easily make needed reports, to accomplish paper works easily because nowadays it is very common to use them for the paperworks to be printed and done.

As well as that, teachers are important figures in schools. They have also their narratives during this pandemic. Education in the new normal needs a lot of

adjustments since teachers were not well-equipped when the pandemic came. It is concluded that teachers showed resilience despite the weaknesses and threats and translated those into strengths and opportunities (Boholano & Jamon, 2021). The participants revealed the following:

*So mugamit tag gadgets inorder to provide quality education to other learner. Ang akong lang mashare sa ilaha is learn to adjust in technology kay bisan og wala ta kaagi ana sa atong pagcollege, unya naa naman na siya ron, iaccept nato na sya as challenge.* (We used gadgets inorder to provide quality education to the learners. We need to adjust to the technology trend because even if we do not encounter such during our college days, we need to accept it today as a challenge.) FGD-Jan, R105, 119

Teacher Jan used gadgets inorder to provide quality education to the learners. Hinterland educators needed to adjust to the technology trend because even if they do not encounter such during their college days, they need to accept it today as a challenge.

*Kailangan gyud ko nga mag-adjust kay daghan kaayog report nga pinaagi sa computer, pinaagi sa laptop, pinaagi sa cellphone. Sa akoang age, sa akoang kapanahunan sa una, nabag-uhan ko nagaadjust ko pinaagi sa pagtesting unsaon pag-open sa laptop, asa ka padulong muadto kung unsa siya ang kinahanglan nga dapat matun-an sa panahon karon. Bahalag lisud, at least makahibalo ka.* (I need to adjust also to the technology because I need to do my reports through computer. It is very new to me considering my golden age. I need to try how to open a laptop and where to browse. Though difficult, I need to learn it so that I have the knowledge also.) FGD-Ney, R80-82

Furthermore, though the whole world was unprepared for lockdown. However, the same was not valid for a vast majority of educational institutions. Since educational institutions were way behind in adopting technology, having focused more on classroom teaching and never having seriously considered online education as a credible model, they were slightly more unprepared than other sectors (Saxena, 2020). Teacher Ney also added that as hinterland educator for learners with special educational needs, he needed to adjust also to the technology because he needed to complete reports via computer. It is very new to him considering his golden age. He was required to try how to open his laptop and know how to browse. Though difficult, he needed to learn them so that he can have the

knowledge be acquainted too.

**Learning from the Children.** Teaching is a two-way process. Learners learned from the teachers and teachers learned from the learners. Willingness to be part of one's educational journey takes a win-win relationship.

*Teachers dapat willing pud ta makabalo unsaon dapat daghan pud tag nahibal- an unsaon sila pag-approach kung unsay buhaton. Dapat willing jud ta mu-learn always* (We should be willing to learn on what to do so that we will know how to approach them. We should be willing to learn always.) IDI-Rhe, R96-97

We should also become teachable. We should be willing to learn on what the child can offer to us. IDI-Pro, R85-86

Teacher Rhe revealed that she was willing to learn on what things to do so that she may know how to approach learners with special educational needs. Teachers should be willing to learn always. This was also affirmed by participant Pro of which teachers should become teachable. They should be willing to learn on what the child can offer to them.

*Sa akong is, isa sa akoang mashare to fellow hinterland educators who love to educate learners with disability amid pandemic is dapat learn from them. Dili kay tungod teacher ta, sila nalay naay matun-an sa atua. Wala ta kahibalo as we know them, as we engage ourselves to them naa diay tay matun-an sa ilaha. Naa silay kaya buhaton nga dili nato mabuhay. Naa silay nahibal-an nga wala nato nahibal-an. So mao gyud na, we can learn from them.* (For me, one thing I can share to my fellow hinterland educators who love to educate learners with disability amid pandemic is we should also learn from them. Not because we are teachers we already knew everything. As we engage ourselves to them we can get something from them. They have the skills that we do not expect. They knew various things we do not know also. That's it, we can learn from them.) FGD- Chem, R 109-114

*Walay surrenderay kay as a teacher kinahanglan gyud nga maglearn gyud ta.*

(No surrender. As a teacher we ought to learn.) FGD-Ney, R 83

Teacher Chem homilied the things she can share to her fellow hinterland educators who love to educate learners with disability amid pandemic. Educators

should learn from the learners. Not because teachers already knew everything, they should engage themselves to the learners with special educational needs because they can get something positive from them. They have the skills that teachers did not expect. They knew various things educators do not know also.

*Continue to learn. Continue to learn kay tungod dili ta face to face. Kinahanglan nato silag i-treat equally and also kung teacher ka dili man pasabot nga knowledgeable naka sa tanan. Kinahanglan pud nga mag-learn pud ka sa ilaha. Sama sa akoang naexperience, dili tanan kabalo ko. Naay time nga makalearn ko sa ilaha. Kana mao na akong mashare sa ilaha. Learn to treat all learners equally and learn from them.* (Continue to learn. Continue to learn because we are not face-to-face yet. We need to treat them equally. Teachers don't mean that we are all knowing, we need to learn from them. Same with my experience, I didn't know everything. There are times that I learn from them. That is what I can share to them. Learn to treat all learners equally and learn from them.) FGD- Jan, R103-104, 143-148

Teacher Jan mentioned the continuity of learning. Educators should continue to learn also because of the new modality. He needed to treat learners with special educational needs equally. Teachers don't mean that they are all knowing thus, we should also learn from the learners. There are times that he can learn from them. Learn to treat all learners equally and learn from them also.

In addition, academic leaders have been charged with restructuring their systems, ensuring instructional quality while operating with significantly diminished resources in the unprecedented pandemic. For department heads of units with leadership preparation programs, the complexity of this crisis is layered upon fundamental scholarship about leadership, which reports the effectiveness of leadership as a collective incorporating the shared and diverse talents of faculty, students, and program stakeholders (Kruse, Hackman, & Lindle, 2020). This work of educational leadership rests on a public and democratic ethic promoting social justice and equity as the practices and outcomes for schooling at any level.

### Valuing Other's Welfare

The second category of the lesson gained by hinterland educators in facilitating a modular learning modality that they can share with their families, community and school leaders is valuing other's welfare. The power of a values-driven approach to educational management

clearly resonated. This approach resulted in actionable responses to the CoViD-19 pandemic that were founded on the values of relationship, connectivity, collective wisdom, collaboration, empathy, and adaptive risk-taking (McLeod & Dulskey, 2021).

**Accepting Equally the Learners.** Education of learners with special educational needs has come an extensive and lengthy way: it can be in a method of SPED to integrated education and it as process from integrated education to inclusive education. Despite the prop-up by a number of guidelines, policies and program from time to time to speed up the bound of all the efforts made in this direction the regular schools with inclusive orientation face many barriers, roadblocks, impediment and challenges. It has invariably been referred to as part of the global education for all agenda as a new education paradigm and an as educational reform goals to make societies inclusive. The same is accepted in Philippines, however, the aspect of education for all is effectively implemented despite of having policies and legal framework that advocate education for all especially in the implementation of SPED classes (Allam & Martin 2021).

According to participant Pro, teachers should continue serving learners with special needs and treat them as regular children. The need to cater learners with disabilities pushes her to continue to work with a heart. She also wanted to see her worth in the society. Motivating herself to continue and embrace life despite of so many disappointments in the new normal learning modality.

The need to cater learners with disabilities pushes me to continue working heartily. I also want to see my worth in the society. Motivating myself to continue and embrace life despite of so many disappointments in the new normal. We should continue serving learners with special needs and treat them as regular as they could. IDI-Pro R71-72, 84

*Ug gibuhat pud nako ni para sa mga estudyante. Sa life lesson, regardless of disability of pupils, we should accept and love them. Accept the challenge of educating learners with disability so that pupils will not be left behind.* (I am doing this for the children. My life lesson, regardless of disability of pupils, we should accept and love them. Accept the challenge of educating learners with disability so that pupils will not be left behind.) IDI-Ali R33, 40, 41

Furthermore, schools shall strengthen the implementation of DepEd Order 40, s. 2012 the policy



guidelines on protecting children in school from abuse, violence, exploitation, discrimination, bullying and other forms of abuse through their duties and responsibilities stipulated in Sections 7 to 10. Schools shall likewise review the composition of the CPC including their roles and functions in accordance with the provisions in the same Order. The CPC shall work in coordination with the BCPC. In places where the BCPC does not exist or where it is dysfunctional, alternative community structures need to be set in place with the assistance of recognized people's organizations or faith-based organizations that have experience in similar concerns (San Antonio, 2020). Teacher Ali also affirmed on this by telling that hinterland teachers should do everything for the betterment of the children. Regardless of the disability of pupils, hinterland teachers should accept and love them. They should accept the challenge of educating learners with disability so that the pupils will not be left behind.

*Ang ako lang ika-share with my fellow teachers dapat regardless sa disability sa bata dawaton jud ang bata. No child left behind. Okay... so learn to accept learners with disability. Willing to love and care sa mga bata and beyond.* (The thing I can share to my fellow teachers is we have to receive learners regardless of their disability. No child should be left behind. Okay, so learn to accept learners with disability. Willing to love and care for the children and beyond.) IDI-Mar R37-38, 46, 48

Teacher Mar also said the thing she can share to her fellow teachers. Hinterland educators also have to receive learners in class regardless of their disability. No child should be left behind that is willing to love and care for the children and beyond. Moreover, the DepEd as cited by Areola (2020) envisioned that the child with special needs is adequately provided with basic education that fully realizes one's potentials for development and productivity as being capable as self-expression of his rights in society. Under the special education program learning continuity plan, DepEd has various interventions such as streamlining of the curriculum, modifying learning delivery modalities, assessing accommodations, utilizing universal design for learning, ensuring individualized education program, ensuring availability of learning materials in different accessible formats, ensuring availability of learning facilitators, capacitating teachers and strengthening partnerships and networking for program supports. Equal acceptance is also mentioned by Rhe. She mentioned to teach learners fairly regardless of their disability. They should be taught and treated as regular learners.

*E-teach nato, hmm, pantay-pantay regardless paman bisan naa silay disabilities, teach and treat lang gyud sila as regular learners.* (Teach them, fair enough regardless of their disability, teach and treat them as regular learners.) IDI-Rhe R95

Below is the sentiments shared by Jan. He made mentioned his ways of facilitating the learning for the learners with disability. He wanted them to gain the opportunity to be included in school despite of the situation. He wanted to give the quality education for all learners, with disability or not, at least he can give them equal treatment. This drove him to work heartily for the learners with special educational needs, to give them quality education and the opportunity to be in school and for them to have wonderful life in the future.

*Sa ako, I am working in facilitating the learning for the learners with disability kay gusto nako mahatag sa ilaha kay gusto nako mahatag sa ilaha ang opportunity nga makaeskwela despite sa ilang kahimantan. Mahatag ang quality education to all learners naa man syay kapansanan or wala, at least mahatag nako sa ilaha equally. Mao na akong masulti nga nagdrive sa akoo para magwork heartily sa ilaha, para matagaan silag quality education, opportunity nga makaeskwela og matagaan silag maayo nga kinabuhi in the future.* (I am working in facilitating the learning for the learners with disability because I want them to gain the opportunity to be included in school despite of their situation. I want to give the quality education to all learners, with disability or not, at least I can give them equal treatment. That I can say that drives me to work heartily for them, to give them quality education and the opportunity to be in school and for them to have wonderful life in the future.) FGD-Jan 87-88, 91

Teacher Jan also accepts learners with special educational needs like regular pupils, with sense of belongingness in receiving them. His life lesson that he can share to his fellow hinterland educators is to treat the learners equally regardless of disability.

*I-accept nimo sila as normal nga tao with sense of belongingness ang pag-accept sa ilaha. For me, life lesson nga akoang ma-share sa akong fellow hinterland educator is to treat the learners equally.* (I accept them like regular with sense of belongingness in receiving them. My life lesson that I can share to my fellow hinterland educators is to treat the learners equally.) FGD-Jan R137, 141

*Bisan unsa pa ang ability and disability sa bata, new normal man or dili, we should accept children as part of our lives and part of our mission. Gusto pud nako mahatag ang education nga deserve sa bawat bata.* (Whatever the ability and disability of the child, new normal or not, we should accept children as part of our lives and part of our mission I want to give the education that the child deserved.) FGD-Uki R22, 37

Uki added that whatever the ability and disability of the child, new normal or not, hinterland educators should accept children as part of their lives and part of the mission. She wanted to give the education that the child deserved.

In addition, teachers were provided by DepEd and all these schools became part of implementation in Mindanao the access to basic education. It has been one of the most critical development concerns among communities. In terms of the public school system, indigenous communities in general, especially those located in remote rural and mountainous areas, experience difficulties in accessing government services. Many of those who have schools within their communities have to grapple with shortage of basic inputs, such as teachers and learning resources. Despite this general situation, there exists, of course, pockets of good models and desirable education practices based on successful interventions by the DepEd, NGOs and other community-based initiatives which effectively respond to the learning needs of learners. The need for urgent affirmative action specific to Mindanao has been recognized by the DepEd (DepEd, 2020).

**Considering Everyone's Adjustments.** The effect of the pandemic panic has caused massive changes to people's daily lives because it happened rapidly and abruptly. Life's adjustment often comes with a wide range of experiences and emotions. Sometimes that transition can feel smooth and other times that journey to the new normal is choppy or downright bumpy (Purdue.edu, 2020).

Participants Mar, Pro and Rhe mentioned the adjustments in the new normal. Parents shall adhere to the times. Despite of the pandemic DepEd already made ways for the learners to continue their schooling through the SLM so that everyone is safe including school leaders, teachers, parents and learners. Pro also adjusted in the new normal set-up. The willingness to adjust in new norms with love, grace and passion was a great help.

*Sa mga parents akong ikasulti, sabay nalang sa*

*panahon karon tungod sa virus maong naay pandemic pero naghimo ang DepEd og pamaagi para mapadayon ang pag-eskwela sa mga bata pinaagi sa self-learning modules para safety sa mga kabataan, sa teachers, ginikanan ug uban pa.* (What I can say to the parents is to just adhere to the times. Because of the virus there is a pandemic but the DepEd already made ways for the learners to continue their schooling through the self-learning modules so that everyone is safe including the learners, teachers, parents and other stakeholders.) IDI-Mar, R49

I learned to adjust in the new normal setting. Our willingness to adjust in the new norms with love, grace and passion is a great help. IDI-Pro, R64, 87

According to Rhe, teachers shall adjust to the new normal. Hinterland educators should accept the reality. They should be willing to adjust on what is happening around.

*Mag-adjust ta sa new normal. Dawaton nalang nato nga ingon ani najud sya. Magtuon ta o adjust sa mga panghitabo diria karon nga new normal. We should learn to adjust and i-love nato ang mga bata.* (We should adjust to the new normal. We should accept the reality. We must learn to adjust to what is happening. We should learn to adjust and must love the children.) IDI-Rhe, R72- 73, 80, 94

As teacher, Jan exclaimed that teachers must learn to adjust in order to impart the desired knowledge. They must impart proper knowledge to the learners. Hinterland educators must adjust for the learners.

*Then, adjust. Kinahanglan as a teacher mag-adjust ta para mahatag nato ang atoang knowledge. Ma-impart nato atoang knowledge sa mga learners. Mag- adjust ta in order para pud sa atoang mga learners* (As teachers we must learn to adjust to give the desired knowledge. We must impart our knowledge to the learners. We must adjust for the learners.) FGD-Jan, R106-108, 120

Furthermore, Reimers et al., (2020) mentioned as the pandemic runs its course, governments departments were implementing measures that limit the number of people congregating in public places. Such measures have disrupted the normal functioning of schools and universities. Because the duration of such measures has been extensive and is likely to continue in some countries for a certain time until a vaccine becomes available leaders of public and private education institutions have put in place alternative methods for

students and teachers to continue with their lessons when attending school is not possible and are working on methods that will make schools fit for working in a safe environment.

Encouraging one another was one of the most powerful tools hinterland teachers can use. It is often the key to unlocking untapped potential in children, especially those who have trouble learning. Look at the power of encouragement and some simple steps that parents and educators can take to encourage students during the learning process. As an educator or parent, your words and actions have the ability to lift students up or break them down. Encouraging words and actions were often internalized by students and have the power to motivate them to succeed. Encouragement can even be the difference between students completing school and giving up on themselves.

*Ginaencourage raman gihapon nako sila nga ipadayon lang. Ginencourage nako ang mga bata nga mag-answer gihapon bisan pa man sa ing-ana.* (I encourage them to continue. I encouraged the learners to respond despite of the circumstances.) IDI-Rhe, R4, 48

*Mao to ginaencourage gihapon ang bata ug ang ginikanan kay naa may ubang ginikanan ba nga maulaw na mupasa or maulaw na mubalik sa module kay mao lagi daw nadugay. Ginaencourage gihapon nako sila nga sige lang, hinay- hinayan lang. We should encourage and motivate ourselves and other people or atoang mga colleagues nga fight lang bisan unsa pa may mahitabo.* (I encouraged learners and parents. Some parents were introverted when they cannot return the learning materials on time. I still encourage them to pursue, little by little. We should encourage and motivate ourselves and other people or our colleagues to fight regardless on what happens.) IDI-Rhe, R54-55, 82

Teacher Rhe revealed that she still encourages the learners and parents to respond despite of the circumstances. She still encourages them to pursue, little by little. Teachers should encourage and motivate themselves and other people or the colleagues to fight regardless on what is happening around.

The path to student confidence begins by creating a culture of encouragement. Teachers and parents can build a culture of encouragement by embodying the belief that every student has potential and is the ability to accomplish their goals. Additionally, teachers

strived to focus on students' positive behaviors and actions as opposed to their negative ones (Kentwood Preparatory School, 2021).

*So in terms sa kana ganing bata nga cannot fully comprehend and parents who cannot manage, ang ginabuhat nako ana para masolusyonan na nga problem is dili lang sila ipressure. Ako lang gyud ginasulti sa ilaha bahalag taga adlaw naay isa ka module module maansweran or duha basta dili lang sila pressure kay basin dili na sila ganahan mag-answer. Tagaan lang gyud nako silag consideration basi lang gyud sa ilahang answer nga gihatag* (For those learners who cannot fully comprehend, as a solution, I did not pressure them. I always tell them that one day at a time at least one learning material per day. We should not pressure them. Give them consideration, let us just base on the learning materials they can return.) FGD-Jan, R70, 73, 76

It can be surmised from the revelation of Jan that he did not pressure those learners who cannot fully comprehend. He told parents and learners with disability to work the modular activities one day at a time with at least one learning material per day. Hinterland educators should not pressure them. They should be given consideration.

*Isa gyud para sa akoo is to encourage each one. Eencourage nako sila nga despite sa kalisud, despite sa atoang naagian karon nga lisud kaayo, daghay nawad-ag trabaho.* (We should encourage each one. I encourage them despite of the hardships, despite of being jobless.) FGD-Chem, R115-116

*Para sa akoo, dapat gyud nato eencourage ang mga bata labi na gyud ang mga ginikanan. Bisin lisud kaayo, pero kung magtinabangay ang ginikanan og ang bata, ang kalisud during this pandemic is mawala lang.* (We need to encourage our learners especially the parents. Even if it is difficult, but with unity and strength of the parents and learners, the sufferings will be gone.) FGD-Ney, R119-120

Chem and Ney affirmed on this. Teachers, parents, learners should encourage each one. Encourage them despite of the hardships, despite of being jobless. We need to encourage our learners especially the parents. It is difficult, but with the unity and strength of the parents and learners, the sufferings will be eased and gone.

As the old adage goes, nothing is more permanent than temporary, and as we all desperately wait for

CoViD-19 to be muted or cured, this pandemic has probably set the tone and revamped the way education will look forever, especially in elementary schools (Ferdig et al., 2020). Therefore, replicating the processes in any international and elementary school with similar parameters and context could provide students, faculty, parents with the necessary guidelines, expectations and goals that could be achieved by all, thus blanketing the community with a sense of purpose, security and calmness.

### Advocating Humanitarianism

The third lesson gained by hinterland educators in facilitating a modular learning modality that they can share with their families, community and school leaders is advocating humanitarianism.

The importance of clear, constant, and effective communication was universally recognized by all school leaders as an essential component to a successful transition to remote learning. Establishing and maintaining clear channels of communication became a universal goal of the educational leaders. Attention to mindset, fluid roles and expectations, responsive professional development, and efficiency and prioritization of structures and systems all formed the basis of our participants' efforts to build, sustain, and strengthen capacity across their organizations. Setting the stage for capacity building began with clarifying and embracing a mindset of acceptance and support (McLeod & Dulskey, 2021).

**Respecting the Community.** People in the hinterland had their own beliefs and ways of life. They were accustomed on this from the day they were born. The community accepts the teachers from the lowlands to temporarily settle in their village for the sake of their children's education. As they say, respect begets respect.

Teacher Mar had her side on this. She favors in respecting the community because she is touched by their life even in the hills. People are respectful. They give reverence to the visitors and teachers. Hinterland educators and visitors should learn to accept the people in the community. This can be seen in her responses below.

*Ang nakatouch sa akua bisan naa diri sa bukid hmmm, respectful sila. Kanang respetu jud sila labi na sa mga bisita, sa mga teachers diri. Learn to accept sa mga tao sa community. (I am touched by their life even if we are here in the hills, they are respectful. They respect our visitors and teachers. We should learn to*

*accept the people in the community.)* IDI-Mar, R39-40, 47

*Grabe ilang respect nga ginapakita sa imuha. (They shown abounding respect.)* IDI-Rho, R87

They should also know how to mingle with other people at work or in the society. IDI-Pro, R82

Participant Rho was also amazed with the abounding respect she experienced in the hills. Thus, Teacher pro added lines for those aspiring hinterland educators that they should also know how to mingle with other people at work or in the society.

*Usa pa kana pung narespetu sila sa imuha. Sa akua lang gyud, ginasulti lang gyud na nako sa ilaha nga kinahanglan magrespectu jud ka kung kinsa to imuhang kaistorya, kaila ba dira or sa imuhang mga friends. Ang ilaha pong simple smiles and pagsulti og salamat sir, salamat maam. Akoang ma-share sa mga aspiring teacher nga magtudlo sa hinterland is to accept the people and the community. Kinahanglan i-accept gyud nimo ang mga tao nga nagpuyo dira og ang community. So dili nimo sila i-judge base sa imuhang nadak-an nga community. (One thing is their respect. I always tell them to respect on whoever you are talking with. Their smiles and gratitude emplied gratefulness. What I can share to the aspiring teachers here in the hinterland is to accept the people and the community. We need to accept the people living in the community. We should not compare your life in your homes versus your life in the hills.)* FGD-Jan, R130-132, 134-136, 138-139

One thing that excites Teacher Jan is the respect in the community. He always tells them to respect whoever the person is communicating with. The community's smiles that delivers gratitude excites him. Teachers and visitors need to accept the people living in the community. Lives should not be compared in lowland and highlands just to ease comfort.

*Makisama ka sa parents, sa community, sa mga kauban. (There should be belongingness with the parents, community and comrades.)* FGD-Ney, R105

*Dapat magtuon jud ta na makisama sa whole community. (We should learn to intermingle with the community.)* FGD-Chem, R102

Teacher Ney and Chem affirmed on this. There should be belongingness with the parents, community and comrades. Everyone should learn to intermingle with



the community as well. In addition, in terms of international development commitments, DepEd's commitment to the achievement of the country's EFA targets and sustainable development goals. Aside from access, an equally important and more complex issue for indigenous communities is the relevance and appropriateness of what is taught in schools and other learning interventions. The lack of access to education services is usually compounded by the fact that in communities where there are schools accessible to learners, many of these have limited or no capacity to provide culturally appropriate education. Time and again, indigenous elders and leaders have articulated the observation that the educational system has failed to respect and recognize their communities' knowledge, worldviews, and identities. Education under this kind of a system only contributes to the alienation of learners to their own culture and community (DepEd, 2020).

*Taking Risks, Being Grateful and Patient.* Living in the hinterland for weeks is not simple. Teachers risked their lives from the start they departed from their permanent homes lowland. There were landslides, slippery roads and cliffs along the way. Adventure is the twin being a hinterland educator. One must be willing to overcome fear and continue at work regardless of the unfortunate events along the way going to the station.

*Hmmm, dapat kabalo mu-take og risk sa kalayo sa school sama sa landslide. Sa pagbyahe pa lang daan, kusog ang ulan, danlog ang dalan. Naa poy magbaha o maflatan ang ligid sa motor.* (We should know how to take risk because of the distance and there are landslides. During travels, there is heavy rain and slippery roads and there are times we suddenly have flat motorcycle tires.) IDI-Mar, R43- 45

*My life lesson nga akong mashare so willing to take risk despite of the distance travel.* (My life lesson to be shared is to willing to take risk despite of the distance travel.) IDI-Ali, R38

*You should be risk-taker kay syempre layo man ka sa imong comfort zone. Ang distance layo man siya. Dili man siya duol nga mauli-uli lang sa imong family and everything.* (You should be risk-taker because we are far from our comfort zone. The distance is far. It is not near that we can easily return home.) IDI-Rhe, R89-91

Despite of the distance, teachers should be risk-takers because adventure awaits there way like floods and landslides. IDI-Pro, R83

Teacher Rhe shared that hinterland educators should be risk-takers because they are far from their comfort zone. The distance is too remote thus returning home everyday is not possible. Pro also shared the same, risk-takers, because adventure awaits there way like floods and landslides while going in their station.

*My main motive why I choose to work here sa bukid is to experience the life and adventure here in the hinterland. Willing pud gyud dapat ta mu-risk like sa byahe pasubida or pabahada.* (My motive why I choose to work here in the hills is to experience the life and adventure in the hinterland.) FGD-Uki, R21, 30

*Sila lang gabaktas nga bisan dilikado pud sa dalan, sila-sila lang , para lang gyud makaeskwela.* (They walk by themselves even if the roads are hazardous. They themselves journey to school.) FGD-Chem, R100

Likewise, this was affirmed by Uki and Chem. Uki's motive why he chose to work in the hills was to experience the life and adventure in the hinterland. Chem also considered the life of the learners and parents of which they walk by themselves even if the roads are hazardous. They themselves journey to school just to fetch the learning materials. Moreover, Diaz (2021) stated that teachers took hours hiking after stopping where the road ends. From there they would have to cross rivers, climb steep hills, and tiptoe through ravines to be able to reach the school while ensuring that the modules shall be safely delivered to every household in the area. They personally hand over these modules to the families while observing proper health protocols. No hills, no mountains, no pandemic can stop teachers from reaching out their learners. Life in this pandemic time is very harsh and traumatic. People can provide less for their family because others loss their daily living. Face to face education is also hampered because learner are just having the learning at home. The call of duty of the teachers carried them to be grateful despite of the negativities brought by the deadly Corona virus. Filipinos are overcoming the trials as mentioned by the participants.

*Sa ilahang pagshare. Usahay mushare sila sa unsay maharvest nila sa ilahang bukid.* (They share. Sometimes, they share their harvest from their farms.) IDI- Mar, R41-42

*Ginashare nila ang ilang everyday nga ginabuhay. Everytime nga mubisita ka sa balay nila, ilang*

*ginikanan or learners pud mismo maabi-abihon kaayo sila sa imuha.* (They share their everyday tasks. Everytime I visited in their homes, the parents and learners are very hospitable.) IDI-Rhe, R84-85

They also share what they have at home like the harvest they have had at their farm like bananas and vegetables melted my hearts. IDI-Pro, R79

Teacher Mar experienced the gratefulness of the parents and learners in the hinterland. They expounded that the parents shared their harvest fresh from their farms. Though not big but the thought of giving is really emphasized. There are also learners and parents that are very hospitable everytime Teacher Rhe visited them. These melted the hearts of Teacher Pro base on their revelations.

*Sa akong, ang matouch jud and makamelt sa akoang heart is kanang hatagan gani ka nila sa ilahang harvest. Ang imuha kay nagtudlo lang ka, nagshare ka sa imuhang knowledge pero wala ka nagdahom nga tagaan pud diay ka nilag ilahang reward sa imuhang gibuhat. Mao to nga wala ka nag expect nga tagaan diay ka nila kay wala wala man sad ka nangayo.* (My hearts melts when they give me some crops from their farm. I only teach them, I didn't expect that they will give me a reward also for what I did to them. I didn't ask, I didn't expect but they have the initiative.) FGD-Jan, R127-129

Teacher Jan's heart melts when they give him some crops from their farm. He didn't expect that they will give him a reward also for what he did to the learners. He didn't ask anything from them but they have the initiative to somehow repay the goodness. Moreover, Filipinos were all aware and grateful for all the teachers' sacrifices for preparing for the new normal, and they're all still adjusting all these different learning modalities. Often, teachers use their own savings to pay for internet connection and print the modules. Dedication and hard work of teachers and non-teaching personnel allowed the country to push through with the school opening (Mateo 2020).

*Isa gyud nga nakapamelt sa akoang heart is kanang makit-an nako sa akoang mga bata kining ilang mga smiles despite sa kalisud. Despite nga magbaktas pa silag pila ka oras para lang gyud makauli sa eskwelahan sa module. Pero never nimo makita sa ilang dagway gud nga gikapoy sila.* (There was an instance that melted my heart. Everytime they smile at me despite of their condition. Even if they walk distance away from school too just to get the materials.

I cannot see that they are tired, still they smiles.) FGD-Chem, R96-98

*Sample words like, thankful. Mapasalamaton sila nga bisan pa og nagpuyo ko sa lungsod, lipay sila nga nagtudlo ko diria sa ilahang lugar. Diria sa bukid kay dili tanang maestra nga gusto maassign diria sa bukid kay tungod sa kalayo.* (They are very thankful because I am here in their place educating them. They expected that not all teachers can stay longer in the hills because of the distance.) IDI-Ali, R35-37

There was once an instance that melted the heart of Teacher Chem. Everytime the learners smile at him despite of their condition. Even if they walk distance away from school just to get the materials, Teacher Chem cannot see that they are tired and still manages to give genuine smiles to the teacher.

*Sa pagpakita sa ilang smile nga nalipay sila nga nakita ka, mapasalamaton sila.* (They show me their smiles and gratefulness everytime we see each other.) IDI-Rhe, R83

There simple way of saying thank you with smiles already touched my senses to love them more. IDI-Pro, R78

*As a teacher, ang atuang kahibalo, kinahanglan pud natong i-share sa atoang mga kaigsoonang teacher.* (As a teacher, we must share our knowledge to them, to our fellow teachers.) FGD-Jan, R118

Teacher Rhe was fascinated with the smiles and gratefulness everytime they see each other. There simple way of saying thank you with smiles already touched the senses of Teacher Pro to love them more. In return, Teacher Jan said that as a teacher, we must share our knowledge to them, to the learners and to the fellow teachers. We can gather learners and be with the community if we knew how to be a good person to everyone. Building a relationship with them is not just earned in the glimpse of an eye. It takes true heart, communication and friendship to earn their trust Attitude towards them matters. This is manifested on the revelations of the participants.

Calmness and being patient works best in this time of pandemic. I always say that we can endure everything with patience and love to our work and to the people we are serving. IDI-Pro, R43, 75

*We should be patient sa tanang butang taas gyud tag pasensya.* (We should be patient in all aspect.) IDI-Rhe, R79

Participant Pro shared that calmness and being patient works best in this time of pandemic. She always says that teachers can endure everything with patience and love to the work and to the people they are serving. Rhe also shared to be patient in all aspect. Alon, Camsa and Guiamalon (2021) expounded on the consideration to the learners in rural areas where the internet inaccessible for online learning, the modular learning modality is currently used by all public schools in the Philippines. Modular learning is a form of distance learning that uses SLM and was highly convenient for most of the typical Filipino students. It was also the most preferred learning system of the majority of parents or guardians for their children. Teachers were well-oriented and prepared to perform their tasks and functions on modular distance learning education in times of pandemic. They also have enough training and skill development necessary to effectively and efficiently do their job. Parents and guardians were able to support their children in the new learning modality but some of them were hampered because of the incapability of facilitating and explaining the modules provided for their children.

*Akoang ma-share lang sa akong fellow teachers nga gahandle og estudyante nga gahandle og special educational needs dapat magbaon gud ta permi og daghan kaayo nga pasensya kay kabalo man gyud ta nga dili same ang capacity sa atong mga estudyante with special needs.* (I can share to my fellow teachers who are handling learners with special educational needs is that we should have patience innate in us. We should know the capacity of the learners with special educational needs.) FGD-Chem, R93

Teacher Chem shared to her fellow teachers who were handling learners with special educational needs. They should have innate patience. Hinterland educators should know the capacity of the learners with special educational needs. Teacher Ney also added lines below:

*Mao bitaw to siya ang akong giingon nga as a teacher dapat taas gyud atong pasensya sa ilaha kay dili man sa tanang panahon nga kita ra permanente and ilahang sabton. Sabton pud nato ang ilahang side.* (As teachers we must have remarkable patience because not all the time that they will understand us.) FGD-Ney, R51-52

*Taasan lang gyud ang pasensya kay bata man atong ginatudluan. Magbaon jud dapat og pasensya. Taas kaayo nga pasensya ang dalhon inig subida.* (We should have patience because we teach learners. We

should bring with us the extraordinary patience.) FGD-Uki, R28, 33-34

A guide from the Center for Academic Innovation at the University of Michigan advises students to be patient with themselves, their peers and instructors during this challenging time, and recommended that students made a plan and adjust studying to help regain just a little sense of control over this situation (Bresnick, 2020). This was visible with the remarks of Teacher Ney of which he said that teachers must have remarkable patience in order to understand each other. Uki added that teachers should have patience because they were the ones teaching learners. Teachers should bring with them the extraordinary patience at work.

### **Accepting the Call and Keeping the Faith.**

Spirituality in education, as a necessity in improving the quality of teaching and learning, is affected by various personal, social, religious, and cultural factors. Since the identification of these factors can empower the faculties and facilitate the transfer of spiritual concepts through teaching (Nasrollahi, Eskandari, Adaryani & Hasan Haji Rahimian Tasuji, M., 2020). As human nature teachers too became tired but with the grace and mercy of God, everyone can survive. Fervent prayer was her key on this because she was also bombarded with so much work and pressures. This is for the mankind to be reminded that God is there ready to catch us when we slip. Providing quality and compassionate care amidst very complex challenges can uplift people's work, families and all those need hope and healing through prayers. Teacher Pro shared her revelations on this.

Even if my work is hazardous, I need to accept the reality that this is part of the plan of God for me. Teachers should accept their calling. Not just because they needed the salary but because their service can touch hearts and and change lives. IDI-Pro, R74, 80-81

*Accept challenges nga maatubang nimo samtang gatrabaho ka diri sa bukid, ang byahe ba ron or unsa. We should accept and love ang imuhang trabaho wholeheartedly nga walay pag-alinlangan or walay pagduha-duha.* (We should accept any challenges that we will be facing in the hinterland like the travels. We should fully accept and love our work wholeheartedly without hesitation.) IDI- Rhe, R92-93

Participant Rhe said that teachers shall accept any challenges that they will be facing in the hinterland including the travels. They should fully accept and love our work wholeheartedly without hesitation.

*First is accepting the plan of God kay dili man gud ko teacher dati unya nag-earn lang ko. Unya mao may gihatag sa Ginoo nga mahimo kong teacher. Giaaccept nako ang challenge sa Ginoo nga magtudlo sa mga learners. (We should accept the plan of God. I just earned units in education. God made me a teacher. I accepted the challenge of God to teach the learners here.) FGD-Jan, R111-113*

*Focus ka permi sa imong goal which is to help children especially here in remote areas. (Focus always in the main goal which is to help children especially here in remote areas.) FGD-Chem, R87*

*Tinuod gyud to nga accepting the plan of God. Pero kung iaccept man gud nimo ang plan sa Ginoo, maka-think positive. (True. We should accept the plan of God because if we did such, we became positive thinkers.) FGD-Ney, R84, 86*

Participants Jan, Chem and Ney affirmed on this. We should accept the plan of God. God made Jan a teacher even if he is just an education unit earner not a bachelor's degree holder in education. Ney focuses always in the main goal which is to help children especially in remote areas. In the side of Ney he revealed that we should accept the plan of God in order to become positive thinkers in life.

*Always pray lang gyud that everything will be fine. (Always pray that everything will be fine.) IDI-Ali, R39*

Keeping the faith that this virus will soon end and providing school supplies even at home schooling can motivate them to accomplish the learning materials and to be submitted on time. IDI-Pro, R89

Having a prayerful life is the key of Teacher Ali. Keeping the faith that the virus will soon end is the line of Teacher Pro. In addition, the intensification of the insight, religious worldview and the basic of beliefs, consolidating ethics and empowering faculty members in teaching skills along with building a positive and constructive relationship with the students, as well as institutionalizing spirituality as the inseparable teaching element can facilitate the transfer of spirituality concepts (Nasrollahi, Eskandari, Adaryani & Hasan Haji Rahimian Tasuji, M., 2020). Teacher Chem also added important points below:

*One thing that motivates you in surpassing hardships in facilitating learning in the new normal is accepting*

*the plan of God and knowing nga walay gihatag ang Ginoo nga dili nako kaya. Kabalo si Lord nga kaya nako. (One thing that motivates you in surpassing hardships in facilitating learning in the new normal is accepting the plan of God and knowing that God gave us problems in accordance with our capacity. God knows that we can do it.) FGD-Chem, R88-89*

And continue to live and always pray. FGD-Ney, R90

*Padayon sa pagtawag sa Ginoo kay dili baya lalim rong new normal. (Continue calling on God because it is not easy in the new normal.) FGD-Uki, R39*

One thing that motivates Chem in surpassing hardships in facilitating learning in the new normal was accepting the plan of God and knowing that God gave us problems in accordance with our capacity. She believed that God knows exactly what teachers can do. Ney and Uki also affirmed to continue to live and pray without ceasing. As Christians we should turn to God in times of fear and uncertainty as we do in times of joy and celebration. Joining every affected citizen to pray of God's heart of love, mercy and truth to dwell in every household and show us to face the challenges posed by the deadly Corona virus.

Also, De Villa and Manalo (2020) mentioned that the pandemic has resulted drastic changes in education. Part of it was the shift from face-to-face classes to different learning modalities which include distance learning. Since education is believed to continue despite the circumstances, teachers started to prepare for modular and online distance learning. Teaching is possible, but, has challenges as well. It was also revealed that as education migrates to a new normal, teachers made necessary preparations to equip themselves with distance learning. Though they face challenges which may hamper their work, they still manage to cope with the new normal to continue their tasks. The higher offices and school authorities should work with teachers at the pre-implementation of distance learning to address their needs in resources and training to effectively facilitate the delivery of quality education for students.

### Implementing Time Management

The fourth lesson gained by hinterland educators in facilitating a modular learning modality that they can share with their families, community and school leaders is implementing time management. Teachers' time management may start with setting priorities and organizing the day around the most important tasks. Setting priorities helped in keeping teachers on track



throughout the day, even when the unexpected occurs and the workload can seem overwhelming. Deadlines have been part of most people's life since early childhood when we were first introduced to the dreaded concept of homework (Rollings, 2019).

Effective prioritizing is about arranging workload based on both the importance of the tasks as well the resulting impact of the completed tasks. Teachers must be able to assess whether projects can be put on hold if the outcomes are not as impactful as others. Priorities are not as black and white as putting math and English first and getting to arts projects if time avails (The Editorial Team, 2022). This kind of thinking led to class burnout for both teachers and students. Within certain contexts, an impactful art or outdoor activity can be just as stimulating as academic lesson planning.

### Rendering Quality Service Amid Pandemic.

Ultimately, leaders who built capacity through attention to mindset, embraced fluid roles and expectations, facilitated responsive professional development, and prioritized efficient structures and systems were able to create environments for teachers to reach students in meaningful ways and increase engagement. As the initial crisis moved into a sustained new normal, organizations began finding ways to move from their initial state of emergency to a state of best practices (McLeod & Dulsky, 2021). The pandemic cannot stop the hinterland educators to reach out those learners who are living on far-flung areas. Though hazardous, they should find ways to continue the spreading of quality education. Following the health protocol is still observed even if the location is very far from the city. Efforts are still made for the learners to achieve their goals and that the virus cannot penetrate educational system.

Give your 101% best to your pupils. IDI-Ali, R39

*My passion to teach all kinds of learners including those with special needs. Kanang ilang pagtahud and pagpasalamat sa atoa nga naabot ta sa bukid nagtudlo sa ilaha* (My passion is to teach all kinds of learners including those with special needs. Their respect and gratefulness to us for reaching in their place even if its too distant, we are still here for them.) FGD-Uki, R27, 31

*Akoa lang ma-share kay ipadayon nato ang atoaang pagtudlo sa ilaha. Tagaan nato sila og panahon kay kabalo man gud ta especially gyud diri sa bukid, kinahanglan nato sila hatagan og panahon.* (We have to continue teaching them. We need to give them attention especially that their place is in the steep and

far mountains.) FGD-Ney, R106-107

Also, build resilient education systems for equitable and sustainable development. Strengthening the resilience of education systems enables countries to respond to the immediate challenges of safely reopening schools and positions them to better cope with future crises. In this regard, governments could consider the following: focus on equity and inclusion; reinforce capacities for risk management, at all levels of the system; ensure strong leadership and coordination; and enhance consultation and communication mechanisms (United Nations, 2020). Amid pandemic, participants Ali, Uki and Ney affirmed on the giving of full service for the learners. Uki's passion is to teach all kinds of learners including those with special needs. Their respect and gratefulness to the teachers for delivering education in their place made the parents and learners very grateful for the service. Ney added that there is a need to continue teaching learners with special educational needs. Teachers needed to give them attention especially that their place is in the steep and far-flung mountains.

**Giving Parental Quality Time.** Likewise, more than 300 million students worldwide are having their education disrupted by the spread of Corona virus. Schools and universities haven't faced this level of disruption in generations, but unlike any time in the past, DepEd through motivated teachers have the ability to continue education even when schools are close. Learners, teachers and families are at the heart of everything (Pearson.com, 2020).

*We should give quality time to the children. Magbonding ba mo while ga-answer sa module* (We should give quality time to the children. Bond while answering the modules.) IDI-Rhe, R100-101

I am also thankful for some parents who make time supervising their children at work. Giving quality time to your children during answering the modules can encourage them to pursue schooling while there is pandemic. IDI-Pro, R26, 88

*Ug hatagan og quality time sa mga parents ang ilang bata sa pagtuon sa module.* (Parents should give quality time to their children in learning the modules.) IDI- Mar, R50

In addition, these sudden changes have taken a toll on schools, families, and society in general. Many parents have had to work from home while taking care of their children and acting as home tutors. Educators for all

age groups from early childhood to further education have had to switch from traditional in-class settings to various forms of distance education, and develop methods to stay in touch with parents and students. Often, this has required adopting new educational strategies for digital teaching, synchronous and asynchronous, which is still an emerging phenomenon in many educational settings (Gehrer Fackler, Street, Gnamb, Lindorff & Lockl, 2020).

*Tagaan nato sila og pagtagad kay sa akoang naoberserbahan man gud sa mga bata nga gaeskwela diri, sayo pa sa buntag pagmata nila, wala na ilang ginikanan kay tua na nagtrabaho sa bukid.* (We should give attention to children because base on what I had observed, their parents already toil and left from home early in the morning.) FGD Ney, R108

*My insight to those parents and learners amid the pandemic is e-encourage nako sila nga buhaton nila ang ilahang mga trabaho as parents. As also a teacher sa ilahang mga anak, bisan dili kaayo sila makabalo, at least naa ilang support nga maguide ang mga bata.* (My insight to those parents and learners amid the pandemic is I will encourage the parents to do their duty as parents. As a new normal home teachers of their children, even if they have little knowledge on the modular learning, at least they have given their support in guiding their children.) FGD Jan, R149-150

*Hatagan pud unta nilag time ilang anak sa balay.* (They should give time to their children in their homes.) FGD-Uki- R40

Ney mentioned on giving attention to the children. He also brought up that when the children woke up in the morning, their parents already left to work in their farm. Jan gave his suggestions to those parents and learners amid the pandemic. He encouraged the parents to do their duty. Even if they themselves had little know-how on the activities of their children in school, their time and care for the learners really matters. Guiding and giving encouragements to them helped a lot in boosting the children's eagerness to do school works. In the new normal distance learning modality, parents are the home facilitators of children. Even if they have little knowledge on the modular learning, at least they have given their support in motivating their children. Uki also affirmed that it will be a great contribution from the parents if they will be giving time to their children.

## Conclusion

Based on the revelations of my participants, the following implications are obtained:

The lived experiences of hinterland educators in facilitating modular learning modality for learners with special educational needs revealed that it is vital for the teachers to be receptive and expressive of their thoughts and opinions to their school administrators. The challenges faced by the teachers have implications on the leadership of the school heads as to how to provide support and comfort to the teachers as the primary movers in this pandemic time. Supporting through comforting, listening and providing supplies may alleviate the challenges experienced by teachers. Educational leaders of the hinterland teachers also failed in assessing situations. Despite of so many challenges and ancillaries burdened by teachers, school heads are not considerate in providing support. The teachers felt that tasks were not attainable and certain implementations were inconsiderate. Teachers sacrificed their lives and persistently performed for learners' excellence. Possessing a good attitude, relationship and commitment helped in maintaining a direct guidance while working in unity with care for the literacy of learners with special educational needs. Teamwork and communication with flexibility at work helped in the development of finest way of performance.

The coping mechanisms in facing the challenges in facilitating modular learning modality for learners with special educational needs reveals that teachers are emotionally, physically and socially preparing to conquer the fear which everyone is facing in this time. With this, they also need instructional leadership from humanitarian school heads who can understand their difficulties and can also provide solutions on their clamors. They themselves tend to give bright words to their fellow countrymen and learners just to give encouragement and positive thoughts. They even gave rewards to the pupils just to maintain the fire of education within the households. Attitude of school leaders, parents and teachers really matters. Possessing a good relationship can help in maintaining a direct supervision and guidance to the literacy of the learners with special educational needs.

Hinterland teachers have learned many things. Bearing a teachable heart encourages them to accept the stand of every human being. Proper planning for the lesson and material preparations, work from home, on-site work and even home visitation to every learner needs

efficient and effective time and educational management. The production of quality education, still, they work hand in hand for the benefit of the learners. Giving significance to mankind can be practiced to work in unity with care for every individual. Keeping the faith in God is the main ingredient once a teacher is assigned in far-flung mountains for the effort to become effective and purposeful in the academe.

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