A Photovoice and Psychological Study on the Realities of Teachers in Simultaneous Onsite-Online Teaching-Learning Modality

May B. Tubang-Delgado,
Ed.D., Richard E. Bandoja, CPA, MBA

Abstract

With schools all over the world redesigning instruction because of Covid-19, blended learning modality is becoming the new normal. This learning modality has been common with the unvaccinated students belonging to classes in the different levels; however, there are insufficient published studies about this modality in the context of this pandemic, specifically on simultaneous onsite-online teaching-learning process. Anchored on empowerment theory, and adaptation theory, specifically on behavioral adaptation, this research aimed to find out the realities of teachers conducting simultaneous onsite-online teaching to junior high school students at a laboratory high school of a University, school year 2021-2022 and 2022-2023. Specifically, this study looked into the teachers' challenges, opportunities, coping strategies, and best practices. This endeavor is deemed significant for strengthening the teaching-learning process, designing the learning continuity plan, and policy making at this time of pandemic. This study which made use of a qualitative research design, specifically photovoice, were participated by eight purposely selected permanent or temporary teachers in the junior high school level, who were conducting a simultaneous onsite-online teaching. Data were gathered using photographs, narratives, and in-depth interview; and said data were analyzed using the SHOWED Framework (Wallerstein and Bernstein, 1998). The result of this study included the following: (1) Challenges of the teachers in the simultaneous onsite-online teaching-learning modality dwell mainly on keeping up with the protocols, on the internet connectivity issues, the heavy workload, and the lack of sleep; (2) The modality itself offers teachers the opportunities because this paves way for more possibilities for class interaction, competency development, and strengthening positive relationship; (3) The teachers' coping strategies include maintaining an emotionally supportive relationships with family and colleagues, appreciating the support of the administrators, maximizing technology utilization, keeping a high sense of motivation, and satisfying one's physiological needs; and   (4) Some of the teachers' best practices include saving teachers' time and effort, promoting access to education, and narrowing the digital divide.

Keywords: photovoice, simultaneous onsite-online teaching-learning modality

Introduction of the Study

With schools all over the world redesigning the teaching-learning modality because of COVID-19, blended learning modality is becoming the new normal. This learning modality has been common with the unvaccinated students belonging to classes in the different levels.

Blended learning has been around for a while and is the combination of traditional face-to-face instruction with aspects of online instruction. This learning modality strives to provide students the best of both face-to-face and online learning experiences. Hybrid learning is also a teaching model that combines online learning with in-person instruction (Robinson, 2020).

Considering the literature about these two learning modalities, blended learning is an educational model where all students attend class in-person, but they also engage in asynchronous, online learning methods outside of class. Hybrid learning may involve splitting students into groups and creating a set schedule for in-person and distance learning (Robinson, 2020).

Studies on blended learning may abound, and studies on hybrid learning are already getting its way in research journals, but there are insufficient published studies about this modality in the context of Covid-19 pandemic, specifically on simultaneous onsite-online teaching-learning modality; hence, this study.

Statement of the Problem

This photovoice study aimed to find out the realities of teachers using the simultaneous onsite-online teaching-learning modality at a laboratory high school during this time of pandemic, specifically the third and the fourth grading periods of school year 2021-2022, and the first grading period of 2022-2023.

Specifically, this study aims to answer the following questions:

1. What are the challenges of the teachers using the simultaneous onsite-online teaching-learning modality in a laboratory high school?
2. What are the coping strategies of the teachers using the simultaneous onsite-online teaching-learning modality?
3. What are the opportunities of the teachers using the simultaneous onsite-online teaching-learning modality?
4. What are the best practices of the teachers using the simultaneous onsite-online teaching-learning modality?

Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored on the theory of educational empowerment. The theory of empowerment states that views about the self may be instrumental in contributing to individual, community and social change (Gutierrez, 1995 in Naidoo, 2015); and that an individual's success may be enhanced through empowering them.

It is also anchored on adaptation theory, specifically on behavioral adaptation.

Significance of the Study

This endeavor is deemed significant for strengthening the teaching-learning modality, designing the learning continuity plan, and policy making at this time of pandemic.

The result of the study may benefit the following:

Administrators. The result of this study may help the administrators in the formulation of policies in relation to the simultaneous onsite-online teaching-learning modality. This will also provide them some inputs for their planning sessions, and in decision-making.

Curriculum Planners. This study may help the curriculum planners design the curriculum for onsite-online teaching-learning modality.

Teachers. This study may help them improve their teaching efficiency and effectiveness. Its results may also serve as basis in addressing some of the teachers' concerns.

Students. The result of this study may provide inputs for the design of the instruction that would benefit the students more.

LGU Officials. The result of this study may provide inputs for policies of the Local Government Unit that concern education.

Regulatory Bodies in Education. The findings, in relation to the realities of the faculty members, may shed light on the formulation of some academic, and other related policies.

Review of Related Literature

Reviewed in this study are the topics on 1) The Context of Education in the Philippines at the Time of Pandemic, 2) Learning Modalities at the Time of Pandemic, 3) Challenges of the Teachers at the Time of Pandemic, 4) Opportunities of the Teachers at the Time of Pandemic, 5) Coping Strategies of the Teachers at the Time of Pandemic, and 6) Best Practices in the Teaching-Learning Process at the Time of Pandemic.

Methodology

Research Design

This study made use of a qualitative research, a research design intended to deeply explore, understand and interpret social phenomena within its natural setting (Creswell, 2002).

Specifically, this made use of photovoice which is defined as a method that attempts to publicize and politicize personal struggle via photography, narratives, critical dialogue and social action (Suppon-Brown, 2014).

Research Setting

This study was conducted at a laboratory high school of an external campus of a University during the school year 2021-22 and 2022-2023, specifically the third and the fourth grading periods of 2021-2022, that is the start of the implementation of the limited face-to-face classes at said University; and the first grading period of 2022-2023 that is the start of the implementation of full face-to-face classes.

Participants

The participants of the study were purposely selected using the following criteria: 1) He or she is a permanent, temporary, or part-time teacher in a laboratory high school at a university; and 2) He or she is using the simultaneous onsite-online teaching-learning modality.

Data-collection Methods and Analysis of Data

Sources of data include the photographs, narratives, and focus group discussions.

The photographs were taken by the participants themselves, or their buddies; these were chosen by each of said participants. Five best photographs that represent their realities were identified by the participants themselves.

The narratives are the responses of the faculty participants to the SHOWED framework questions (Wallerstein and Bernstein, 1998).

S stands for "What do you See in this photo?";

H stands for "What is Happening?";

O stands for "How does this photo relate to Our lives?";

W stands for "Why does this strength/or this problem exist?";

E stands for "How can we be Empowered?"; and

D stands for "What can we Do to solve the problem?"

Focus group discussions (FGD) were done to gather more information from the participants. One FGD was done face-to-face for the five participants, and one FGD was done online for the three other participants.

The recordings of the two focus group discussions were then transcribed.

The textual data were coded and categorized. Themes were then identified.

Member check was done after the visual and textual data were gathered, encoded, and analyzed.

Results

1. **The Challenges**
   a. One of the challenges of the teachers in the simultaneous onsite-online teaching-learning modality dwells mainly on keeping up with the protocols.

4G AS IN GRADE 9 *GURO* (TEACHER) GASPING WITH GRACE: Even with some difficulty in breathing because of the mask she is wearing, the Grade 9 teacher models the correct way of speaking that includes observing correct phrasing, stress, and intonation patterns.

b. Another challenge lies on the internet connectivity issues.
    "I have also experienced problem with the internet connection and there are instances that I did not know that I was disconnected because I kept on talking and discussing. When the internet connection was back, that was only the time that I would know that I was disconnected because there were already messages that my students would tell me 'Ma'am, you were out; Ma'am, 'nadura kaw' (You were lost); Ma'am, we can't hear you (FGD-P8)."
c. Another challenge is on the heavy workload.
    "The preparation that I did doubled or even tripled (FGD-P7)."
d. Another challenge is on the lack of sleep.
    "Sometimes, I tend to work almost 24/7(FGD-P1)…"

2. **The Coping Strategies**
    Even though the teachers have met a lot of challenges in the implementation of the simultaneous onsite-online teaching-learning modality, they were able to cope with such challenges.
a. One of the coping strategies done by the teachers is by maintaining an emotionally supportive relationships with family and colleagues.
b. Another coping strategy is by appreciating the support of the administrators.
c.
d. Another strategy is by maximizing technology utilization (BP-P2).

SMART TEACHER'S SMART GADGET: The smartphone serves as the teacher's monitor for her to see, from time to time, who is attending the class online.

e. Another strategy is keeping a high sense of motivation (BP-P3).
f. Another strategy is satisfying one's physiological needs.
    "Eating good food, drinking coffee, taking some vitamins, having a nap, and doing some exercise…"

3. The Opportunities

a. Even at trying times, the use of the simultaneous teaching-learning modality paves way for more possibilities for class interaction (BP-P6).

b.

***MALAYO MAN, MALAPIT DIN* (FAR, YET NEAR): A LONG DISTANCE RELATIONSHIP:** Physical distancing or remote learning sets the students apart, but online connection or a common study goal makes them closer with one another at heart.

c. One opportunity is also on competency development.

> *"The onsite-online teaching-learning modality paves the way for me to learn a lot especially in technology… I now know how to open the Google Meet, share links to my students, and use the Zoom platform. At first, I find it difficult; and then I have learned a lot because of the different platforms being oriented to us (FGD-P4)."*

d. One opportunity identified by the participants is in strengthening positive relationship.

> *"We could build strong relationship with the parents because they could sense that even though it's pandemic and some of the students are unvaccinated and cannot go to school, we are still here to reach out to them and to give them the opportunity to learn even though they are at home, with the help of their parents (FGD-P5)."*

4. The Best Practices
   a. One best practice identified is on saving teachers' time and effort.
   b. Another best practice observed in on promoting access to education.
   c. Another best practice is narrowing the digital divide (BP-P7).

NO ONE IS LEFT BEHIND: In order not to miss the lesson for the day, one of the students was allowed by his teacher to use the LHS e-hub, in order to keep up with his classmates.

The Conclusions

The simultaneous onsite-online teaching modality brought some challenges to the teachers in the Laboratory High School; however, they were able to cope with said challenges. This modality has also brought a lot of opportunities for said teachers, and has also highlighted some best practices.

Recommendations or Call for Social Action

1. The school administration may subscribe to more bandwidth to meet the needs of an increasing number of internet users in the Campus.

   The school administration may provide more e-hubs; while the Local Government Units, whether in the municipal and barangay level, may provide e-hubs in their respective areas.

   The government agencies, such as the Department of Information and Communications Technology (DICT) in the Philippines, may collaborate with other organizations or institutions to implement programs or provide facilities that could help students with poor connectivity in their respective homes.

2. The full teaching load of the faculty members may be lessened so that they would have more time to do the tasks demanded by teaching both face-to-face and online, and that they have some opportunities for some good rest and sleep.

   Should the school have enough budget, teacher aides may be hired to assist the teachers, not only on the technical aspect, but on the preparation of instructional materials, and gathering or downloading students' outputs.

3. Programs or activities that can help teachers cope with the challenges of the simultaneous onsite-online learning modality may be established or facilitated by the University or the organizations in the Campus.

4. Other possible opportunities may be provided for teachers to be more motivated in using the simultaneous onsite-online teaching-learning modality.
5. Best practices that were already observed need to be continued.
6. Further study using other research designs, and involving another group of participants may be conducted.

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