

Article

IMPLEMENTATION OF PRINTED MODULAR MODALITY IN HOMESCHOOLING AMID COVID-19 PANDEMIC

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Abstract: The study explores the application of a printed modular method in home schooling for children with special needs during the COVID-19 pandemic, specifically in three selected special education centers. Using a mixed-method approach that includes both quantitative and qualitative designs, data was gathered and analyzed through survey questionnaires, interviews, statistical procedures, and Thematic Analysis. The results explicitly show that the printed modular method is being effectively implemented in home schooling. However, challenges have been encountered by both parents and teachers, particularly related to internet access at home and work. This lack of connection leads to difficulties in managing communication for monitoring, consultation, collaboration, and feedback, due to struggles with internet load consumption. An important finding of the study was the significant relationship between the respondents' profile and the level of implementation of the printed modular approach. Based on these findings, the study concludes that school administrators need to address the challenges faced by parents and teachers in applying this method. Recommendations from the study suggest that teachers, school administrators, and other stakeholders should work together in implementing a monitoring intervention plan. This collective effort will help in enhancing the learning experiences of students with special needs and disabilities, by taking their unique requirements into consideration.

Keywords: Special education, modular distance modality, monitoring and intervention

Introduction

Education represents a critical and enduring transformation in an individual's intellectual abilities and functional capabilities (Mitsea et al., 2022; Mystakidis, 2021). Such progression demands an effective educational approach that accommodates various learning experiences to ensure effectiveness (Wade, 2023). Realizing this goal isn't instant; it requires careful attention to factors contributing to the achievement of academic objectives. These include the awareness of learner diversity,



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learning resources, strategies, and other equally important aspects to make education purposeful and foster lifelong learning (Dewey, 1938).

In the sphere of special education, addressing students who struggle within the conventional system has required the development of specific methods and materials (Morris-Mathews et al., 2021). Even though the goal is to align the special education system with regular education, an assortment of procedures and techniques is still necessary to foster effectiveness and accommodate students with learning disabilities (Hallahan et al., 2014). However, the COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent school closures presented considerable challenges for parents of special needs students in adapting to new learning modalities. The Department of Education (DepEd) in the Philippines has emphasized that education must continue, implementing a distance learning approach to ensure uninterrupted learning (DepEd, 2020). Despite technological and connectivity barriers, printed module materials were provided, with a survey indicating that 59% of approximately 22 million students adopted this printed modular modality in the current academic year (DepEd, 2020).

The shift to home education, also known as homeschooling, requires enhanced communication between schools and families and substantial effort by teachers to adjust their methods (Rothermel, 2011). In the Philippines, homeschooling has become a significant educational reform, especially among parents with children with disabilities, resulting in a marked increase in alternative home instruction (Knowles et al., 2015).

The Philippine education system has adapted to blended learning for the current school year (DepEd, 2020). In Region VII, teachers distribute printed modules, with initiatives at the division level emphasizing health protocols for the pick-up and return of these materials. Special monitoring devices guide parents and students in completing the activities in the printed modules. The task of ensuring the proper issuance of these documents falls to parents or others who can guide the students at home.

In the Special Education Centers in the City of Naga and Cebu Province Division, where the mandate for inclusive education is strictly followed, teachers and administrators strive to meet the diverse learning needs of children with disabilities (Salend, 2016). The widespread adoption of the printed modular method in response to Modular Distance Learning necessitates a balanced and effective implementation that takes into account parent capabilities and available home resources. In conclusion, this study seeks to determine the success of the printed modular modality's implementation by teachers and parents during homeschooling amid the pandemic, specifically for children with special needs.

Printed Modality

The printed modular modality is an educational approach that has gained significant attention, especially in contexts where technology and internet connectivity may be limiting factors (Cabual, 2021). This approach involves the use of printed self-learning materials (SLMs) designed to enable independent study at a learner's own pace. During the COVID-19 pandemic, this modality has been implemented extensively in various educational systems, including in the Philippines, to ensure the continuity of learning amid school closures (DepEd, 2020). Research indicates that printed modular materials can be particularly beneficial in reaching students in remote areas and those with special needs by providing structured, customizable learning experiences without the need for online resources (Aguado et al., 2016; Demeulenaere, 2020). While the effectiveness of this modality can vary based on factors such as quality of materials, support from educators, and learner engagement, it represents a flexible and accessible solution to maintain educational progress in challenging circumstances (Dilna et al., 2022).

Homeschooling

Home schooling, or homeschooling, refers to the education of children outside the formal setting of public or private schools, typically within the home environment (English, 2021). Over the past few decades, homeschooling has emerged as a viable alternative to conventional schooling, with motivations ranging from dissatisfaction with traditional education systems to desires for more individualized or values-based instruction (Murphy, 2012; Triplett, 2021). During the COVID-19 pandemic, homeschooling has expanded rapidly as families adapt to school closures and distance learning mandates. Some studies have highlighted the benefits of homeschooling, such as the flexibility to tailor education to a child's unique needs and the opportunity for parents to be more actively involved in their children's learning (Kunzman & Gaither, 2013). However, others have noted challenges, including potential lack of access to specialized resources, potential social isolation, and the demands it places on parents or guardians to facilitate education (Collom, 2005).

Methodology

This study employs a qualitative research method, utilizing survey questionnaires and simplified interview guides to gather data regarding the implementation of printed modular modality in home schooling for children with special needs in selected Sped Centers. By employing a descriptive research design, the researchers aim to

systematically describe and understand the phenomenon, with the assistance of purposive sampling to select the respondents. The combination of tools and methods, including alternative interviewing techniques (such as telephone, social media, and online interviews), facilitates a comprehensive and adaptable approach. The data are statistically treated with researcher-made questionnaires and analyzed using statistical software at a 0.05 level of significance. The purpose of this methodological approach is to provide a detailed and nuanced understanding of the implementation of the printed modular modality, exploring challenges and effectiveness, particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic, to inform future practices and policies in education for children with special needs. This study was administered in three public elementary schools that offer Special Education Programs. These elementary schools are known with integrated Special Education classes in their respective campus. These are Naga Sped Center, Tabunok Central School and Lipata Central School. In view of this, the study concentrates on the teachers and the parents of learners under Special Education Programs in the selected elementary schools offering Special Education Classes. It has been a common reality that the teacher – student ratio in the Special Education Programs is scarce in nature. This reflective with the data gathered as to number of enrollees and teachers facilitating them in the new normal academic set – up.

Results and Discussions

Table 1. Parents' Perception as to the effects of Printed Modular Modality To the adverse learning needs of children with disabilities

Parent's Perspective	N	Mean	SD
1. Has become independent in learning	125	3.5	0.99
2. Has improved his / her behavior towards home schooling	125	3.4	1.11
3. Has pushed him to do more research to seek answers online	125	3.2	1.09
4. Has developed strong bond of family members at home	125	3.8	1.06
5. Has performed diligence in answering the activities in the modules	125	3.5	1.06
6. Has shown less occurrences of tantrums and misbehavior	125	3.1	1.14
7. Has improved his / her communication skills	125	3.4	1.06
8. Has transformed him/her to a better version of him / herself	125	3.4	1.07
9. Has encouraged close monitoring of parents at home	125	3.8	1.14

Table 1 illustrates the parents' perceptions concerning the effects of the Printed Modular Modality on their children's learning and behavior. With a sample size of 125, the table covers various aspects, including independence in learning (Mean=3.5, SD=0.99), improved behavior towards homeschooling (Mean=3.4, SD=1.11), increased motivation for research (Mean=3.2, SD=1.09), family bonding (Mean=3.8, SD=1.06), diligence in module activities (Mean=3.5, SD=1.06), reduced tantrums (Mean=3.1, SD=1.14), enhanced communication skills (Mean=3.4, SD=1.06), personal transformation (Mean=3.4, SD=1.07), and parental monitoring (Mean=3.8, SD=1.14). These results suggest that parents generally perceive the Printed Modular Modality as having positive impacts on learning independence, behavior, family connection, diligence, and communication. However, there is some variability in these perceptions, as indicated by the standard deviations, which may warrant further exploration to understand specific contexts or individual differences.

Table 2. Parents' Perception as to the effects of Printed Modular Modality Towards addressing learning diversities of children with disabilities

Teacher's Perspective	N	Mean	Standard Deviation
1. Has addressed children's learning needs	16	3.4	0.51
2. Has helped hone the children holistically	16	3.4	0.62
3. Has enhanced my children's weaknesses	16	3.3	0.59
4. Has developed more of the strengths of the children despite their diversities	16	3.4	0.51
5. Has equated well the face-to-face learning of my child.	16	3.3	0.70
6. Has encouraged parents to become more supportive and collaborative with teachers and the activities demanding their cooperation	16	3.8	0.66
7. Has led the children to become independent	16	3.5	0.63
8. Has minimized instances to one – fits all teaching – learning process	16	3.4	0.51
9. Has promoted collaboration of children and other peers at home and neighborhood	16	3.6	0.50
10. Has opened opportunities for building strong communication between home and school	16	3.8	0.58

Table 2 presents the teachers' perspectives regarding the effects of the Printed Modular Modality on addressing the learning diversities of children with disabilities. With a sample size of 16, the responses indicate a general agreement that this modality has been effective in various areas. Specifically, teachers perceive that it has addressed children's learning needs (Mean=3.4, SD=0.51), contributed to holistic development (Mean=3.4, SD=0.62), enhanced weaknesses (Mean=3.3, SD=0.59), and developed strengths despite diversities (Mean=3.4, SD=0.51). The modality is also seen to equate well with face-to-face learning (Mean=3.3, SD=0.70), encourage parental support (Mean=3.8, SD=0.66), foster independence (Mean=3.5, SD=0.63), minimize one-size-fits-all teaching (Mean=3.4, SD=0.51), promote collaboration (Mean=3.6, SD=0.50), and open opportunities for strong home-school communication (Mean=3.8, SD=0.58). The results reflect a positive evaluation of the Printed Modular Modality by teachers in addressing the unique and diverse learning needs of children with disabilities.

Table 3. Level of significance of teacher's active participation in teaching delivery through printed modular modality

Indicators	N	Mean	Standard Deviation
Conduct of home visitations	16	3.8	1.24
Making follow-ups through texts and calls	16	4.4	0.81
Creation of group chats as method of communication	16	4.2	0.86
Utilization of FB and other platforms for information dissemination	16	4.0	0.76
Administration of parent conferences and orientation in any platform	16	4.0	0.73
Distribution of modules to nearest drop off points	16	4.1	0.85
Retrieval of modules to nearest drop off points	16	4.0	0.82
Individualized administration of assessments	16	3.8	0.68
Utilization of modified mechanisms on the conduct of performance tasks and other forms of assessment	16	3.8	0.68
Conduct of updated feedbacking of learner's performance to parents	16	4.1	0.85

Table 3 illustrates the teachers' active participation in delivering education through the printed modular modality, emphasizing a multifaceted approach. From home visitations to regular follow-ups through texts, calls, and social media, teachers demonstrate a high level

of engagement (Mean ranging from 3.8 to 4.4). They also actively administer parent conferences, distribute and retrieve modules at convenient locations, and emphasize individualized assessments and feedback. The use of modified mechanisms for tasks and assessments further underscores their adaptability.

Table 4. Significant Difference between the level of effectiveness as perceived by both parents and teachers

Perception of Effectiveness of Printed Modules	Independent samples t-test					
	Descriptive Statistics			Inferential Statistics		
	<i>N</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Standard Deviation</i>	<i>T</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>p</i> (2- tailed)
<i>Parents</i>	125	2.96	0.96	4.17	128	.001
<i>Teachers</i>	16	4.00	0.66			

The data reveals a significant difference in the perceptions between the two groups. Parents, from a sample size of 125, have a mean score of 2.96 with a standard deviation of 0.96, reflecting a more moderate perception of effectiveness. In contrast, teachers, from a sample size of 16, have a mean score of 4.00 with a standard deviation of 0.66, indicating a more favorable view of the effectiveness of printed modules. The independent samples t-test results in a t-value of 4.17, with 128 degrees of freedom, and a p-value of 0.001 (2-tailed), confirming that the difference in perceptions is statistically significant.

Table 5. Problems encountered in using printed modular modality in homeschooling (Parents Perspectives)

Parents' Perspective	Frequency	Percentage
Absence of internet connection for reference purposes	63	50.4%
Absence internet connection for reference purposes	47	37.6%
Establishing poor communication with the teacher	11	8.8%
Giving simplified instructions to the child in doing the activities	40	32.0%
Lack of gadget/s for consultation purposes	49	39.2%
Management of the child behavior in doing the activities in the module	75	60.0%
Less / No participation of family members at home	17	13.6%
Difficulty in building positive and responsive environment for printed modular modality	38	30.4%
Lack of time management	31	24.8%

Table 5 highlights the problems encountered by parents in using the printed modular modality in homeschooling. The issues range from technological challenges to behavioral management and family involvement. A significant proportion of parents (50.4%) identified the absence of an internet connection for reference purposes as a problem, followed by the management of the child's behavior while working on activities in the module (60%). Lack of gadgets for consultation was a concern for 39.2% of parents, while 37.6% reported a repeated issue with the absence of an internet connection. Communication issues with teachers (8.8%), difficulty in providing simplified instructions to the child (32%), less or no participation from other family members (13.6%), challenges in building a positive and responsive environment for printed modular learning (30.4%), and lack of time management (24.8%) were other reported problems. This table paints a comprehensive picture of the varied challenges faced by parents in implementing a printed modular approach, indicating the need for multifaceted support and resources to overcome these barriers.

Table 6. Problems encountered in using printed modular modality in homeschooling (Teachers Perspectives)

Teacher's Perspective	Frequency	Percentage
Inaccessibility of internet connection in the work place for modular – related preparations and parent / student communication mechanism	14	87.5%
Unavailability of internet connection at home for modular – related preparations and parent / student communication mechanism	15	93.8%
Daily struggle relative to load consumption for parents and students follow - up utilization	13	81.3%
Scarcity of resources in the production of modules, designing of instructional materials as well as in the preparation of assessment tools	9	56.3%
Difficulty in building positive and responsive environment for printed modular learning	11	68.8%
Time limitations for modular preparations, individualized – home monitoring mechanism and assessment measures	9	56.3%
None familiarization of respective locations of students and parents for home visitations	12	75.0%
None or less cooperation from parents and / or family members of students in the distribution, retrieval, completion and in setting conducive learning environment at home	7	43.8%
Poor parental support towards child's behavior management while on home schooling	6	37.5%
Difficulty in maintaining emotional support to the child through proactive communication while accomplishing activities in the modules	6	37.5%

Table 6 highlights the significant challenges teachers face in implementing printed modular learning for homeschooling. Key problems include the inaccessibility of internet connection at work and home (87.5% and 93.8%), daily struggles with load consumption (56.3%), and difficulties in building a supportive learning environment (68.8%). Additional challenges such as time constraints, unfamiliarity with students' locations, lack of cooperation from parents, poor parental support in behavior management, and difficulties in providing emotional support further complicate the situation. These multifaceted challenges indicate the need for holistic support systems to enable a smoother transition to this modality, considering the technological, resource, and interpersonal barriers encountered by educators.

Qualitative Results

Preference of Modality

Four of the respondents in the interview disclosed that they prefer the face-to-face modality, while two others prefer offline modular and printed modular. Parents claim that the provision of the printed modules does not guarantee thorough learning among children with special needs. Explanation from the teachers is much more needed than merely distributing the self – learning modules. Moreover, results show that printed modular modality is a one – size – fits – all approach to learning which is perceived as effective to other children but not all for learners' diversity and differences matter. Furthermore, children at home assert that teachers can do better than parents at home. The absence of teachers in their learning process prompts them to answer the activities in the modules even if there is no mastery in the competencies.

Opinions about Printed Modular Modality

Respondents shared that the printed module is the best alternative to implement given that the safety and health of their children might be compromised if face-to-face classes were implemented. They also expressed that the modality has been implemented well enough by the schools. Although some respondents also expressed that they are not satisfied with the printed module learning because there is no teacher that will guide or facilitate the learning of their children. These contradicting statements imply that the adoption of printed modular modality vary its impact and effects depending on the capacity of the parents to assist the children at home as well as on the learning profile of children.

Perceived Effectiveness of Printed Modular Modality

Respondents have mixed opinions about the effectiveness of printed modular modality. Those who perceive it as not an effective modality explained that: First, the students are not motivated to answer the printed modules and will just answer the module for compliance even if they have not understood the lesson. Second, there are also

many errors in drafting the modules which creates confusion to the learner. Third, it is not effective because not all parents have adequate knowledge to teach their children the content of the modules.

This indicates the real scenarios of parents battling home schooling of children especially those students who are virtual and introvert. These kinds of learners prefer to really have something to see and interact with in order to internalize the lessons. In this sense, learners just do complete the modules in order to comply the demands of the activities with least or no learning at all. Another consideration that there is no preference of the printed modular modality pertains to the errors that the modules contain. There are items and pages in the printed modules that are erroneous and contain ambiguous options or implications that added to the confusions of the learners and parents as well.

On the other hand, parents taking the role of teachers at home are struggling in providing assistance of learning to their children due to inefficient skills required from the modules. The best person who can provide the needed aid for the children is the teacher. Parents are not accustomed to be reading all the time for their children. Aside from that, parents lack mastery of the necessary competencies to be able to let their children understand the lessons entailed in the printed modules. However, respondents who perceive printed modular modality as effective explained that: First, it is an effective modality of learning because it facilitates self-regulated learning. The students look after their own learning and the parent is just there to facilitate and support in the process. Second, at least with printed modality, the parents can monitor the learning of the child more compared to online for example.

Specifically, the utilization of the printed modules encourages and trains learners to become independent learners on their own by managing their own activities at home in the accomplishment of the printed modules. However, it takes long to train all children this way. The individual difference among children cannot be catered only through one modality. Same is true with the enhancement of learners' skills for self-regulation cannot be done in a snap. Likewise, the opportunities for parents to execute close monitoring of children at home through the printed modality. This is particularly true to parents who are hands-on, not working and has the substantial knowledge and skills in dealing with learners at home with the number of printed modules to be accomplished in a week. Most in particular, the assurance that the children are learning aside from merely doing the compliance.

Challenges Faced with Printed Modular Modality

Respondents shared that they faced a number of challenges associated with the printed modular modality implemented. First, the parents have difficulty keeping the motivation of their child to accomplish the printed modules. Their children lack the drive to study

since it is different from the in-person kind of learning. Second, parents are not able to monitor their children's learning because of work or they still have to fulfill responsibilities at home while supervising their children's learning. Third, parents disclosed that their children are having a hard time understanding learning materials on their own because of the absence of a teacher. Fourth, some parents also expressed that they lack the knowledge to help their children with their schoolwork and tasks.

Motivating children at home is such a burden to parents nowadays, especially, that children are still in the adjustment stage of their educational endeavor. There are factors that deprive their children's focus on learning. Those factors affect their interest and lead to lack of motivation. Work and other responsibilities of parents at home imply a challenge on the part of the parents. These prevent them to closely monitor their children as well as in providing assistance for them to learn.

Difficulty in understanding the learning materials on their own is another problem of the learners. In this sense, the presence of learning adults is crucially required to remediate this problem. Lack of familiarity in comprehending items from the printed modules necessitate the assistance from an educated individual. Lack of expertise on the part of the parents is commonly heard among parents complaining on their roles being the teacher at home. A know – how in the field on handling learners as well as the capability in dealing with learning activities play significant roles towards addressing diverse learning styles of learners.

Active Role Taken by Parents

Respondents shared that there is a number of ways they help in facilitating the learning to their children. One is they personally take the time after work or finishing household chores to help their children in accomplishing the printed modules. They also take the task of keeping the motivation or engagement of their children to learn and study despite the difficulties with the printed module set-up.

In some cases where parents do work for a living or even no helper to assist on the household chores at home, they are given no choice but to prioritize working before providing help to the child. Other parents who can afford to pay for para- teachers do make use of them on their behalf. Time management has always been a secret to be able to facilitate learning at home with children. Being the source of motivation, parents are expected to adopt certain techniques at home or even reinforcement activities including reward system so as to sustain motivation level of the child. Accomplishing or missing learning tasks from the modules can be the bases for a reward or a punishment.

Engaging with the child at home is one the primary roles of parents especially at this time of pandemic. Allowing them to work alone lessens the chance of interactive learning even through home

schooling. Interactive learning activities As parents, self – enhancement is needed in order to provide appropriate assistance to children while learning at home. Enriching oneself as a parent implies an advantage relative to the learning abilities of children amidst pandemic.

Support Received from School

Parents shared that they have received support and assistance from school regarding the printed modular modality implemented. One is the provision of school supplies and health kits. Second, the teachers and school administrators also made themselves available through phone call, texts, and chat to answer the queries and concerns of parents. Third, the teacher also did a home visitation, especially to those students with issues and concerns.

Being the partner of parents during distant learning administrators in school must take active role in the implementation of the adopted modality. The provision of school supplies and health kits are commendable actions for this contributes to the learning enhancement of children. Being at the economic threat causing loss of jobs among breadwinners in the family, receiving supplies that can be used for home schooling is such a blessing. On the other hand, in observance of the health protocols mandated anywhere, even at home, the provision of health kits to children is one of the creditable initiatives that the school must take.

In the midst of distant learning, the establishment of communication among teachers, parents, learners and even stakeholders has to be treated as a primary task to focus. The availability of teachers and school administrators upon parents' collaboration and feedbacking pays a lot in the quest of strengthening the needed partnership. On the best practices in the midst of the prohibition of the face – to – face classes if the evidence of teachers conducting of Home Visitations through home monitoring mechanism especially to children with issues and concerns.

Parents' Suggestions

The respondents provided a number of suggestions to improve the implementation of printed modular modality. First, they suggested that the creators of the printed module should consider following the sequencing of lessons so that the flow of lessons is organized and will not confuse the learners. Second, the schools should dedicate more time in preparing the modules to avoid errors and mistakes in the contents of the modules.

With the noted number of errors from the teacher – made self – learning modules, it is suggested that thorough review has to be done as to proper sequencing of the lessons to avoid confusion on the part of the parents and students. Thus, if there are existing errors, teachers and school administrators have to find ways to eradicate the mistakes. Doing so would lessen the challenges met by both parents and students.

Modular instruction is an attempt to individualize learning by allowing a student to achieve mastery of one unit of content before moving on to another. Module, as a self-instructional material, can be used as a supplementary material to help the student improve his/her mastery and as means to help the student catch up with the missed lessons. However, to some cases where errors are spotted, evaluators should strongly agree on the necessary action actions to take so as for the printed modules to satisfy with the set criteria and evaluation process (Torrefranca,2017).

Thus, given enough time to prepare, some printed modules have to be revised in such a way that the contents are contextualized and are within the levels of the learners and not that of the teacher. Contextualizing and localizing lessons and learning materials can improve making the curriculum responds, conforms, reflects, and be flexible to the needs of the learners, especially the 21st century learners who need to be holistically and skillfully developed. Localized and contextualized the learning materials are more acceptable for pupils (De Lara, 2017)

Conclusion

The findings reveal a multifaceted perspective on the implementation of printed modular modality in addressing the learning needs of children with disabilities from both parents' and teachers' viewpoints. While this approach has shown some promising aspects, such as fostering independence in learning, enhancing family bonds, and encouraging collaboration between home and school, it has also faced significant challenges. These challenges include issues related to internet access, parental support, motivation, and the capacity to provide tailored instruction to meet individual learning needs. The contrasting preferences and opinions underscore the importance of considering individual circumstances, learning profiles, and the support mechanisms in place when adopting such an approach. In conclusion, while printed modular modality offers a viable alternative to face-to-face instruction, especially in the context of health and safety concerns, its effectiveness is highly dependent on a complex interplay of factors including resources, parental engagement, teacher support, and individual learner's needs. Therefore, a careful and flexible approach that takes into consideration the specific needs and contexts of learners and their families is crucial for optimizing the potential benefits of this modality.

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