**CHAPTER I**

**The Problem and Its Setting**

“The task of the modern educator is not to cut down jungles, but to irrigate deserts.”

-C.S. Lewis

The Philippines is recognized globally as one of the largest English-speaking nations with majority of its population having at least some degree of fluency in the language. English has always been one of the official languages of the Philippines and is spoken by more than 14 million Filipinos. It is the language of commerce and law, as well as the primary medium of instruction in education. Proficiency in the language is also one of the country’s strengths that has helped drive the economy and even made the Philippines the top voice outsourcing destination in the world, surpassing India in 2012 (Cabigon, 2015).

To be a competent teacher in the field of English language teaching, a teacher needs a growing body of knowledge to help students achieve lifelong learning. Consequently, effective teachers require re-examining their basic principles, methodologies and trainings, such as, through a teaching reflection. Teaching reflection is considered a complex process of thinking in which teaching principles, knowledge and learning have a reflective relationship. Reflecting on personal teaching performance might establish professional credibility and measure a teacher trainee’s value as an English teacher. As teacher-trainees are considered part of the teaching processes, they are not only learning as students but also teachers-in-making who are trying to learn and understand their strengths and weaknesses in a real classroom situation. This practice is not only fundamental to teacher’s professional development but also enhances students’ learning progress (Deocampo, 2020).

It has been argued that learning how to learn (self-directed learning) would be of utmost importance for language learners for at least three reasons. First, because of the complexity of the task which learning presents, there is never enough time within a formal scheme of instruction to ensure mastery on the part of students, and if the learner has not been prepared within the classroom to take responsibility to learn autonomously outside, it is unlikely that any learning will take place. The second reason is the belief that engaging students in the process of learning and assessment would encourage their learning efficiency. Studies of the characteristics of good language learners suggest that efficient learners consciously monitor their performances, analyze them, and develop a repertoire of efficient learning strategies. Thirdly, in a self-directed scheme, through reducing the distance between the learner and the teacher, feelings of anxiety, frustration, and alienation decrease, and consequently the learner becomes more receptive to the learning process (Akbari, 2015).

There is a drastic shift of instructional delivery in teaching English during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic. The agency advocated that learning must continue and the schools must adjust to the situation of the learners in the context of their community. The teachers have to adjust based on the results of the enrolment survey conducted on the onset of enrolment. Teachers identified effective practices, such as synchronous learning opportunities to foster positive connections among students, as well as teacher-created instructional videos to deliver content. They also described some barriers to instruction, such as an inability to engage some students over Zoom, disparities in students’ access to technology, and difficulties communicating with parents over email (Center, 2021).

The disruption of the semester and experiences with the pandemic are impacting students and faculty alike. Many members of our teaching and learning communities are facing significant stress and anxiety. As we transition to distance teaching and learning, you can continue the learning and sense of community that you have already built in your classes. Students have a number of strengths that will help them succeed in different learning environment. They are highly motivated and already have many of the essential skills and attitudes for self-regulated learning (Brown, 2021).

In an article written by Malaya (2020) it stated that in the Philippines, President Rodrigo Roa Duterte mandated the Department of Education (DepEd) to delay, if not, cancel face-to-face teaching for as long as the vaccine for the coronavirus disease is not yet made available to the general public. However, opting not to delay education, DepEd introduced alternative learning delivery modalities that utilize modern technology. DepEd coined the term distance learning, “where learning takes place between the teacher and the learner who are geographically remote from each other during instruction. It has been recognized by the national government under [Article XIV, Section 2 of the 1987 Philippines Constitution](https://www.officialgazette.gov.ph/constitutions/the-1987-constitution-of-the-republic-of-the-philippines/the-1987-constitution-of-the-republic-of-the-philippines-article-xiv/),

*“the state shall (2) establish and maintain a system of free public education in the elementary and high school levels. Without limiting the natural right of parents to their children…” and that “the state shall (4) encourage non-formal, informal, and indigenous learning systems, as well as self-learning, independent, and out-of-school study programs…”*

While the teachers would always do their best to teach students under any circumstance, they didn't have any control on how students would respond. Either of those modalities, whether online or modular, it was difficult to learn. It's difficult for the students. It's also difficult for the teachers because we're not trained for this system. Aside from the financial burden brought by remote education, the children's mental health had been affected. Without teachers explaining the lessons to students, parents had to change her morning routine so she could guide and motivate her children to answer their learning modules (Magsambol, 2021).

Bagood (2020) also added that identified teaching personnel together with the Education Program Supervisors prepared modules starting in May 2020 in all subjects for all grade/year level across four quarters in accordance to the “Most Essential Learning Competencies”. These self-learning modules are already considered learning packages containing pre-test, discussion, and a series of evaluation/assessment. They are distributed to all learners with the modular learning class schedule. Indeed, this kind of instructional modality has been followed by public school teachers all over the Philippines. Teachers play a vital role in the continuous delivery of quality education amid the pandemic. Despite the threats of the COVID-19 pandemic, teachers continue to serve by formulating modules as the learning guide of students. The teacher thus becomes a facilitator in the development of the student, both as a member of their community and a member of their society.

However, Malipot (2020) stressed that teachers also air their problems on modular distance learning. Bagood (2020) highlighted that as front liners in the educational system, they have undergone various training and seminars to be more equipped in delivering better education amid the COVID-19 pandemic as it is a norm of the department to train teachers not just for professional growth but to become ready for unexpected circumstances.

*Purpose of the Study*

The goal of the study is to explore the realities on the experiences of teachers in teaching English utilizing the modular distance learning modality. This study will be beneficial for administrators, as data gathered will serves as research-based information that will be of use in motivating and giving technical assistance to teachers in innovating the methodologies applicable in the context of the school in utilizing the distance learning modality including its challenges and opportunities. This study will also be beneficial for teachers for them to improve the teaching learning process in distance learning set up thereby improving academic proficiency. Further, the results generated provided comprehensive data in conducting future researches with similar or relevant scope.

*Research Questions*

The primary research questions of this study are the following:

1. What are the experiences of English teachers in implementing the modular distance learning modality?
2. What are the challenges encountered by the English teachers in the delivery of instruction with the use of modular distance learning modality?
3. What insights are gained by the teachers in their journey as a distance English teacher?

*Review of Significant Literature*

This section reviewed the significant literature pertaining to the area of educating children in a new normal education setting. The literature presents the assumptions, observations, claims, propositions and findings made by authorities here and abroad which provided the research with rich background related to the variables of the study.

**Distance Learning Modalities in the Philippines**

According to the manual of UNICEF in distance learning modalities, the COVID-19 pandemic has exposed large inequalities in access to technology, such as between rich and poor, rural and urban, girls and boys, across and within countries. Online platforms have often been the first to be rolled out to enable children to continue learning from home; indeed, they are generally the most effective learning modality in getting some form of learning up and running. However, they have the lowest reach. In some countries, online platforms reach less than 10 per cent of the population. This is because they require electricity, reliable Internet connectivity, as well as sufficient devices for children in the household: particularly, devices with good functionality and capabilities, and large enough screen sizes. Moreover, another element of the digital divide concerns the digital literacy gap, a barrier that can be even harder to address. There is also a significant gender digital divide, with girls far less likely to own or have access to digital devices, and fewer opportunities to gain digital literacy skills.

Llego (2021) outlined the different distance learning modalities implemented in the Philippines. Distance learning refers to a learning delivery modality where learning takes place between the teacher and the learners who are geographically remote from each other during instruction. This modality has three types: Modular Distance Learning (MDL), Online Distance Learning (ODL), and TV/Radio-Based Instruction.

*Modular Distance Learning*

Involves individualized instruction that allows learners to use self-learning modules (SLMs) in print or digital format/electronic copy, whichever is applicable in the context of the learner, and other learning resources like Learner’s Materials, textbooks, activity sheets, study guides and other study materials. Learners access electronic copies of learning materials on a computer, tablet PC, or smartphone. CDs, DVDs, USB storage and computer-based applications can all be used to deliver e-learning materials, including offline E-books. The teacher takes the responsibility of monitoring the progress of the learners. The learners may ask assistance from the teacher via e-mail, telephone, text message/instant messaging, etc. Where possible, the teacher shall do home visits to learners needing remediation or assistance. Any member of the family or other stakeholder in the community needs to serve as para-teachers.

Learning is in the form of individualized instruction that allows learners to use self-learning modules (SLMs) in print or digital format/electronic copy, whichever is applicable in the context of the learner and other learning resources like Learner’s Materials, textbooks, activity sheets, study guides and other study materials. Learners access electronic copies of learning materials on a computer, tablet PC or smartphone. CDs, DVDs, USB storage and computer-based applications can all be used to deliver e-learning materials, including offline e-books. The teacher takes the responsibility of monitoring the progress of the learners. The learners may ask assistance from the teacher via email, telephone, text message/instant messaging, etc. Where possible, the teacher shall do home visits to learners needing remediation or assistance. Any member of the family or other stakeholder in the community need to serve as para-teachers.

### *Online Distance Learning*

Features the teacher as facilitator, engaging learners’ active participation through the use of various technologies accessed through the internet while they are geographically remote from each other during instruction. The internet is used to facilitate learner-teacher and peer-to-peer communication. Online learning allows live synchronous instruction. It requires participants to have good and stable internet connection. It is more interactive than the other types of distance learning. The responses are real time. The learners may download materials from the internet, complete and submit assignments online, attend webinars and virtual classes. This is practiced effectively by using a Learning Management System or related technologies. The DepEd Commons and LR Portal fall in this category.

TV/Radio-Based Instruction utilizes SLMs converted to video lessons for Television-Based Instruction and SLMs converted to radio script for Radio-based Instruction.

It features the teacher facilitating learning and engaging learners’ active participation using various technologies accessed through the internet while they are geographically remote from each other during instruction. The internet is used to facilitate learner-teacher and peer-to-peer communication. Online learning is a form of live synchronous platform where it requires both parties to have good and stable internet connection. It is often more interactive than the other types of distance learning. The responses are real-time. The learners may download materials from the internet, complete and submit assignments online, attend webinars and virtual classes. This is practiced effectively by using a Learning Management System or related technologies. The use of DepEd Commons and LR Portal falls in this category as both requires internet connectivity to have access.

*Homeschooling*

This is an Alternative Delivery Mode (ADM) that aims to provide learners with access to quality basic education through a home-based environment to be facilitated by qualified parents, guardians or tutors who have undergone relevant training. It allows families to educate according to their personal faith, philosophy, and values, and to adjust learning schedules around family schedules and circumstances. However, there remain several issues in its implementation, including the supervision of licensed teachers and alignments with the curriculum. Thus, this modality will be the subject of a later DepEd issuance before its expansion (Llego, 2021).

## **The Philippines in Terms of Technological Innovation**

## Information and communication technologies (ICT) play an increasingly important role in virtually all aspects of our daily lives. Not only is technology profoundly transforming people’s work and professional life, but it is also altering how people interact, communicate, retrieve and share information, and even how governments provide public services to citizens. ICT also significantly affects multiple facets of education. They can provide new opportunities for students to learn outside of school, and can change teachers’ pedagogical approaches and the learning experience of students in school. Moreover, education systems are increasingly embedding digital competencies in their curricula (Muro et al., 2019).

According to Sagcal (2018), there is an existing “technology gap” in the Philippines. Varied technological development worldwide, which tech-mavens consider a “digital divide” contributes in an inordinately competitive market and industry towards globalization. The Philippines is a developing country, but our technology has kept up with most of the world. The technology gap is not the country’s acquisition of technology or lack thereof on a global comparison, but the present local gap between schools, universities, and institutions. It is the lack of distribution of resources to the poverty line. Public education and technology are hard to provide, especially where the majority of the people are living beyond the daily means. One requirement for the education technology department to flourish is the growth of household income so that families can buy computers in their household. This sparks curiosity in children about the capabilities of technology.

Moreover, Garcia (2016) stated that in 2011, the Philippine government put up a national strategy for improving Internet access, identifying education as a key area that would benefit from ICT development. The government aimed to boost internet access coverage by 100% on secondary schools and 80% on elementary schools by 2016. Unfortunately, the strategy adopted and available infrastructure was insufficient. Next comes the heavier challenge of deploying these resources to school children. Online learning databases do not waste precious natural resources. A single laptop and projector set-up, for example, can be used for a learning session for an entire classroom. In lieu of books and papers, students can access modules, submit assignments, and consult with their teachers and classmates online. Teachers can also benefit from learning tools that do not require traditional logistics and multiple materials. For example, the DepEd has launched the [Learning Resources Management and Development System](http://lrmds.deped.gov.ph/) (LRMDS), a portal for online teaching and learning materials created by teachers and education partners.

The Commission on Higher Education suggested strengthening online platforms and blended learning such as but not limited to google classroom, messenger, zoom, edmodo, Facebook and YouTube (CHED, 2020). In addition, both will adopt numerous learning delivery options such as but not limited to face-to-face, blended learnings, distance learnings, and home-schooling and other modes of delivery (CHED, 2020; DepEd, 2020). However, the implementation posed problems for students who have limited internet access, no gadgets and the poor. According to the report of Akamai (2017), the Philippines has the lowest internet connectivity in Asia. The Commission on Higher Education (CHEd) admitted during a virtual House hearing that poor internet connection, especially in the provinces, has made the conduct of fully online classes “not viable.” As an alternative to online classes, it was proposed that colleges and universities apply “flexible learning,” a combination of online and offline learning activities, with take-home activities that students can work on during their free time

K-12 teachers endured the cumbersome and exhausting printing of materials, and online consultations through social media and SMS. This requires a laptop and an internet connection, which is out of reach for many public school teachers, whose starting monthly salary is PHP 22,000 (USD 420). Many students, too, still need the internet to do supplemental research on more complex assignments. That’s a problem, given a DepEd survey showing that, of the 6.5 million students who have access to the internet, approximately 20 percent use computer shops or other public places to go online. Worse, 2.8 million students have no way of going online at all. This is especially common in the [rural areas](https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.RUR.TOTL.ZS?locations=PH) where 53 percent of the population live and where both internet access and speed can be a challenge (Santos, 2020).

**The New Normal in Education**

The pandemic ushers in a “new” normal, in which digitization enforces ways of working and learning. It forces education further into technologization, a development already well underway, fueled by commercialism and the reigning market ideology. Many institutions had plans to make greater use of technology in teaching, but the outbreak of Covid-19 has meant that changes intended to occur over months or years had to be implemented in a few days”. Is this “new normal” really new or is it a reiteration of the old? Knowledge is and will be produced in order to be sold, it is and will be consumed in order to be valued in a new production: in both cases, the goal is exchange. Knowledge ceases to be an end in itself, it loses its use-value (Pacheco, 2020).

Transnational organizations have specified competences for the 21st century and, in the process, have defined disciplinary and interdisciplinary knowledge that encourages global citizenship, through “the supra curriculum at the global, regional, or international comparative level” (Marope [2017](https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s11125-020-09521-x#ref-CR26), p. 10). According to UNESCO ([2017](https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s11125-020-09521-x#ref-CR46)). While the world may be increasingly interconnected, human rights violations, inequality and poverty still threaten peace and sustainability. Global Citizenship Education (GCED) is UNESCO’s response to these challenges. It works by empowering learners of all ages to understand that these are global, not local issues and to become active promoters of more peaceful, tolerant, inclusive, secure and sustainable societies.

However, according to Geronimo (2020), the crisis and the response to it has exposed weaknesses in educational systems, while creating opportunities to reshape school education to a new paradigm that is more resilient and robust. This pandemic is not the first, nor will it be the last, to impact countries and schools. Such crises are becoming increasingly likely with climate change, technological disruptions and globalized connectivity. The solution lies in neither a top-down approach from policymakers, reactive changes to teacher preparation and in-service training, nor temporary makeshift arrangements by under-resourced principals and teachers. All parties need to be involved in developing strategies that can be implemented in the near-term as well as long-term. A dialogue across all levels of education is therefore critical in making informed policy to prepare for the new normal in school education.

There exists now a small window of opportunity to learn from each country and experts and in developing a dialogue of expectations and requirements as we move ahead to the next phase of meeting post-COVID-19 challenges, knowing that the world will never be the same again. It is also an opportunity to address the rigidities in the education system of many countries that were exposed by the pandemic (Geronimo, 2020).

**The Teacher’s Role in Education in the New Normal**

Like in any other sector, the pandemic has had a significant impact on the education sector and provided a much-needed impetus for digitization. It has transformed the education system drastically and has brought a paradigm shift in teaching and learning methodologies forcing educational institutions across the globe to re-imagine traditional classroom learning and transition to an online mode of teaching to provide uninterrupted access to education and knowledge. Most importantly, myths surrounding the feasibility and efficiency of online learning have been addressed, and the growing demand for online platforms is a testimony to this. Without any doubt, education has been the silver lining in this pandemic (Saxena, 2020).

In the country, Lagua (2020) stated that the new role of teachers in education is a challenge that must be accepted upfront. Today’s teachers will have to embrace and master the technology that would establish connection and interaction at a different level toward a rich learning environment. Mastering meeting applications, like Zoom and Google Meet, is not simple. Add to that learning management systems, like Canvass and Moodle, that one needs to be familiar with, depending on what the institution has subscribed to. New adopters will have to face their learning curves.

In a qualitative research conducted by Villa (2020) results identified three core themes related to preparation such as gathering resources and establishing practices, profiling learners, and capacity building for continuous learning and development; three core themes related to challenges such as complexity of assessment, difficulty in instructional delivery and digital divide; and five core themes related to coping mechanisms which include positive well-being, time management, openness to change, peer mentoring, and collaboration. Findings revealed that as education migrates to a New Normal, teachers make 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.

In the recently published *Framework for Reopening Schools* from UNESCO, UNICEF, the World Bank, the World Food Programme and UNHCR, these reputable international organizations are all one in saying that “the best interest of every child should be paramount.” When deciding whether to re-open schools, authorities should look at the benefits and risks across education, public health and socio-economic factors, in the local context, using the best available evidence,” they pointed out. Perhaps this is the reason why the Department of Education decided to postpone the class opening for school year 2020-2021 from August 24 to October 5. Indeed, with the world’s greatest disruption upon us, more than 1.2 billion students worldwide have been affected by school closures (Garcia, 2020).

## **Facing the education gap**

While pandemic has laid bare in most education systems all over the world, Philippine HEIs goes on through utilizing virtual classrooms or primary online educational platforms such as Zoom, Google Classroom, Messenger, Edmodo, Facebook, and YouTube to name a few — to host the blended and distance learning (Tria, 2020).

Meanwhile in Turkey, the Ministry of National Education has an online platform known as the Educational Informatics Network (EIN) to implement effective online learning. It has provided all online educational materials such as documents, electronic books (E-Books), videos, tests, and activities that are accessible exclusively for preschool and high school students and teachers. Aside from EIN, Turkish Radio and Television Corporation (TRT), a national television channel is also used to reach students living in far-flung areas. Although many schools have been closed since the pandemic started, pursuing inclusive education can be valuable or another setback as to how a person handles it.

In our country, especially in remote areas, the problem with internet speed exacerbates when traditional classes transition online. For the record, it ranked eleventh slowest in upload speed and sixteenth slowest in download speed among 87 countries (as cited by Ragandang, 2020); while named 21st or 72.4 percent — leveled from those of Albania, Brazil, and Tunisia, among others — in terms of 4G availability (Mercurio, 2020).

For instance, this connectivity issue has pushed teachers in Bato, Catanduanes to consider using Radio EduKo (Radyo Edukasyon Ko), or a two-way radio communication that can be able to reach their Grade 6 students in Cagraray Elementary School (CES) wherever they are — all to keep up with their education (DepEd, 2020). They believe that their students will no longer take on the burden of signal and connection in which cellular phones and online learning is impossible in their area. But it does not, in any way, guarantee quality and inclusive learning.

This approach will take a toll on our teachers who, on the other hand, are struggling with the pressure of adjusting to the new normal, securing and navigating technological resources, and writing and delivering instructional materials on time.

However, with their unfaltering passion for teaching, some have crossed rivers to distribute modules and risk their lives — all to ensure that no one gets left behind. The learning environment, studying styles, faculty training, and appropriate tools to use are among the concerns the government should take into consideration too (Navarosa, 2020).

Within the past few months, this new world has transformed living rooms, bedrooms and all available corners of a home into the new classroom. We’re seeing the combination of this new format and school closures has exposed the fragility of our education system and widened the inequality gap. Students are conscious about their environment; their insecurities have been amplified. The physical space of school created an equal equation. Many students struggle to join virtual classes as they lack access to reliable internet service. According to [reports from the Federal Communications Commission](https://www.fcc.gov/internet-access-services-reports), some 20 million Americans do not have access to the internet, and a large portion of those students without access are students of color (Jaisinghani, 2020).

*Theoretical Lens*

The following are the theories that support to the generalization of this study amongst which are:

### *Equivalency Theory.* Education at a distance should be built on the concept of equivalency of learning experiences. The more equivalent the learning experiences of distant learners are to those of local learners, the more equivalent will be the outcomes of the educational experiences for all learners. This approach to distance education advocates designing a collection of equivalent learning experiences for distant and local learners, even though they may be different for each student. The objective of the instructional designer of distance education is to provide for appropriate, equivalent learning experiences for each student (Simonson, 1999).

In elaborating on this theory, Simonson (1995) states that it should not be necessary for any group of learners to compensate for different, possibly lesser, instructional learning experiences. Students should have learning experiences that are tailored to the environment and situation in which they find themselves. Thus, those developing distance education systems should strive for equivalency in the learning experiences of all students, regardless of how they are linked to the resources or the instruction they require. There are several key elements to Equivalency Theory; they are the concepts of equivalency, learning experiences, appropriate application, students, and outcomes.

*Equivalency.* Central to this theoretical approach is the concept of equivalency. Local and distant learners have fundamentally different environments in which to learn. It is the responsibility of the distance educator to design learning events that provide experiences with equal value for learners. Just as a triangle and a square may have the same area and be considered equivalent even though they are different geometrical shapes, the experiences of the local learner and the distant learner should have equivalent value even though these experiences might be very different.

*Learning Experience.* Second in importance is the concept of learning experience. A learning experience is anything that happens to the student to promote learning, including what is observed, felt, heard, or done. It is likely that different students in various locations, learning at different times, may require a different mix of learning experiences. Some may need a greater amount of observing while others require a larger dosage of doing. The goal of instructional planning is to make the sum of experiences for each learner equivalent. Instructional design procedures should attempt to anticipate and provide the collection of experiences that will be most suitable for each student or group of students. For example, if library resources are important to a course or unit, then library resources should be available. This does not mean that distant learners in a university research course will need access to a modern research library. It does mean that the educational equivalent of the resources of the library should be as readily available to the distant learner as they are to the local learner, whether electronically, through collaborative agreements with local libraries, or through the delivery of library resources to the distant student.

*Appropriate Application.* The idea of appropriate application implies that learning experiences suitable to the needs of the individual learner and the learning situation should be available and that the availability of learning experiences should be proper and timely. In other words, learning experiences that are made available to either distant or local learners should allow delivery of instructional ideas that fit the expectations and facilities available to them; desktop video conferencing should not be expected of learners accessing Web-based information by modem. Similarly, collaborative learning strategies are not appropriate when an individual learner is isolated unless an equivalent, technology-based collaboration is arranged.

*Students.* Students are the ones involved in the formal, institutionally based learning activity---the course or unit of instruction. Students should be defined by their enrollment in a course, not by their location. They necessarily seek institutionally-based education, sanctioned by a recognized and accredited organization.

*Outcomes.* Finally, the outcomes of a learning experience are those obvious, measurable, and significant changes that occur cognitively and effectively in learners because of their participation in the course or unit. Outcomes consist of at least two categories: those that are instructor determined and those determined by learners. Instructor-determined outcomes are usually stated as course goals and objectives and identify what learners should be able to accomplish after the learning experience that they could not accomplish prior to participating in it. Learner-determined outcomes are less specific, more personal, and relate to what the learner hopes to accomplish as a result of participation. Equivalent learner-determined outcomes are identified when students enroll in follow-up courses or apply newly learned skills to job or course situations.

Theory and Practice of Distance Education *Holmberg (1995).* According to this theory, the approach to guided didactic conversation as a pervasive characteristic of distance education is based on the seven postulates: (1) That feelings of personal relation between the teaching and learning parties promote study pleasure and motivation; (2) that such feelings can be fostered by well-developed self-instructional material and two-way communication; (3) the intellectual pleasure and study motivation are favorable to the attainment of such goals and the use of proper study process and methods; (4) that the atmosphere, language and convention of friendly conversation favor feelings of personal relation according to postulate; (5) that messages given and received in conversational forms are comparatively easily understood and remembered; (6) that the conversation concept can be successfully translated for use by the media available, to distance education (7) that planning and guiding the work, whether provided by the teaching organization or the student, are necessary for organized study, which is characterized by explicit or implicit goal conceptions.

As such, Holmberg puts the learner and his or her communication with the instructor at the center of the process of teaching and learning in distance education. This personal communication is an essential cornerstone of the theory of distance education, a concept that often is neglected when information technologies are used to bypass or circumvent instructor-learner communication through guided didactic conversation (Saba, 2014).

*Figure 1: Conceptual Framework of the study*

The conceptual framework of the study is presented in figure 1. Based on the figure, there are two interconnected variables. These variables are the experiences of English teachers in implementing the modular distance learning modality; (2) Challenges encountered by the English teachers in the delivery of instruction with the use of modular distance learning modality; (3) Insights are gained by the teachers in their journey as a distance English teacher.

*Framework of Analysis*

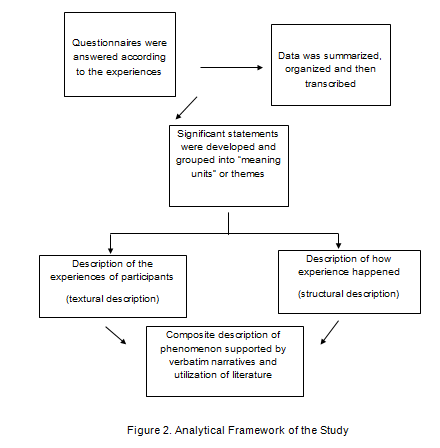
The framework analysis of this research was flexible to allow the researcher to either collect all the data and then analyze it or do data analysis during the collection process. In the analysis stage the gathered data was sifted, charted and sorted in accordance with key issues and themes. This involves a five step process: (1) familiarization; (2) identifying a thematic framework; (3) indexing; (4) charting; and (5) mapping and interpretation (Ritchie & Spencer, 1994).

Familiarization refers to the process during which the researcher becomes familiarized with the transcripts of the data collected (i.e. interview or focus group transcripts, observation or field notes) and gains an overview of the collected data (Ritchie & Spencer, 1994). In other words, the researcher becomes immersed in the data by listening to audiotapes, studying the field or reading the transcripts. Throughout this process the researcher will become aware of key ideas and recurrent themes and make a note of them. Due to the sheer volume of data that can be collected in qualitative research the researcher may not be able to review all of the material. Thus, a selection of the data set would be utilized. The selection would depend on several aspects of the data collection process. For example, the mix of methods used (e.g. interviews, documents, observations),

Identifying a thematic framework, the second stage, occurs after familiarization when the researcher recognizes emerging themes or issues in the data set. These emerging themes or issues may have arisen from a priori themes are issues however it is at this stage that the researcher must allow the data to dictate the themes and issues. To achieve this end the researcher uses the notes taken during the familiarization stage. The key issues, concepts and themes that have been expressed by the participants now form the basis of a thematic framework that can be used to filter and classify the data (Ritchie & Spencer, 1994).

Indexing means that one identifies portions or sections of the data that correspond to a particular theme. This process is applied to all the textual data that has been gathered (i.e. transcripts of interviews). For the sake of convenience Ritchie and Spencer recommend that a numerical system be used for the indexing references and annotated in the margin beside the text (1994). Qualitative data analysis tools are ideal for such a task.

The final stage, mapping and interpretation, involves the analysis of the key characteristics as laid out in the charts. This analysis should be able to provide a schematic diagram of the event/phenomenon thus guiding the researcher in their interpretation of the data set. It is at this point that the researcher is cognizant of the objectives of qualitative analysis, which are: “defining concepts, mapping range and nature of phenomena, creating typologies, finding associations, providing explanations, and developing strategies” (Ritchie and Spencer, 1994:186). Once again these concepts, technologies, and associations are reflective of the participant. Therefore, any strategy or recommendations made by the researcher echo the true attitudes, beliefs, and values of the participants.



**CHAPTER 2**

**Method**

This chapter of the study presents the method, research participants, data collection, role of the researcher, data analysis, trustworthiness of the study and the ethical consideration. Exploring facts and knowledge in this study necessitates the consequent design and implementation as elaborated in this chapter.

*Philosophical Assumptions*

The philosophical assumption is a framework used to collect, analyze and interpret the data collected in a specific field of study. It established the background used for the following conclusions and decisions. Typical philosophical assumptions have different types were elaborated below.

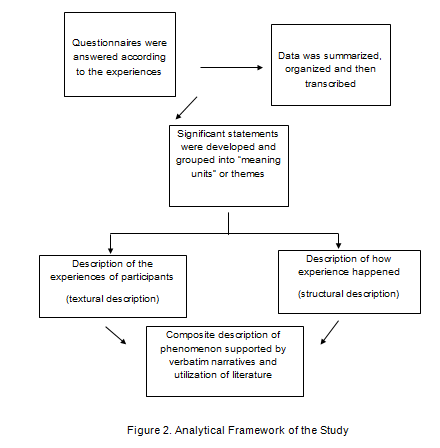
*Ontology*. This part of the research pertains on how the issue relates to the nature of reality. According to Creswell (2012), reality is subjective and multiple as seen by participants in the study. The ontological issue addresses the nature of reality for the qualitative researcher. The reality was constructed by individuals involved in the research situation. Thus, multiple realities exist, such as the realities of the researcher, those of individuals being investigated, and those of the reader or audiences interpreting the study.

In this study, the researcher relied on voices and interpretations of the participants through extensive quotes, themes that reflected their words and provided evidence of different perspectives. The answers of the participants to the study were coded and analyzed to build and construct for the commonality and discreteness of responses. It is made sure that the responses of the participants were carefully coded to ensure the reliability of the result. The researcher upheld the authenticity of the responses and precluded from making personal bias as the study progresses.

*Epistemology*. This refers to the awareness of how knowledge claims are justified by staying as close to the participants as possible during the study to obtain firsthand information. Guba and Lincoln as cited by Creswell (2012) state that on the epistemological assumption, the researcher attempted to lessen the distance between himself or herself from the participants. He suggests that being a researcher he or she collaborates, spends time in the field with participants, and becomes an ‘insider’.

It is assured that there is an establishment of close interaction with the participants to gain direct information that would shed light on the knowledge behind the inquiry.

*Axiology*. It refers to the role of values in research. Creswell (2012) avers that the role of values in a study was significant. Axiology suggests that the researcher openly discusses values that shape the narrative and includes their interpretation in conjunction with the interpretation of participants.

Upholding the dignity and value of every detail of information obtain from the participants was ensured by the researcher. The researcher understands the personal and value-laden nature of information gathered from the study. Therefore, the researcher preserved the merit of the participants' answers and carefully interpret the answers in the light of the participants' interpretation.

*Rhetoric*. It means that reporting what reality was through the eyes of the research participants. This was important because it means that the research would report objectively on what was observed and heard from the participants. The research used personal voice and qualitative terms such as credibility, transferability, dependability, and conformability instead of internal and external validity and objectivity.

Patton (2000) defined phenomenology as an inquiry which asks the questions," What is the structure and essence of the experience of his phenomenon for these people?'. The goal of this research study worked well with this definition in trying to understand the experiences of teachers on their attitudes in teaching elementary learners such as positive, and strong-willed. Guba (2007) pointed out that the researcher needs to prepare for an investigation that greater in both depth and breadth than the offered description implied. He suggested information be viewed as only" the tip of the iceberg."

The researcher implemented the qualitative research method of phenomenology to allow for exploration of the teachers' experiences and perception on the challenges of inclusive education.

*Research Design*

This study will employ a qualitative approach to research specifically a phenomenological research design. According to Creswell, (2012), phenomenology is an approach to qualitative research that focused on the commonality of lived experiences within a particular group. The fundamental goal of the approach is to arrive at a description of the nature of the particular phenomenon. Typically, interviews were conducted with a group of individuals who have first-hand knowledge of an event, situation or experience. Other forms of data such as documents, observations and art were also used. The data were read and reread and was culled for phrases and themes that was grouped into clusters of meanings. Through this process, the researcher was able to construct the universal meaning of the event, situation or experience and arrived at a more profound understanding of the phenomenon.

Moreover, Maxwell (2013) also added that with the roots in philosophy, psychology and education, phenomenology attempt to extract the purest, untainted data and in some interpretations of the approach, bracketing were used by the researcher to document personal experiences with the subject to help remove him or herself from the process. One method of bracketing is taking of notes.

According to Corbetta (2003), the phenomenological research design is a qualitative type of research for which interviews provide in-depth method that can grant access to deep knowledge and explanations and help grasp the subjects’ perspective.

Creswell, (2012) also claimed that interviews are primarily done in qualitative research and occur when researchers ask one or more participants general, open-ended questions and record their answers. Often audio tapes were utilized to allow more consistent transcription. Interviews also useful to follow-up with individual respondents after questionnaires, such as to further investigate their responses.

In qualitative research, interviews were used to pursue the meanings of central themes in the world of their subjects. The main task in doing interviews is to understand the meaning of what the interviewees say (McNamara, 1999).

Withal, based on the statements of Quad (2016), the researcher transcribed and typed the data into a computer file, in order to analyze it after interviewing. Interviews particularly be useful for uncovering the story behind a participant’s experiences and pursuing in-depth information around a topic.

The researcher collected data, typically via long interviews, from individuals who have experienced the phenomenon under investigation. Next, the data analysis involved triangulation that was extracted significant statements from the transcribed interviews. The significant statements were transformed into clusters of meanings according to how each statement fell under specific psychological and phenomenological concepts. Moreover, these transformations were tied up together to make a general description of the experience both the textural description of what was experienced and the structural description of how it was experienced. The researcher incorporated his or her personal meaning of the experiences here. Finally, the report was written such that readers understand better the essential, invariant structure of the essence of the experience.

Conversely, several challenges have been pointed out. The researcher required a solid grounding in the philosophical guidelines of phenomenology. The subjects that were selected into the study were individuals who have actually experienced the phenomenon. The researcher needed to bracket his or her own experiences and observations, which will be difficult to do. The researcher also needed to decide as to how and when his or her personal observations be incorporated into the study.

Epistemologically, phenomenological approaches be based on the paradigm of personal knowledge and subjectivity, and emphasize the importance of personal perspective and interpretation. As such they were powerful tools for understanding subjective experience, gaining insights into people's motivations and actions, and cutting through the cluster of taken-for-granted assumptions and conventional wisdom

Since the focus of this study to explore and asses the teacher experience and feelings towards the school environment and on the perspectives of the seasoned teachers, the researcher will intend to employ the phenomenology type of qualitative method research.

*Research Participants*

The participants of this study will be the 7 teachers of Lavigan National High School, Governor Generoso South District, Division of Davao Oriental. The participants were chosen based on the following criteria: (1) must be in the service for at least 5 years; and (2) must employ Modular Distance learning Modality for at least 1 school year.

The researcher will utilize the purposive sampling design since the participants will be chosen based on the criteria or purpose of the study (Creswell, 2014). It is also known as judgmental, selective or subjective sampling. The selection of the participants was purposefully done to ensure that the findings would be authentic (Marshall, 1996).

*Research Instrument*

In gathering data, the researcher will utilize an in-depth interview questionnaire. The researcher will develop the interview questionnaire and will be answered by the participants orally. These researcher-made interview questionnaire will be developed upon consultation and validation by the experts and undergone several processes to accommodate their suggestions. The components to be validated include the language and the conceptual levels of questions if suited to the participants’ level of understanding, the suitability of the items to the research design in which there should be no leading questions, and the alignment of the interview questions to the objective of the study.

The purpose of the research interview is to explore the views, experiences, beliefs and or motivations of individuals on specific matters. Qualitative methods, such as interviews, are believed to provide a deeper understanding of social phenomena than would be obtained from purely quantitative methods, such as questionnaires (Stewart et. al., 2008)

*Data Collection*

To ensure safe educational continuity admits the challenge of COVID-19, this study, adhered to the Department of Health (DOH) Administrative Order No. 2020-0015 or the *Guidelines on the Risk-Based Public Health Standards for COVID-19 Mitigation*, cited by the IATF to aid all sectors in all settings to implement non-pharmaceutical interventions.

The following are the step by step process of gathering the data needed.

*Asking permission from the Schools Division Superintendent*. The researcher will ask permission from the Schools Division Superintendent to conduct the study in the identified school. The researcher will send a letter addressed to the Schools Division Superintendent with the attached Chapter 1 and 2 together with the research instrument which explains the objectives of the study and the identification of the participants. The researcher will wait for the response of the SDS before the conduct of it.

*Asking permission from the school heads*. After securing the approval of the SDS, the researcher will send letters to the principals of the schools explaining about the study to be conducted in their school.

*Obtaining consent from the participants.* The researcher will ask permission from the participants and to their parents/guardians. They were formally oriented about the study and of the process they shall go through as participants.

*Conducting the interview*. The researcher will conduct the in-depth interview using the interview questionnaire. The profile of the participants will be taken, notes will be jotted down, and conversations will record using a sound recorder for ease of transcription. The researcher will carefully listen and respond actively during the interviews. At the convenience of some participants, online platforms will be used in order to conduct he interview which will be recorder with the permission of the participants.

*Transcribing the responses of the interviewees*. The researcher will transcribe the responses of the interviewees precisely by recalling their answers from the sound recorder and video conference recording. Since the participants are free to use any language that they are comfortable with, the researcher will translate it to English language.

*Data Coding.* After the transcription, the data will then be categorized and coded. Then, themes will be extracted and individual data within the participants will be compared and contrasted. The researcher then will conduct a second round of interviews (FGD) to corroborate any data that needs further explanation and input from the participants, Additional information gathered were examined thoroughly and integrate it into the existing body of data. After which, data were compared and contrasted between the participants in order to come up with patterns and trends.

*Data Analysis*

In this study, thematic analysis will be utilized to analyze the gathered data. The researcher will analyze the answers of the participants from the conducted interviews with the use of Creswell’s Model specifically the identifying of themes approach. According to Creswell (2012) themes in qualitative research are similar codes aggregated together to form a major idea in the database.

Familiarization with the data is common to all forms of qualitative analysis, the researcher immersed herself in, and became intimately familiar with, their data; reading and re-reading the data and noting any initial analytic observations.

*Coding* is also a common element of many approaches to qualitative analysis, involves generating pithy labels for important features of the data of relevance to the (broad) research question guiding the analysis. Coding is not simply a method of data reduction; it is also an analytic process, so codes capture both a semantic and conceptual reading of the data. The researcher will code every data item and ends this phase by collating all their codes and relevant data extracts.

*Searching for themes is* coherent and meaningful pattern in the data relevant to the research question. The researcher will end this phase by collating all the coded data relevant to each theme.

*Reviewing themes.* The researcher reflected on whether the themes tell a convincing and compelling story about the data, and began to define the nature of each individual theme, and the relationship between the themes. Defining and naming themes: The researcher prepared a detailed analysis of each theme identifying the ‘essence’ of each theme and constructing a concise, punchy and informative name for each theme.

*Writing-up* involves weaving together the analytic narrative and data extracts to tell the reader a coherent and persuasive story about the data, and contextualizing it in relation to existing literature.

*Trustworthiness of the Study*

The concepts of validity and reliability will relatively be foreign to the field of qualitative research. Qualitative researchers substitute data trustworthiness instead of focusing on reliability and validity. Trustworthiness consists of the components such as credibility, transferability, dependability and conformability (Harts, 2016).

Credibility involves establishing that the findings of the research are credible or believable from the perspective of the participant. Through observing the attributes of prolonged engagement this is where credibility contributes to a belief in the trustworthiness of data.  To address the issue of credibility, the researcher interviewed as many research participants as possible or up to the point of saturation.

Meanwhile, transferability is the degree to which the findings can be generalized or transferred to other contexts. In this, the researcher did a thorough job in describing the research context and assumptions that are relevant.

On the other hand, dependability is the consistency and repeatability of the research. The researcher made sure that the findings of the study were evaluated by the participants and scrutinized by an external reviewer.

Lastly, confirmability is the degree to which findings could be confirmed or corroborated by other researchers.  The researcher documented the procedures and did rechecking of the data during the entire research process. The researcher also made sure that the findings are free from bias.

*Ethical Considerations*

The ethical considerations are significant in the design of this research study. The researcher needed to consider several ethical issues about the research participant in this fieldwork. Ethical considerations can be specified as one of the most important parts of the research. The researcher needs to adhere to promote the aims of the research imparting authentic knowledge, truth and prevention of error.

*Social Value.*Research is very essential to the society. In this study, the social value was focused on the experienced of teachers. This study was specifically conducted among the elementary teachers. This study also served as a basis for the higher authorities to create more programs and resolutions where classroom teacher could benefit. Thus, the social problem that pushes the interest of the researcher is the challenges faced by the teachers in the use of interactive media instruction in the classroom as a way to ameliorate teaching competence.

*Informed Consent*.In the conduct and practice of this study, the Treaty Principle of Participation as cited by McLeod (2009) adhered to. The invitation to the participants was ensured that their participation in the research is completely voluntary in nature, and is based on the understanding of adequate information. The participant recruitment and selection lodged in the appendices of this study. Gaining the trust and support of research participants is critical to the informed and ethical academic inquiry and phenomenological research (Walker, 2007 as cited by Pillerin, 2012). All participants will be given an informed consent form before scheduling the interviews and participating in the phenomenological research process. Each participant was required to provide a signed personal acknowledgement, consent, and an indication of a willingness-to-participate-in-the-study release. The purpose of the informed consent letter is to introduce the research effort, provide contact information, articulate the intent of the study, request voluntary participation by the recipients, and anticipate the information that the informants were expected to provide. All participants were required to sign and return the letter of consent to the researcher before participating in the research.

*Vulnerability of Research Participants*.The participants of this study are capable of answering the research instrument for they are all professional teachers in public elementary schools. Thus, the researcher will assure them that as the researcher, he or she can easily be reached through the contact number and address in case there are some clarifications or questions with regard to the study.

*Risks, Benefits and Safety*. The recruitment of the respondents was free of coercion, undue influence or inducement. Moreover, respondents were provided with the contact numbers of the chair of the panel or panel members in case they have queries related to the study. Furthermore, in the event that respondents would experience potential discomfort and inconvenience while answering the questions, they were not compelled to participate in any manner. Further, the researcher has ensured that the respondents were safe during the conduct of the survey and interview. Thus, the distribution of the questionnaire was conducted in a safe venue and administered during their convenient time. Dominant concern of this study is the Treaty Principle of Protection, as reflected in the respect for the rights of privacy and confidentiality, and minimization of risk. This was done by assigning pseudonyms for each informant so as not to disclose their identity. The possibility of a degree of risk inherent to this was minimized through taking all reasonable steps to guarantee participant confidentiality.

*Privacy and Confidentiality of Information*. This study observed the Data Privacy Act of 2002 to assure that the data cannot be traced back to their real sources to protect participants' identities. Thus, utmost care was taken to ensure anonymity of the data sources. Hence, any printed output that was carried out from this study was kept in anonymity. Furthermore, all the issues were given considerations so that there will be no conflict of interest among the researcher and the respondents. Any type of misleading information, as well as representation of primary data findings in a biased way and must be avoided.

*Justice.* The respondents were informed of the researcher's role and their corresponding role during data gathering. They were briefed that they have to give their full honesty in answering the survey questions and additionally, any type of communication in relation to the research should be done with honesty. Similarly, they were informed that they were the ones to benefit first with the results of the study.

*Transparency.* The results of the study were accessed by the respondents, heads of the participating schools because the information is available, and will be placed in CD or other storage devices in which can be requested from the researcher to provide. In addition, by learning on the results of the study, classroom teachers will be aware of the significance of the study and its contribution to their well-being. Further, each of the participants were be advised that they have the right to withdraw their information at any time up to the completion of the data collection process, and that they can be requested and allowed to verify their individual transcript after the interview is carried out. This provided the participants with the opportunity to amend, or remove any information which they feel might identify them. The researcher reserved the right to employ the use of pseudonyms, and changing names and or non-significant dates in the interest of the protection of the identity of the participant in all subsequent data analysis and reporting.

*Qualification of the Researcher*. The researcher ensured that he or she possesses the needed qualification to conduct the study. The researcher should be completing the academic requirements, passed the comprehensive examination prior to thesis writing which was the last requirement to obtain the masteral degree, and that the researcher should be qualified to conduct the study physically, mentally, emotionally and financially. In addition, the advisee-adviser tandem ensured that the study will reach its completion.

*Adequacy of Facilities*. The researcher strivedthat the study can be completed successfully on the specified time and that he or she is equipped with the necessary resources. Likewise, the technical committee helped in the enhancement of the paper by giving the needed suggestions and recommendations for the improvement of the study. Also, the researcher ensured that he or she has enough funds to continue and finish the research. Thus, this study was hoped to be completed on the target time.

*Community Involvement.* The researcher showed respect to the local tradition, culture and views of the respondents in this study. Moreover, this study did not involve any use of deceit in any stage of its implementation, and specifically, in the recruitment of the participants, or methods of data collection. Furthermore, the researcher necessarily expressed great pleasure for the wholehearted participation of the interviewees in the conduct of the study.

*Plagiarism and Fabrication as the researcher*. The researcher respected other works by properly citing the author and rewrite what someone else has said his or her own way. The researcher also used quotes to indicate that the text has been taken from another paper**.** Similarly, the researcher assured that honesty was present in working the manuscript and no intentional misrepresentation and making up of data or results is included, or purposefully put forward conclusions that are not accurate.

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**APPENDICES**

**Appendix A**

**Interview Protocol**

**Part I Demographic Profile**

Name (optional):\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

School: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Number of years in teaching: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Designated Position: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Subjects Taught: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Year Level Taught: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Part II Interview Guide Questions**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **INTERVIEW QUESTIONS** | **PROBING QUESTIONS** |
| What are the experiences of English teachers in implementing the modular distance learning modality? | * Are there any opportunities that came up in utilizing the printed modular learning modality? * What significant changes have you encountered in shifting to the new normal setup especially in teaching English in Junior High School? |
| What are the challenges encountered by the English teachers in the delivery of instruction with the use of modular distance learning modality? | * Which part of the whole process in printed modular distance learning are you most challenged about? * What are your needs that are necessary to be address for effective instructional delivery in terms of?   + - Preparation of Modules     - Distribution of Modules     - Monitoring Student’s Learning     - Retrieval of Modules     - Checking     - Giving Feedback to Students |
| What insights are gained by the teachers in their journey as a distance English teacher? | * What are the best ways to cope with the challenges that you encountered as an English teacher in the “New Normal”? * If ever we came back to face to face instruction, which part of the distance learning strategy can be still be useful for English teachers? * What possible recommendation can you proposed to improve the implementation of distance learning in new normal education especially in teaching English? |