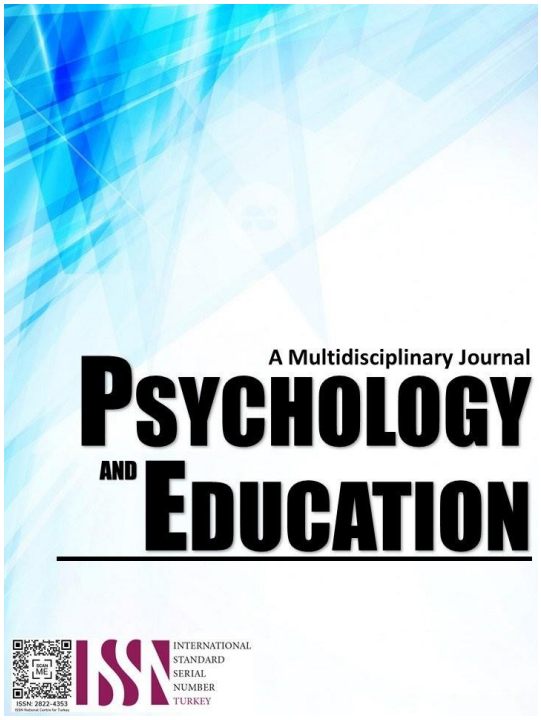
A REVIEW OF STORIES UNTOLD IN MODULAR DISTANCE LEARNING: A PHENOMENOLOGY



PSYCHOLOGY AND EDUCATION: A MULTIDISCIPLINARY JOURNAL

2023
Volume: 12
Pages: 230-236
Document ID: 2023PEMJ1054
DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.8247151
Manuscript Accepted: 2023-13-8

Psych Educ, 2023, **12**: 230-236, Document ID:2023 PEMJ1054, doi:10.5281/zenodo.8247151, ISSN 2822-4353

CC BY NC

Research Article

A Review of Stories Untold in Modular Distance Learning: A Phenomenology

Axel Rose R. Jaicten*, Abigael Rave M. Uzarraga, Roland M. Rodriguez, Cyril A. Cabello
For affiliations and correspondence, see the last page.

Abstract

Due to the increase in COVID-19 cases, educational institutions have struggled to transition from face-to-face instruction to distance learning which is the modular distance learning. With the said transition, teachers were not prepared as to what will be their roles and how will the handle the said modality This study will look at how teachers actually cope with the new normal of modular distant learning. The study used qualitative research approach and employed phenomenology as research design. Eight (8) individuals participated in this study, which focused on the real-life experiences of the teachers of Inawasan Provincial Community High School. After data has been gathered, the researchers generated 2 themes; the Struggles and Challenges of teachers in modular distance learning, and the ineffectiveness of modular distance learning. These themes serve as clear examples of how educators are thriving despite the challenges, they face during the modular distance learning. This study recommends the teachers to partner modular distance learning with other learning modality to make it more effective, develop localized module, and improve the quality of the material used in making the modules.

Keywords: *teachers, modular distance learning, modules, impressive efforts by the teachers*

Introduction

The Department of Education adopted one of the learning modes known as modular remote learning as a part of its learning contingency plan and as a preventive step during this pandemic since they felt that learning shouldn't cease during a pandemic. Despite many objections, both parents and stakeholders, the plan was pushed through and was implemented. The modular distance learning is divided into two: the modular print and the digital print where learners received a soft copy of the modules. The principle of this learning modality is that learners will learn on their own with the aid of SLM (Self Learning Module) in each subject. Distance learning is not new to education (Villar et al., 2022). In fact, many countries practice this to help learners who want to study in the comfort of their home.

But in the Philippines, it is a different scenario. It is in fact the first time to use this modality in almost all schools because everyone thinks that learning should take place in school with the aid of the teacher. There is a big uncertainty as to the effectivity of this modality since no concrete study was done before regarding modality in the Philippines (Cabello et al., 2022). It was literally a leap of faith for the teachers as to how will they monitor the learning process, how will they act as teacher in the modular mode and how will they help learners in their struggles to learn. Those were some of the things that bothered the teachers plus the initial reaction of parents: teachers were accused of being “hayahay” meaning doing nothing due to the fact that learners were not present inside the classroom.

Despite the department's praise for the mentioned modality, there are drawbacks (Geraldine, 2021). In 2021, 93.3% of respondents claimed that "few students answer their modules with commitment, 93.4% claimed that some parents spoil their children and do their task alternatively, 73.3% claimed that parents have difficulty mentoring their children using modules (Abucejo et al., 2022). This finding generally reveals the veracity of the learners' responses. Despite these drawbacks, the study did identify several benefits of modular learning. According to a survey conducted in 2021, 86.7% of respondents said that education continues when students adjust to change, 93.3% said that parents actually realized their importance in their children's education, 33.3% also said modular distance learning teaches students values in addition to lessons, and 50% said that teachers have become more receptive to the challenges the pandemic has brought about. The experiences of those learners are unheard of as well as the side of the teachers who made the materials for the said modality. This study will tell the stories of the people who undergo the said modality.

It is said there are many versions of the story and it’s up for us to filter the information. The story of real people who undergo the said modality can shed light to the department as to what really is happening. From the planning stage of the learning modality to be used, preparation of the materials and to the planning of the distribution process, all these are considered before the implementation. With all the planning, it cannot be

denied that there will be challenges (Bahinting et al., 2022). First is on producing the modules. The department scout teachers to be module writers in every subject for the production of SLMs'. Because of the limited timeframe, there are errors which can be found in the modules. Second is the distribution and retrieval of the modules. Though some parents follow the schedule date, many if not do not follow. As a result, teachers will deliver the modules house-to-house.

With the department's vision to continue the learning process of the Filipino learners'despite the threat of the virus, The Department of Education issued DepEd Order No. 12, s. 2020 entitled "Adoptation of the Basic Education Learning Continuity Plan for School Year 2020-2021 in Light of the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency". This memorandum is the implementation of the Basic Education Learning Continuity Plan (BE-LCP) which is a package of learning interventions that will respond to the learning challenges brought by COVID-19. This plan is in collaboration with internal and external stakeholders to come up with learning delivery strategies and operational directions that will ensure the health, safety and well-being of all learners, teachers and personnel of the Department. This plan aims to promote positivity that despite the current situation, learning should not be sacrificed (Cariaga et al., 2022; Pableo et al., 2022). Since there will be limited time in delivering the lesson, the Department come up with the Most Essential Learning Competencies (MELCs) wherein competencies several competencies are merged to focus on what is most essential one focusing mostly on reading, language and numeracy (Cabello et al., 2021; Olleras et al., 2022).

This research aims to study the phenomena and review stories based on experiences during the modular distance learning on how learners cope with the change as well as the teachers. It is undeniable that during the modular distance learning, parents and guardians play a vital role. According to Ballescass et al. (2022), parents and guardians involvement in the modular distance learning varies according to the educational attainment and income of the family. Which also reveals that parents are hands-on to their children in a way. On the side of the teacher, how were the able to cope with the challenges in the modular distance learning? How did they monitor their learners during this time? According to Abunde (2021), it is the responsibility of the teacher to monitor the progress of the learners but how about if her learners are 150 plus? These questions need to be understood and explicated. This research will investigate teachers' and students' perceptions on the usefulness of the aforementioned modality.

Research Questions

Generally, this study investigated stories on the experiences of teachers during the conduct of modular distance learning. Specifically, this study addressed the following questions:

1. Looking back the time when modular instruction was used, what were your struggles and challenges you encounter?
2. How effective was the modular instruction?
3. What were your takeaways when you used modular instruction?
4. How to improve the modular instruction?
5. What remedies can be proposed in order to effectively implement the modular instruction?

Literature Review

To provide the concept of research, the different surveyed materials regarding the Junior High School teachers of Inawasan Provincial Community High School lived experiences in modular distance learning modalities are discussed in this section, this study gathered pertinent and reliable information to back up the current study, these articles underwent careful scrutiny. This section goes into greater detail on the modular learning approach of junior high school teachers experienced.

The order of "stay from home" is a cycle of the teachers to retrieve the accomplished printed modules while bringing a new set of printed modules that will run for another week. Regardless of the preferred method of learning the subject or submitting the required assignments, all students will receive the printed learning modules (Bustillo & Aguilos, 2022). This order is in consonance with the protocols set by the IATF and since the department must execute the continuity plan, the department come up with a strategy on how to distribute and retrieve the modules of the learners. Schools' set up drop off center in every feeder barangay for the distribution and retrieval. Some school let their parents or guardians come inside the school premises to get and return the modules as long as health protocols are observed and they must also come on the scheduled time to prevent from crowding. The downside of this is some will not follow the scheduled time for some reasons and others will not get the modules assign for the week because their children were not able to finish answering the

task in the modules. In the end, teachers will deliver the modules door-to-door.

The educational system has changed as a result of an unexpected epidemic, placing both teachers and students in a challenging situation (Mangubat et al., 2022; Yamon et al., 2022). Therefore, blended learning has been proven to be effective for sustaining high-quality education and lifelong learning. The digital revolution produced blended learning (Selwyn & Jandric 2020). Higher education institutions all across the world are starting to use it as a new delivery technique (Cabello, 2022; Perez et al., 2022). In addition to enabling a more thorough review of the course material, blended learning environments offer students significant support and opportunities to actively participate in defining their own learning (Montgomery et al., 2019). Blended learning is not new to the Philippines but it commonly used in university and colleges that offer open education exclusively for those learners who cannot physically come to school due to their hectic schedule like the actors and actresses. It is not widely practiced because will have the traditional idea that learning will take place in the classroom where learners can interact physically and do collaborative task (Segarino et al., 2022; Ugbamen et al., 2022). Online classes with modules are effective since learners can interact with the teachers using different educational platform. It encourages independent learning because the learners will research and evaluate the information that they researched from the web. In this way they can manage their own learning and time (Longcob et al., 2022).

A modular learning environment in higher education could be beneficial, especially after a pandemic (Jones & Sharma, 2020). It is evident that a modular learning approach offers students a learning outcome with significant educational value. Although it could seem challenging, it is a straightforward method for piquing students' interest in the subject. Other materials, however, talked about the problems this modality has had with facilitating students' learning, flexibility, engagement, and learning environments and styles. Additionally, a higher education gives students more options. This intensifies the bond between the students and their teacher to a significant degree. This gradually enables students who might be shunned in particular settings to connect (Ando et al., 2022). It is beneficial to the higher education learners since they are already mature and can manage their time wisely at the same time, they are expected to already have the skills like reading comprehension and critical thinking which is very useful in the learning process. Problems occur to learners who will be doing to school for the first time like the incoming kindergarten learners who are yet to learn those skills. Kindergarten is a very crucial stage since this is where foundation of learning begins. This the stage where children will learn literacy and numeracy skills with the teacher as model. Children at this stage mimic the teacher thus, demonstration of concept is a must.

Students use the online platform to obtain knowledge as part of the blended learning experience, which includes online resources and information tailored to their level of interest. Giving teachers opportunities for professional involvement improves their ability to manage their time. It made use of interactive knowledge checks, which are an essential component of active learning in blended learning and have been found to increase student engagement (Guillén-Gámez et al., 2020; Owston et al., 2019). Given that flipped classrooms have been shown to increase student engagement, it made use of interactive knowledge checks as a critical component of active learning in both our online and face-to-face components. Learning objectives are accomplished when quizzes are incorporated into the design (Van Alten et al., 2019).

This is applicable if there is strong internet connectivity and all our learners have the gadgets as well as the money for internet connection. On the part of the teachers, many upgraded their gadgets and spend thousands if not for their load just to conduct online classes. Students engagement is evident but it cannot be denied that some will not attend classes or skip their class if they will not have sufficient funds to buy load. As to the teachers, they really tried their best just to provide the learners with quality education and meaningful learning experience. For the children in kindergarten, screen time is also limited thus teacher will make adjustments just to meet both ends.

Both students and teachers have distinct circumstances and restrictions, which include teaching techniques and a host of other things (Weinhandl et al., 2020). Additionally, children who do not live with their parents and those whose parents do not have a background in education lack guidance (Hebebci et al., 2020). Furthermore, navigating remote schooling is challenging. Some institutions would need to employ a hybrid approach of onsite and remote learning to handle this problem in order to make sure that the proper social distance measurements were put in place. When it comes to reviewing research and teaching materials, online learning expanded beyond the educational system to the learning experiences of students (Ando et al., 2022). Students are given a solid foundation for learning to learn on their own. In order

to maintain the distinction between various techniques, it will improve students' readiness for learning and confirm learning through evocative assessment.

A wide variety of viewpoints on modular distance learning were presented in the numerous articles cited in this section. When attempting to understand students' modular printed learning life experiences, it is essential to take into account the many perspectives. Students can study and learn independently through modular printed learning. By offering flexible time slots that may be adapted to individual requirements, modular distance learning enables students to learn at their own speed. However, not all students fully achieve this due to various issues with modular printed learning. In order to comprehend the underlying challenges and oppositions faced by students both in-person and online, the living experience of modular distance learning should be assessed (Riconalla et al., 2022). These articles offer a strong foundation for understanding what to anticipate from the investigation's findings.

Methodology

Research Design

The Heideggerian phenomenology method was utilized in this study. Understanding the individuals' actual experiences in a given phenomenon is done through phenomenology. It is frequently used to examine actual experience, learn more about how people think, and expand knowledge about a phenomenon. Given that the subject of the current study or investigation was the Stories Untold in Modular Distance Learning, phenomenology research method was the best approach to take and was utilized. The researchers wanted to undertake the process of data after those were gathered and collected.

Research Environment

This study took place at Inawasan Provincial Community High School, Buho Inawasan Pamplona Negros Oriental as the area assignment of the researcher. Barangay Inawasan is a small and remote barangay of the Municipality of Pamplona. On the island of Negros, Inawasan is located roughly between 9.4659 and 123.0409. It is estimated that the elevation at these coordinates is 346.5 meters or 1, 136.8 feet above mean sea level.

Research Participants

The participants of this study were the Junior high school teachers of Inawasan Provincial Community High School, for the school year 2022-2023. Teachers from the aforementioned school made up the student participants.

Research Instrument

The interview guide question was the instrument used in the gathering of data. The interview guide question was developed and validated in order to gather information regarding the experiences of students in Modular Distance Learning.

Table 1. *Data Analysis*

Horizons	*Textual Language*	*Themes*
"Hassle in distribution/retrieval of modules" Participant 1	Stress	Impressive efforts
"ICT related issues like late or unavailable link for modules and little knowledge in using google meet or zoom." Participant 3	Technology Limitations	
"Printing modules day and night even weekends, checking huge number of papers and limited time to give feedback." Participant 6	Work overload	
"Answers were undeterminable since they copy from answer keys." Participant 4	Cheating	Ineffectiveness
"Parents were the one's answering." Participant 7	Parents as learners	
"Not beneficial to the learners since it does not provide them a quality education." Participant 5	Educational issue	

Results and Discussion

After analyzing the data, the researchers determined two core themes that will be established in the study: Theme 1: The struggles and challenges of teachers in modular distance learning; and Theme 2: The ineffectiveness of modular distance learning. These themes are the highlight in this study.

Theme 1: Impressive efforts by the Teachers

As mandated by the Department of Education that education must continue despite the odds of the pandemic, teachers become unexpected front liners in serving their learners. The respondents recount their struggles during the implementation of the modular distance learning.

Participant 1 said that distributing and retrieving the module is a hassle because parents will come during

lunch break and not on the scheduled time because they also have work or chores. And if parents will not get the modules, teachers will effort to deliver the modules to their homes.

Participant 3 said "ICT related issues like late or unavailable link for modules and little knowledge in using google meet or zoom."

Since teachers don't use those platforms during pre-pandemic, they have a hard time in manipulating the said platforms especially those teachers whose age is nearing senior citizen. They asked help to the younger teachers who are techwiz (technology wizard) or the ICT coordinator of the school. This will test the patience and the perseverance of the teachers in serving the learners

Participant 6 said "Printing modules day and night even weekends, checking huge number of papers and limited time to give feedback."

Due to number of learners enrolled in the school, teachers need to keep up with the printing of the as well as the checking of the papers. On top of these are related works that needs attention like webinars, making of reports among others.

On the bright side, they become open-minded on the changes they encountered and was considerate to their learners that they cannot accomplish all the task in the modules. The teachers extended their patience to another extra-miles since both they and the learners were adjusting to the 'new normal' set up. Though time is not of their control, they were able to do task one at a time. Some of the senior teachers were able to explore the use of the different platforms. Due to the challenges thrown to the teachers, they made sure to extend extra mile for their effort in doing their work.

Theme 2: The ineffectiveness of modular distance learning.

Majority of the respondents said that the modular distance learning was ineffective.

Participant 4 said "Answers were undeterminable since they copy from answer keys."

These happen because the answer key was sent together with the modules for the learners to check his/her answer but the purpose was defeated since they just copy the answers.

Participant 7 said "Parents were the one's answering."

When learners slack behind their task, their parent was always to the rescue. It is very evident when checking the notebook/answer sheets of the learners that it contains different hand writings to the surprised of the teachers. It is common in the lower years since they need guidance from the teacher and cannot independently do task on their own.

Participant 5 said that it is "not beneficial to the learners since it does not provide them a quality education."

The physical presence of the teacher in the teaching learning process has a significant impact to the learners. Not all learners can study independently with the aid of the module. It is a struggle for them to comprehend the content of the module since some of them also struggle on their reading skills. Also, it the first time that they experience modular distance learning. The adjustments that they do was not easy. Some was able to cope and others got depressed. Teachers were not able to give timely feedback because of time constraint on their part. Teachers also cannot home visit or follow up his/her learners due to the number of learners in his/her subjects. These and more are among the factors to be considered.

Conclusion

The pandemic made everybody realized that the only permanent in this world is change. The modular distance learning is one of the alternative learning modalities in the 'new normal' in education. This study is able to affirm some doubts in the learning modality but on the bright side, it also brings out the best in teachers. The impressive efforts made by the teachers is highly commendable for they display their dedication for their job. Due to its ineffectiveness, it is recommended that the curriculum developer will evaluate the said modality for improvement.

Acknowledgement

Any task at hand could never be accomplished without the support and guidance of the people who appreciate and believe in our worth. It is timely and just to recognize those people who help the researchers one way or the other.

To our professor sir Cyril A. Cabello for pushing us to our limits and uprooting us from our comfort zone to fulfill this task. All the guidance and expertise are very much appreciated.

To all participants in this research, thank you so much for sharing your precious time despite your hectic schedule. This research will not be possible without you, again a million thanks.

To our Great Master Teacher, creator of all and giver of life, all praise and glory is into Your name. Thank you for all the favor You bestowed upon us specially the strength in times when we wanted to give and the wisdom when we could not anymore see the bright side of life No other name is greater than You, oh Lord.

References

Abucejo, C. M., Amodia, J. B., Calorin, R., Deo, N. F., Fuentes, M. J., Lamila, K. N., ... & Minyamin, A. (2022). Going Back to Elementary Years: The Parents Lived Experiences in Modular Distance Learning. Psychology and Education: A Multidisciplinary Journal, 2(6), 477-489.

Alvarez, A.V. The Phenomenon of Learning at a Distance Through Emergency Remote Teaching Amidst the Pandemic Crisis. Asian J. Distance Educ. 2020, 15, 144–153.

Ancheta, H. B. (2022). The Teaching and Learning Modality in the New Normal. Institute of Industry and Academic Research Incorporated, 42.

Anzaldo, G. D. (2021). Modular Distance Learning in the new normal education amidst Covid-19. International Journal of Scientific Advances, 2(3), 233-266.

BAHINTING, M. A., Ardiente, M., Endona, J., Herapat, M. A., Lambo, D., Librea, H. J., ... & Minyamin, A. (2022). Stronger than the Internet Connectivity: A Phenomenology. Psychology and Education: A Multidisciplinary Journal, 2(6), 465-476.

Bustillo, E. and Aguilos, M. (2022). The Challenges of Modular Learning in the Wake of COVID-19: A Digital Divide in the Philippine Countryside Revealed. https://doi.org/10.3390/educsci12070449

Cabello, C. A. (2022). Higher education professors in blended learning modality of teaching: The silent tears of heroes towards resiliency. Journal of Positive School Psychology, 6(3), 6171-6183.

Cabello, C. A., & Bonotan, A. M. (2021). Designing and validating an instrument to assess the wellness of business process outsources' customer service associates. Asia Pacific Journal of Multidisciplinary Research, 9(1), 1-11.

Cabello, C. A., Abadiano, M. N., Mabitad, A., Pulma, D. B., & Hipe, A. (2021). Gamification in Education: The Motivation-Exploration-Implementation Theory. Turkish Online Journal of Qualitative Inquiry, 12(7).

Cariaga, J., Tomada, G. R., Velonta, J., Villagonzalo, K., Gaco, G. J., Ugbaniel, J., ... & Cabello, C. (2022). Enriching the Teaching of Pie Chart Using Cooperative Learning as A strategy: A Quasi-Experimental Research. Psychology and Education: A Multidisciplinary Journal, 4(2), 137-146.

Emia, A. J., Lamosao, R., Lamosao, R., Silagpo, A. M., Cantila, J., Albite, C., ... & Minyamin, A. (2022). The Pre-Service Teachers' Uphill Climb in the New Normal: Stories to Tell. Psychology and Education: A Multidisciplinary Journal, 2(6), 529-540.

Longcob, J., Salatandre, J. A., Tatang, B. K., Escubido, E. C., Taneo, J., & Cabello, C. (2022). Stuck Up in the Middle of Nowhere: The Lived Experiences of Teachers' Latency in their Career Progression. Psychology and Education: A Multidisciplinary Journal, 5(1), 55-62.

Mangubat, N., Bucotot, M. C., Salatan, J., Tolentin, J., Villanueva, M. A. F., Lumangtad, S., ... & Cabello, C. (2022). The Technology and Livelihood Education Teachers in Modular Instruction: A Qualitative Inquiry. Psychology and Education: A Multidisciplinary Journal, 4(2), 121-136.

Mcgeons, S. P., et.al. Exploring the relationship between adolescent's reading motivation and reading habits.Reading and Writing, doi:10.10007/s11145-014-9537-9

Ogang, C. J. E., Balbuena, J., Tabanao, K. M., Amante, W. M., Sambrana, M. G., Bandoquillo, H. M., ... & Minyamin, A. (2022). The Freshmen and their Fresh Start: A Phenomenology. Psychology and Education: A Multidisciplinary Journal, 2(6), 541-551.

Pableo, J., Adiong, F., Alberca, R., Ansag, M., Antone, C. M., Asma, L., ... & Cabello, C. Improving the Discussion of the Different Kinds of Plants through Computer Simulation.

Perez, Z. O., Minyamin, A. V., Bagsit, R. D., Gimena, G. B., Dionaldo, W. V., Padillo, E. S., ... & Cabello, C. A. (2022). Research capability of faculty members in Higher Education Institution: Basis for Research management plan. Journal of Positive School Psychology, 6(3), 6215-6226.

Rasheed, R. A., Kamsin, A., & Abdullah, N. A. (2020). Challenges in the online component of blended learning: A systematic review. Computers & Education, 144, 103701.

Riconalla, P. G., Quiñanola, K. K., Devila, J., Zozobrado, J., Estoque, R. M., Capito, N., ... & Minyamin, A. (2022). The Lived Experiences Aged Instructors in Online Classes: Their Struggles and Coping Mechanisms. Psychology and Education: A Multidisciplinary Journal, 3(1), 1-11.

Sakina, R., Kulsum, E. M., & Uyun, A. S. (2020). Integrating Technologies in the New Normal: A Study of Blended Learning. International Journal of Quantitative Research and Modeling, 1(4), 181-193.

Segarino, G. M., Labisig, J., Calmerin, L., & Cabello, C. (2022). SIMS as Intervention in Enriching the Teaching of Fundamental Operations in Mathematics: An Action Research. Psychology and Education: A Multidisciplinary Journal, 5(1), 11-20.

Ugbamen, J., Acruz, E., Causin, S. E., & Cabello, C. (2022). Enriching the Discussion of Convergent Plate Boundary by Utilizing the Video Instructional Support: An Action Research.

Villar, M. C. G., Filipinas, J. P., Villanueva, J. B., & Cabello, C. A. (2022). The Transition, Transformation, and Adaptation from Modular-Printed Instruction to Limited Face-to-Face Classes: A Phenomenology.

Yamon, L. A., Batusbatusan, J., Raboy, J., Manlunas, L., Tabanao, J., Dichos, C. F., ... & Cabello, C. The Kitchen is Sinking: A Phenomenological Study of the Technology and Livelihood Teachers in the New Normal.

Affiliations and Corresponding Information

Axel Rose R. Jaicten
Lazi National Agricultural School
Department of Education – Philippines

Abigael Rave M. Uzarraga
Campalanas National High School
Department of Education – Philippines

Roland M. Rodriguez
Inawasan Provincial Community High School
Department of Education – Philippines

Cyril A. Cabello, PhD
Cebu Technological University - Philippines