



# ARTS AND MINDFULNESS EXERCISES INTEGRATION (AMEN) APPROACH IN PROMOTING POSITIVE MENTAL HEALTH AMID COVID-19 PANDEMIC

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### **Abstract**

The research incorporated the conceptualized approach by the researcher named, “Arts and Mindfulness Exercises iNtegration” (AMEN) in promoting the positive mental health of the senior high school learners amid the COVID-19 pandemic during the first semester of S.Y 2020-2021. Due to Covid 19 pandemic, some students at the secondary school level caused a detrimental effect not only on health but also the mental health state of the learners. The study utilized a mixed-method research design to analyze and identify emerging themes taken from the experiences of the 158 Grade 11- HUMMs participants from the four sections of synchronous classes. Findings showed a significant number of learners experienced negative to slightly negative mental health in all the components of Ryff’s scale of Psychological Well-being which comprise components, namely: Self-acceptance, Purpose in Life, Personal Growth, Autonomy, Positive Relations to Others and Environmental Mastery as indicated on their psychological well-being scores. In conclusion, some students experienced mental health issues or other psychosocial concerns this pandemic while doing their distance learning (online/synchronous); the implementation of Arts and Mindfulness Exercises iNtegration (AMEN) as a strategy in online synchronous classes was found to be helpful to learners in maintaining or improving their state of mental health.

*Keywords: Arts and Mindfulness Exercises, Mental Health*

## Arts and Mindfulness Exercises iNtegration (Amen) Approach in Promoting Positive Mental Health amid Covid-19 Pandemic

### Context and Rationale

Students and educational institutions all over the world has experienced unprecedented pressure and stress of the Covid-19 pandemic also known as the SARS CoV-2 pandemic. It has made a significant effect in the educational setting which caused a sudden end to face-to-face calendar activities of schools, mostly worldwide.

School closures for adolescents may not only mean the end of the four-walled classroom learning but might also result in the disruption of connections with peers which could cause anxiety; grief and disappointments for canceled events like graduation and recognition rites, and the fear it poses to them, their families and their friends. The implementation of physical or social distancing and stay-at-home orders to fight against the coronavirus may have left many teenagers feeling frustrated and deprived of expected opportunities.

Studies into the mental health impact of previous disease outbreaks such as the SARS epidemic in 2003 showed a clear increase in mental disorders (Wedlake, 2020). "Increased social isolation, loneliness, anxiety, stress, and financial challenges harm individuals, especially the young people's mental health and well-being" (O'Connor, 2020). "Many quarantined individuals experienced short and long-term mental health problems including stress, insomnia, emotional exhaustion, and substance abuse. Certain factors increased the risk of psychological problems such as those quarantined for more than ten days (associated with Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder), lack of access to necessary supplies, fear of infection, frustration, boredom, and the stressors of post quarantine" (Brooks, et.al, 2020). The COVID-19 pandemic could have a similar effect according

to experts. Indeed, there could be long-term consequences to the stress, fear, and anxiety that have overwhelmed most countries around the globe for months, especially for adolescents.

In 2018, Mental Health Act was enacted in the Philippines to help protect the rights and welfare of people with mental health conditions, shift the focus of care to the community and improve access to services. According to RA 110361 (Mental Health Act), mental health refers to a state of well-being in which an individual realizes one's abilities and potential, copes adequately with the normal stresses of life, displays resilience in the face of extreme life events, works productively and fruitfully, and can make a positive contribution to the community.

The Department of Education has confirmed one reported case of suicide concerning the COVID-19 pandemic. This prompted the department to fortify its psychosocial support program by partnering with the Psychological Association of the Philippines (Aguilar, 2020). DepEd has emphasized the importance of the well-being of all the learners, thus stressing out the need to provide mental health and psychological support to all the learners, especially to distressed students in the wake of the COVID-19 crisis (Torregosa, 2020). This is in pursuance to DepEd Order No. 28 s. of 2018 or the policy guidelines on the Oplan Kalusugan or "OK sa DepEd" program in which mental health is one of the aspects of health that needs to be addressed to further educate learners on the importance of overall wellness.

Researchers have shown possible ways of treating the mental health problems of teenagers without using medication. According to Payne, O'Donnel, and Doty (2018), "participating or expressing themselves through arts can alleviate pain, help people manage stress, promote wellness, enhance memory, improve communications and aid physical rehabilitation". Art is increasingly being used as a tool for therapy for high school students who have faced trauma and has been proven to help them cope both physically and psychologically. Studies have shown that

“arts help adolescents explore their emotions, improve self-esteem, manage addictions, reduce symptoms of anxiety and depression and cope with a disability” (American Art Association, 2016).

Another way of reducing mental health problems is the practice of mindfulness-based meditation. As Medical dictionary (2009) defined, “mindfulness meditation as a form of meditation or induced relaxation focuses awareness on breathing and boosts positive attitudes to obtain a healthy balanced mental state”. Research indicates that mindfulness shows a decrease in disruptive behavior, anxiety, impulsivity, stress, psychological distress, self-harm thoughts, and improvements in quality of sleep,, self-control, anger management, emotional regulation, social competence resulting in better academic performance, mental wellness, and quality of life. (American Psychological Association, 2019). This intervention is suggested for utilization as a potential technique in helping adolescents.

With the information presented, the researcher came up with an idea that will help the learners in dealing with the possible impact of the community quarantine due to the Covid-19 pandemic in the school where she is teaching.

Tarlac National High School is known to be one of the largest secondary schools in the region and is considered the oldest public high school in the country. Its Senior High School is also regarded as one of the largest populations of learners in the entire province which offers different tracks and strands for the learners who would want to study. The guidance office as well as the teachers had received reports of suicidal attempts, stress, depression, and anxiety from their learners. Worse than this is the death of a female student from Grade 12, who committed suicide due to personal problems before the pandemic started - an alarming case that triggered attention to the whole Senior High School. What made it more terrifying news was the fact that the student had never shown any sign of stress, depression, or suicidal attempts to anyone in school. Nobody

had foreseen that a said to be joyful student could plot for an abruptly melancholic death. Therefore, it shows exactly that mental health has a lot of faces, some are even capable of passing positivity to others without them realizing that the one who passed it is already breaking inside. The case proves that mental health must be given paramount consideration in amending and improving some approaches in the teaching and learning process. With this, the researcher believes even more that cases like this must not be evaluated. These scenarios happened before the pandemic, so the researcher assumes that if these things happened during the normal working or environmental conditions where students can talk to someone in school whether it be a friend or a teacher regarding personal matters, what more during the pandemic crisis, where a lot of things are prohibited, going out is not always possible, and many aspects of our lives are deprived.

Hence, an approach named the **Arts and Mindfulness Exercises iNtegration (AMEN)** was conceptualized to be included as a strategy to promote positive mental health to the Senior High School learners during this COVID-19 pandemic. AMEN was incorporated in the lesson for six weeks, intended for remote or distance learning, where videos (recorded or downloaded) or simultaneous mindfulness exercises and activity sheets were provided for the learners each week.

The focus of this research is to help the learners deal with their emotions, particularly undesirable thoughts (if any), and channel out the negative emotions through arts and mindfulness exercises. With this, the researcher hopes that students' mental health would remain stable and firm despite the pandemic that tells them not to. After all, learning must be fun for it to be remembered well by the learners.

### **Research Questions**

This research aimed to promote positive mental health of the Grade 11- Humanities and Social Sciences (HUMSS) learners using the **Arts and Mindfulness Exercises iNtegration (AMEN)**



approach which was incorporated in the lesson during the First quarter of the First Semester of the School Year, 2020-2021.

Specifically, the study sought to answer the following questions:

1. What is the state of mental health of the learners before and after the intervention?
2. Is there a significant improvement in the mental health of the learners after the intervention?
3. What is the implication of the results on class instruction and management?

### **Hypothesis**

1. There is no significant difference in the state of mental health of the learners before and after the intervention.

### **Significance of the Study**

The results of the study would be of immense importance to helping the learners, parents, teachers, guidance counselors, school heads, and the Department of Education and future researchers.

**To the Department of Education.** The findings of the study could serve as the basis for the curriculum implementers to recommend ways, interventions, or strategies how to promote the psychological well-being of the learners to avoid mental health disorders in the time of the pandemic. In addition, this may aid the Department in taking necessary steps in helping the learners, teachers, guidance counselors, and the school heads in intensifying suitable programs for yielding positive mental health.

**To School Heads.** The results of the research would give them the awareness of other interventions or strategies that teachers can utilize in alleviating or channeling out the negative thoughts and emotions of the students to uplift their mental health amid the COVID-19 pandemic. It will also help them identify solutions to other behavioral problems that may occur in challenging times. Moreover, the outcome of this study may serve as their basis for the implementation of programs related to the psychological well-being of the learners in their respective schools.

**To the Guidance Counselors.** This may assist them in developing a comprehensive Guidance Program for the promotion of positive mental health of the learners who may be suffering amid the COVID-19 pandemic. With or without the pandemic, the findings of this study may give them a clear picture of the importance of support groups and interventions in preventing mental health disorders.

**To the Teachers.** This study would aid them in integrating other helpful strategies and techniques in teaching that will boost the morale of the learners and eventually, can uplift their spirit and be motivated to attend classes either physically or virtually (whatever the circumstances may be, once the school year begins). This may also give them a glimpse of the benefits of having positive mental health that may result in better academic performance.

**To the Parents.** This study could enlighten them of the possible means of obtaining positive mental health for their children, which they can adopt whenever they feel disheartened by the COVID-19 pandemic. The results will give support to the decisions of the parents whether they allow their children to use the approach even at home. It may guide them in modifying their parenting styles suited for their children's needs. In addition, recognizing their value in keeping their children motivated at school, could help them work as partners in school together with

Guidance Counselors, class advisers, and subject teachers in monitoring their children's state of mental health.

**To the HUMSS learners.** This research could provide ways how to clear their minds from negative thoughts and emotions to yield positive psychological well-being. The approach may likewise motivate other students to do the same in times of crisis, especially this pandemic. It is expected that through this, they will continue to study, dream, and believe in their potential despite the odds.

**To the Future Researchers.** The findings of the study would help other researchers to look for other probable means of enriching the well-being of the learners to obtain positive thoughts, emotions, and behavior. Modifications or adoption of the approach is encouraged if it fits the needs of the adolescents.

### **Scope and Limitations**

This research aimed to promote the positive mental health of the Humanities and Social Sciences (HUMSS) learners through Arts and Mindfulness Exercises iNtegration (AMEN) approach during the COVID-19 pandemic.

AMEN approach was incorporated in the lesson through the virtual platform for six weeks during the First Quarter of the First Semester of the School Year 2020-2021. The arts-integrated consisted not only of visual arts like painting, drawing, and sculpture but also different branches of arts such as literature, photography, and music. One art activity was instructed to produce as an output per week. The theme for the art integration was based on the components found in Ryff's Scale of Psychological Well-being, which was also employed as a tool in assessing the state of mental health of the respondents.

Mindfulness-based meditation only took three to five minutes of the time per meeting to ease and calm the minds of the learners before the start of the lesson proper.

The participants of this study came from four online class sections handled by the researcher in which all of them underwent the AMEN approach. A pretest was given at the beginning of the 1st semester and a post-test after the implementation of the entire activities (compiled as a module) of the AMEN approach.

### **Method**

This section discusses the methodology and sources of data from where the present research was based. The study utilized a mixed-method sequential explanatory design which consists of two distinct phases: quantitative followed by qualitative (Creswell et.al.,2003). The AMEN approach employed Ryff's Scale of Psychological Well-being to determine the mental health state of the learners. Mindfulness exercises were employed to develop calmness before the start of the class.

### **Type of Research**

Since the researcher has seen a potential problem on mental health amid the pandemic, action research was very much suited for this study to help the learners obtain positive psychological well-being.

This study utilized a mixed-method sequential explanatory design. Cited on the research of Ivankova, et.al (2006), the mixed-methods sequential explanatory design consists of two distinct phases: quantitative followed by qualitative (Creswell et al. 2003).

In this design, a researcher first collects and analyzes the quantitative or numeric data. The qualitative or text data are gathered and analyzed second in the sequence and help explain, or elaborate on, the quantitative results obtained in the first phase. The rationale for this approach is

that the quantitative data and their subsequent analysis provide a general understanding of the research problem. While the qualitative data and their analysis refine and explain the statistical results by exploring participants' views in more depth (Rossman and Wilson 1985; Tashakkori and Teddlie 1998; Creswell 2003).

The quantitative part of this research was based on the results of the assessment of the state of mental health of all the participants before and after the integration of the Arts and Mindfulness Exercises iNtegration (AMEN) approach. The participants of this study came from four sections handled by the researcher in which all of them underwent the AMEN approach. A pre-assessment was given at the beginning of the First Quarter and a post-assessment after the implementation of the entire activities (compiled as a module) of this approach.

After which, a qualitative phase through the interview was conducted to have a more in-depth perspective of the study. In this way, the researcher could have a comprehensive analysis of the possible influence of the AMEN approach on the learners' state of mental health.

### **Sampling**

Total population sampling, a type of purposive sampling technique, was employed in the study. A total number of 158 students from the four sections under the online learning modality was included in the study. The breakdown is as follows:

Grade Level/Section	Total Number of Participants
HUMSS A	46
HUMSS B	35
HUMSS C	40
HUMSS D	37
Total	158

**Participants**

The participants of the study were Grade 11 online learners (synchronous) under the Humanities and Social Sciences (HUMSS) handled by the researcher in the subject Introduction to the Philosophy of the Human Person during the First Quarter of the First Semester of the School Year 2020-2021. The Arts and Mindfulness Exercises Integration (AMEN) approach was incorporated in their lessons for six weeks.

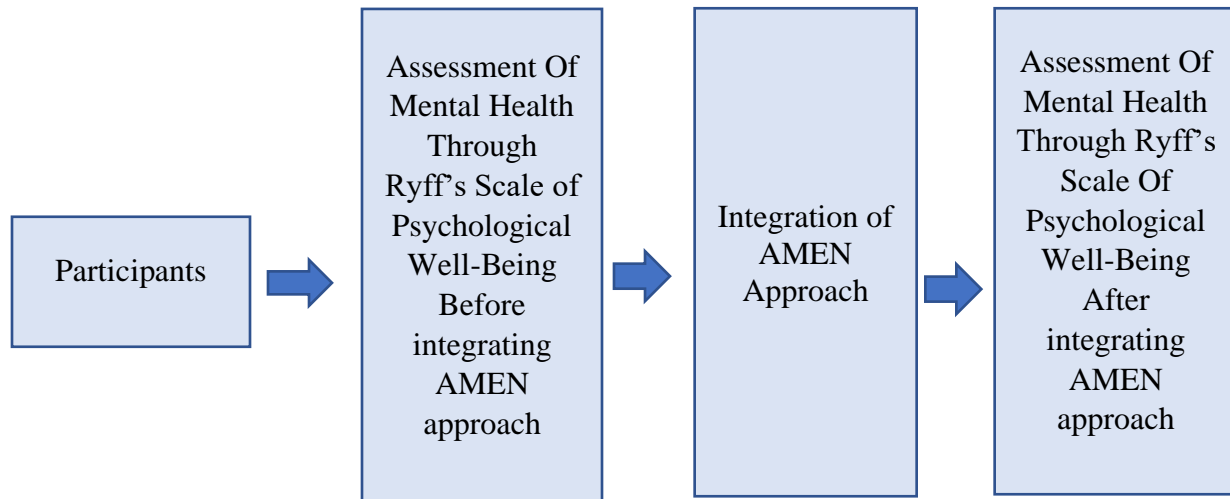
**Proposed Intervention/Innovation**

Arts and Mindfulness Exercises iNtegration (AMEN) was incorporated in the lesson virtually for six weeks. This approach aimed to help and guide the participants in developing positive mental health through the use of arts and practice mindfulness exercises.

Mindfulness exercises were practiced for three to five minutes every meeting to ease and calm the minds of the learners before the class starts. The integration of arts, on the other hand, was assimilated through activities per week for six weeks. Task activities were sent and submitted through the virtual platform. The theme for the art integration was based on the components found in Ryff's Scale of Psychological Well-being. The compilation of activities in the AMEN approach was attached to the appendix.

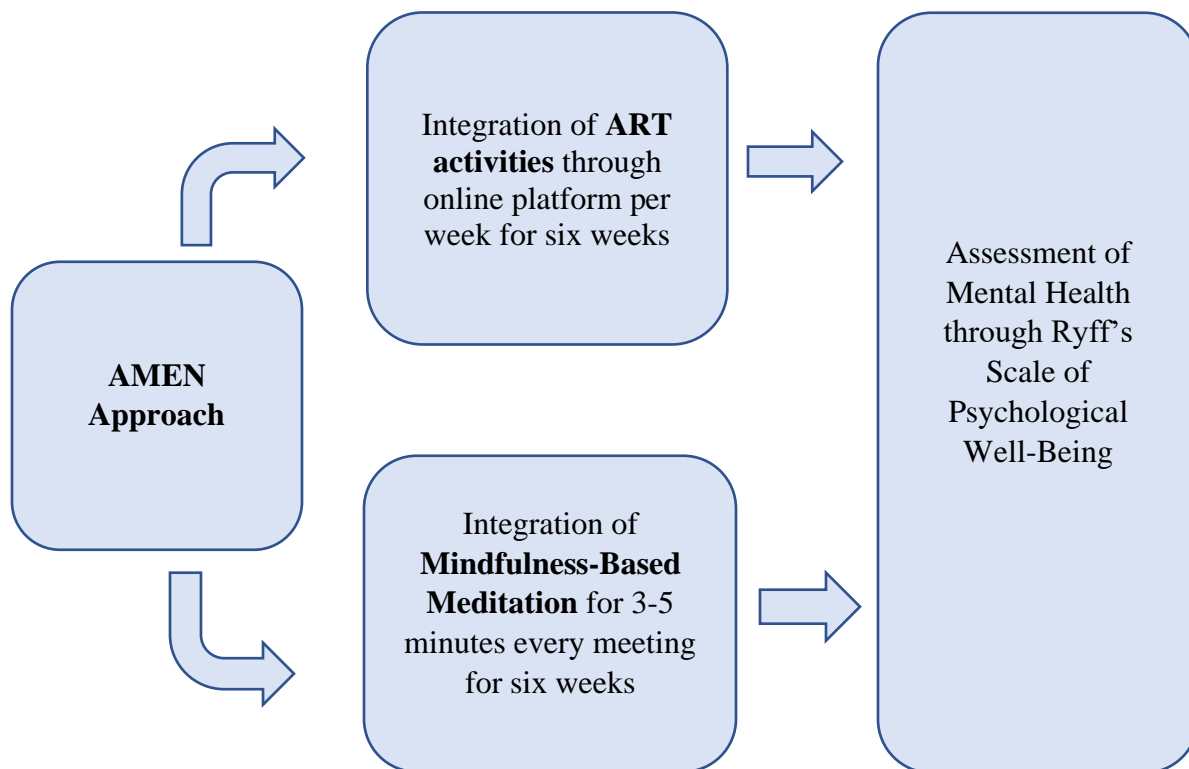
The focus of AMEN activities was on self-acceptance, purpose in life, personal growth, autonomy, positive relations with others, and environmental mastery. The dimensions mentioned were anchored in the components found in Ryff's Scale of Psychological Well-being, which was also used in assessing the state of mental health of the learners.

Figure 1 shows the process of how the study was conducted to the participants. Assessment on the state of mental health was administered before and after the execution of the approach to find out if the strategy works in contributing to positive mental health among the participants.



*Figure 1: Process of the Integration of AMEN Approach*

Figure 2 displays how the AMEN approach was integrated in the lesson for six weeks virtually.



*Figure 2: Integration of AMEN Approach in the Lessons for Six Weeks*

*Mindfulness-based Meditation*

The Mindfulness-based Meditation exercises were introduced to the learners before the start of the lesson proper. Breathing exercises (either through downloaded videos/researcher's recorded audio or simultaneous practice of mindfulness) were practiced three to five minutes every meeting.

*Arts Integration*

The arts included in the AMEN approach refer to the branches of human creative activity or human expressions such as literature, photography, painting, music, and the like, which people can take part in as a hobby or for fun, as well as to create works which express meanings.

Listed below are the artworks that served as the basis for the output submitted by the learners per week through the virtual platform. The theme of their artwork was based on the areas of psychological well-being found on Ryff's Scale of Psychological Well-being (see the complete set of activities attached in the appendix section).

*Week 1*

The theme focused on the self-acceptance of the learners. Self-acceptance refers to the act or state of understanding and recognizing one's abilities and limitations (Merriam Dictionary, 2020). They were asked **to draw or paint** an object or a symbol that best describes themselves as of the moment. Follow-up questions were provided. Reflections about the activity were placed on their journals or submitted through the virtual platform.

*Week 2*

The learners were asked about their purpose in life. The scope to which they give life meaning pertains to their purpose in life. In their activity, they **composed a lyric of a song or a jingle** that corresponds to their purpose in life. The tune of the song/jingle maybe their original composition



or any melody adopted from a song that fits their lyric. Guide questions were answered in their journals or submitted through the virtual platform.

### *Week 3*

The topic gave emphasis on the learners' personal growth. This is the extent to which students could have a sense of continued development and self-improvement. They were instructed to **write poetry, prose or essay** that tells something about the things they enjoy doing and their plans on how to improve them. Reflections about the activity were placed on their journals or submitted through virtual platform.

### *Week 4*

The students' autonomy or the extent to which they view themselves as being independent and able to resist social pressure was the focus of their artwork for this week. They were asked to **take a photograph** of themselves or of anything that may represent their perception of one's independence and resistance to social pressure. Follow-up questions served as their reflections which were written on their journals and sent through online platforms.

### *Week 5*

The output was based on the learners' positive relations with others. In the activity, they made a **collage** showing their visual representations of how they relate with others. Guide questions were provided and reflections were placed in their journals.

### *Week 6*

The degree to which students feel in control of and able to act in the environment is called environmental mastery which is the last theme that was emphasized in their activity. Instead of throwing away their old stuff like t-shirts, pairs of jeans, mugs, and the like, they used it as a material **to create a piece of art** that explained their thoughts on the quotation, "I am the master

of my fate, the captain of my destiny” by Nelson Mandela. (Their output may be a drawing, a doodle, or anything that represents their ideas.) Their reflections were written in their journals

### **Instruments**

This study employed Ryff’s Scale of Psychological Well-being to measure the state of mental health of the learners before and after introducing the Arts and Mindfulness Exercises Integration (AMEN) approach.

The Ryff inventory consists of either 84 questions (long form) or 54 questions (medium form). The medium form or the 54-item questionnaire was utilized in this research for adolescents. It consisted of a series of statements reflecting the six areas of psychological well-being: autonomy, environmental mastery, personal growth, positive relations with others, purpose in life, and self-acceptance. Participants rated statements on a scale of 1 to 6, with 1 indicating strong disagreement and 6 indicating strong agreement.

In addition, the checklist was provided to the participants which was composed of general information about themselves, such as their age, family background, socio-economic status, and the like for supplemental data about themselves.

The interview guide was also included as an instrument for understanding the impact of the AMEN approach on the learners’ state of mental health.

### **Data Collection Procedure**

A letter of request was sent to the authorities before conducting the research. Upon the approval, the state of mental health of the participants was assessed using Ryff’s Scale of Psychological Well-being before introducing the Arts and Mindfulness Exercises iNtegration (AMEN) approach for six weeks.

After integrating the AMEN approach, the state of mental health was assessed once again using the same tool to evaluate if there has been an improvement in the well-being of the respondents.

The checklist was collected from the respondents to have some additional information regarding their background that may help them understand their situations. The interview was conducted after the integration of the approach to find out if there is an impact on their state of mental health.

Reports and anecdotal records (if any) from the guidance office and other subject teachers may also be taken into account for further assessment.

### **Ethical Considerations**

Since the participants are all minors, the purpose and the detailed procedures of the research were explained to the parents through a letter of consent and assent that was sent either through the mail (or e-mail) or Facebook messenger. The researcher made sure that they were provided with adequate information to make an informed decision on their participation. Upon approval of the parents, the conduct of research began.

Confidentiality was strictly observed. The results of the data gathered were held in privacy, though they may serve as bases for further study. Additional data collection was based on the respondents' voluntary submission.

The researcher sent electronic mails to the developers of the Ryff's Scale of Psychological Well-being to ask permission if the tool, which is freely accessible, could be used for action research purposes.

## Data Analysis

This research utilized “Ryff’s Scale of Psychological Well-being” to measure the state of mental health of the student participants. The data were analyzed using descriptive statistics to describe the state of mental health of the learners before and after the implementation of AMEN approach.

“Ryff’s Scale of Psychological Well-being” uses a 6-point Likert scale with 1 (one) indicating strong disagreement and 6 (six) indicating strong agreement. Paired sample t-test was then used to test the hypothesis of the study.

All data were analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) v.25.

## Work Plan

This matrix of activities served as guide for the researcher in realizing this action research.

Activities	Timeline	Resources		
		Person	Physical	Peso
Proposal conceptualization, drafting, and submission of the proposal to the Division Office	Last week of May to 2 <sup>nd</sup> week of August 2020	Researcher, Principal, SEPS in Research	Wifi connectivity for 2 months	P 3,000
Pre-test	2 <sup>nd</sup> week of October 2020	Researcher, Participants	Statistician Fee	P 1,500
Implementation of the study	3 <sup>rd</sup> week of October to 1 <sup>st</sup> week of December 2020	Researcher, Participants, Parents	Notary	P 100
Post-test	1 <sup>st</sup> week of December 2020	Researcher, Participants		
Data-analysis, interpreting and presenting the results report	2 <sup>nd</sup> week of December 2020	Researcher, Participants	Soft/Hardbound copies	P 400

Submission of complete research action	3 <sup>rd</sup> week of December 2020	Researcher, Principal, SEPS in Research		
Production of copy	1 <sup>st</sup> week of January 2021	Researcher		
Dissemination of Results through SLAC sessions, virtually or face to face depending on the circumstances	To be determined (depending on the availability of time and schedule)	Researcher, Principal, Guidance Counselor		
				<b>Total:P 5, 000</b>

### Plans for Dissemination and Utilization

The results of the research would be disseminated through the school's Learning Action Cell (LAC). This may also be presented to the division, regional, national, and even in international research congress and conferences if given the chance. Copies of the research will be given to the schools' division office of Tarlac province library, school library, and to other libraries in the province that will serve as a reference to future researchers.

### Results and Reflections

This section looks into the results of the Arts and Mindfulness Exercises iNtegration (AMEN) innovation integrated with the online classes of the four sections under the Humanities and Social Sciences - Grade 11 in a span of six weeks. After which, reflections were provided in order to have a deeper understanding of the outcomes generated from the responses of the participants.

1. State of Mental health of the learners before and after the intervention/innovation

Based on the collected data, here are the tables which show the state of mental health of the learners through the instrument Ryff's Scale of Psychological Well-being before and after introducing the Arts and Mindfulness Exercises iNtegration (AMEN) approach.

Self-acceptance refers to the state or act of understanding and recognizing one's own abilities and limitations (Merriam Webster Dictionary, 2020). This is where individuals give their lives meaning.

The table 1 indicates that before the intervention, 4% or about six of the students were experiencing a negative state of mental health while 44% or seventy of them were experiencing a slightly negative state as to the aspect of self-acceptance. During this time, the participants confessed that they feel they have not yet accomplished significant achievement in their lives as compared to their peers and people they knew. At times when they have this feeling of comparing themselves to their friends and acquaintances, this may have affected their negative perception of themselves.

Moreover, they revealed that even though people's attitude towards them is positive, their own perception about themselves is inferior compared to what others think. Conversely, more than half of the students manifested a positive outlook as to the aspect of self-acceptance.

After an intervention, the table illustrates that the number of students showing negative perception on their self-acceptance dropped to 29% compared to the 48% before the intervention. The participants disclosed that they realized that they may have made some mistakes in the past, but still they feel that everything has worked out for the best. They believe that in many ways, they should be proud of their achievements and for what they have reached so far in their lives.

This pandemic may be depressing for some of them but through arts and mindfulness exercises they began to reflect and slowly accept who they are and what they want to become someday

Table 1  
Self-Acceptance

State of Mental Health	Before		After	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Negative	6	4%	3	2%
Slightly Negative	70	44%	42	27%
Slightly Positive	76	48%	66	42%
Positive	6	4%	47	30%
Total	158	100%	158	100%

The scope to which an individual gives life meaning pertains to their purpose in life. This dimension covers one's purpose that can guide life decisions, influence behavior, shape goals, offer a sense of direction, and create meaning (Leonard, 2016).

Table 2 reveals that before the intervention, around 30% or forty-seven of the students were leaned towards the slightly negative perspective on the aspect of purpose in life. 70% of them had a positive outlook in this aspect, 10% were very positive and 60% were slightly positive. Most students mentioned that they have a clear purpose in life, what is holding them is the belief that they have not done enough in their lives. This perspective is very much evident for people who have full of dreams and energy to act but could not do anything due to lockdown as an effect of the COVID-19 pandemic. They have several plans and things to accomplish but were forced to stay at home then. This may cause them anxiety or even anguish or depression which they could not explain.

After the intervention, the number of cases on the slightly negative side dropped to 16% and those with a positive perspective increased to 39%. Students mentioned that doing techniques like breathing exercises or mindfulness meditation and art activities, brought relaxation and calmness to their minds and bodies. Participants who were interviewed stated that they have adopted this method and through this, they have realized that while they are enjoying making plans for the future and making them a reality, they have to take things one step at a time rather than sit and do nothing which could cause depression or loneliness.

Conditioning oneself mentally through mindfulness and engaging themselves through art expression may have helped them cope with the pandemic crisis.

Table 2  
Purpose in Life

State of Mental Health	Before		After	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Negative	0	0	0.00	0
Slightly Negative	47	30%	25	16%
Slightly Positive	95	60%	72	46%
Positive	16	10%	61	39%
Total	158	100%	158	100%

Personal growth is the ongoing process of understanding and developing oneself to achieve one's fullest potential (World-Minded, 2016). This is the extent to which a person has a sense of continued development and self-improvement.

Table 3 indicates that before intervention, around 59% percent of them were oriented towards the negative side as to personal growth aspect of mental health. This is also understandable



since lockdown took effect. Since most of the time they may be idle at home, they felt no sense of development, no big improvements or changes in that particular period and even if they want to try new things or do things differently, they felt helpless.

Throughout the intervention, students leaning towards the negative side plunged to 38% and moved to a more positive stance. They pointed out that they were willing to expand their horizon and improve day by day. In addition, the participants were eager to learn new skills, and fortify their strengths to come out as better individuals after the pandemic.

Table 3  
Personal Growth

State of Mental Health	Before		After	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Negative	1	1%	5	3%
Slightly Negative	92	58%	56	35%
Slightly Positive	64	41%	52	33%
Positive	1	1%	45	28%
Total	158	100%	158	100%

According to Ryff's Scale of Psychological Well-being, autonomy refers to the capacity of the individual to make their own choices and go their own direction. In other words, autonomy is how people view themselves as being independent and able to resist social pressures.

Table 4 shows the distribution of mental health states as to autonomy before and after the intervention. It clearly implies that only 6% or around 9 students shifted from the negative to the positive side. Worthy of indicating is that from 9% positive, it increased to 35%. More students were able to help themselves by becoming more positive. They believed that "being happy with themselves is more important than having others approve of themselves and they judge themselves

by what they think is important, not by the values of what others think is important”. Through this mindset, they were able to stay focused on many important things than being influenced by outside opinions on their ideas and even about themselves.

Table 4  
Autonomy

State of Mental Health	Before		After	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Negative	2	1%	3	2%
Slightly Negative	51	32%	41	26%
Slightly Positive	91	58%	59	37%
Positive	14	9%	55	35%
Total	158	100%	158	100%

The extent to which a person has satisfying, trusting relationships with other people is what positive relations with others are all about. Table 5 shows that around 30% of the participants experienced a slightly negative state as to the aspect of positive relationships with others. Of the 70% of the students who were classified under positive state, 57% were slightly positive and 13% were in the positive state of their mental health. Those experiencing slightly negative states indicated that sometimes they did not enjoy conversation with family and friends, and some thought they have fewer friends than most people do. It should be noted that during the lockdown, students were not able to go out and their socialization was only through social media and online games. This situation has in one way or another, triggered the feeling of loneliness and isolation since human beings are social in nature.

After the intervention, there were only 16% remaining in the negative state and the positive state increased to 41% and slightly positive to 49%. Students stated that they already enjoy

personal and mutual conversation with others and the majority of them perceive people would describe them as giving people and willing to share time with others. This is clearly manifested through their interaction with their peers or classmates in their online classes as well as in other social networking sites. Some disclosed that they have gained a new set of acquaintances, they were already getting along well with their classmates, and they have newly found friends with whom they could share their life stories with.

Table 5  
Positive Relations to Others

State of Mental Health	Before		After	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Negative	0	0	0.00	0
Slightly Negative	48	30%	16	10%
Slightly Positive	90	57%	77	49%
Positive	20	13%	65	41%
Total	158	100%	158	100%

In line with Ryff's Scale of Psychological Wellbeing, environmental mastery pertains to one's competence in managing the environment; make effective use of surrounding opportunities; and able to choose or create contexts suitable to one's personal needs and values. This is the degree to which a person feels in control of his life and can act well in his/her environment.

Table 6 shows that before integrating the AMEN approach, there were 100 participants or 63% who were under slightly negative and only 1% negative mental state as to environmental mastery. Since this is the first-time students were forced to stay inside their houses for months,

they may have felt as if they did not fit to the people in their community which is their family members. They also indicated that they were overwhelmed by the responsibilities at home.

After intervention, slightly negative state decreased to 31% and positive state increased to 32%. Students revealed that they got better at managing responsibilities at home and they began to like their lifestyles they have created inside their comfort zones. Furthermore, they expressed that their situation may not have changed, but through various artworks and mindfulness strategies they have experienced, they were able to reflect and change their perspectives on things around them and have chosen to be happy instead.

Table 6

## Environmental Mastery

State of Mental Health	Before		After	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Negative	2	1%	1	1%
Slightly Negative	100	63%	49	31%
Slightly Positive	54	34%	58	37%
Positive	2	1%	50	32%
Total	158	100%	158	100%

## 2. Significant Improvement or Difference of the State of Mental Health Before and After the Integration of AMEN Approach

The incorporation of the Arts and Mindfulness Exercises iNtegration Approach in six weeks was assessed using the Ryff's Scale of Psychological Well-being. This served as a means to gauge if the approach has significantly contributed to the improvement of the state of mental health of the learners. The results are categorized by dimension (self-acceptance, purpose in life, personal growth, autonomy, positive relations with others, and environmental mastery) for clearer understanding of the overall mental well-being of the participants.

Table 7 explains that the paired mean difference of 4.32 ( $t= 6.95$   $df=157$ ) is significant enough ( $sig=0.000$ ) which indicates that there is sufficient evidence to show that there is a significant positive change in the state of mental health of students as to their perception on the aspect self-acceptance.

Table 7  
Comparison of Mental Health State as to Self-Acceptance  
Before and After AMEN Approach

	Paired Samples Test			
	Paired	T	Df	Sig. (2-
	Differences in			tailed)
	Mean			
Self-Acceptance	4.32	6.95	157	0.000

In a way, AMEN approach helped them see the positive facets of themselves amid the pandemic and present predicaments they are experiencing at the moment. As they revealed, the past had its ups and downs, but in general, they wouldn't want to change the things that made them who they are today.

Table 8 shows that the paired mean difference of 3.65 ( $t= 5.69$   $df=157$ ) is significant enough ( $sig=0.000$ ) which indicates that there is sufficient evidence to demonstrate that there is a significant positive change in the mental health of students as to their purpose in life.

After the integration of Arts and Mindfulness Exercises iNtegration (AMEN) approach, some of the participants began to discover something about themselves which they already enjoy doing these trying times such as making plans in the future and working to make them a reality. This pandemic opened their minds to focus on their priority which is their studies. As they say, education is one great key for them to carry out their goals for the future. Hence, the intervention has helped the participants in dealing with the present situation.

Table 8

Comparison of Mental Health State as to Purpose in Life Before and After AMEN Approach

	Paired Samples Test			
	Paired Differences in Mean	T	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Purpose in Life	3.65	5.69	157	0.000

Table 9 shows that the paired mean difference of 4.12 ( $t= 7.26$   $df=157$ ) is significant enough ( $sig=0.000$ ) which indicates that there is adequate proof to illustrate that there is a significant positive change in the mental health of the participants as to their personal growth.

The learners acknowledged that life has been a continuous process of learning, changing, and growth. After the intervention, they divulged that they now understand the importance of having new experiences that challenge how they think about themselves and the world. The results then may indicate that mindfulness or breathing exercises conditioned their minds to think of their personal growth and through art activities, they exhibited their plans on how they would want to improve themselves over time. Thus, Arts and Mindfulness Exercises iNtegration (AMEN) approach may have contributed to the significant positive change in the participants' mental health.

Table 9

Comparison of Mental Health State as to Personal Growth Before and After AMEN Approach

	Paired Samples Test			
	Paired Differences in Mean	T	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Personal Growth	4.12	7.26	157	0.000

Table 10 implies that the paired mean difference of 2.76 ( $t= 4.03$   $df=157$ ) is significant enough ( $sig=0.000$ ) which indicates that there is sufficient proof to show that there is a significant positive change in the mental health of the participants as to their autonomy.

As manifested in the result, the participants could already view themselves as being independent and able to resist social pressure. During the interview, they revealed that they were not afraid to voice their opinions anymore (as observed in their social media accounts as well), though they were cautious of their words and sensitive enough to treat other people with respect and empathy through mindfulness practice and art activities. After the integration of the AMEN approach, they tend to trust in their own decisions and have confidence in their choices.

Table 10  
Comparison of Mental Health State as to Autonomy  
Before and After AMEN Approach

Paired Samples Test				
	Paired Differences in Mean	T	Df	Sig. (2- tailed)
Autonomy	2.76	4.03	157	0.000

Table 11 shows that the paired mean difference of 3.65 ( $t= 5.96$   $df=157$ ) is significant enough ( $sig=0.000$ ) to manifest that there is sufficient evidence to indicate that there is a significant positive change in the mental health of students as to their positive relation to others.

Somehow, the intervention may have helped the students uplift their state of mental health. According to some of the participants, in one way or another, the AMEN approach became beneficial in helping them release their idleness or isolation at home during several months of quarantine, through their artworks, mindfulness, and reflection. Moreover, since they have more time at home, they started to enjoy personal and mutual conversations with family members or

chit-chat with their friends online. This led them to have more positive relations with the important people in their lives.

Table 11  
Comparison of Mental Health State as to Positive Relation to Others Before and After AMEN Approach

	Paired Samples Test			
	Paired Differences in Mean	T	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Positive Relations to Others	3.65	5.96	157	0.000

Table 12 explains that the paired mean difference of 5.49 ( $t= 9.49$   $df=157$ ) is significant enough ( $sig=0.000$ ) which implies that there is satisfactory indication to show that there is a substantial positive change in the mental health of students as to the aspect of environmental mastery. This may mean that the intervention has improved the state mental health of students as to this aspect.

After incorporating the AMEN approach, the participants admitted that overall, they have felt that they are in charge of the situation in which they live, so they have to manage their lives well and become responsible and accountable in their daily lives. Through reflection, they have realized that the COVID-19 pandemic has created a lifestyle new to them, but this also led them to understand fully themselves. Mindfulness meditation and art activities have comforted and directed them to be in control of their lives and focused on what is important at the present.



Table 12  
Comparison of Mental Health State as to Environmental Mastery Before and After AMEN Approach

	Paired Samples Test			
	Paired Differences in Mean	T	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Environmental Mastery	5.49	9.50	157	0.000

### 3. Implications of the Results on Classroom Instruction and Management

The results of this research have implied that the state of mental health of the learners may be in one way or another, be affected by the teacher's manner of teaching, especially this time of the pandemic. Therefore, educators should help the learners stay on track, to teach not only the subject matter, but focus the attention on the students themselves, their way of thinking, and feeling and how these are manifested through their actions.

The integration of the Arts and Mindfulness Exercises iNtegration (AMEN) approach as a teaching strategy has proven that incorporating techniques in online classroom instruction could maintain one's positive mental health or even improve the state of their mental health. Hence, it is necessary for teachers to find appropriate pedagogical strategies for making the class a happy and engaging place for learning so that the student's mental health would remain firm and stable.

According to Scholastic.com, art has the power to engage students in experiential learning, which makes them learn directly from their experiences as opposed to academic learning. Based on the outcome of this research, engagement with the arts has made an impact with the participants, helping the learners deal with their anxiety and at the same time, releasing their imagination to innovate which makes them creative. Participants from different sections have shown enthusiasm in making various art activities and some even submitted their works days before the deadline.

Hence, the incorporation of different forms of arts is one good teaching technique for their generation since they are used to expressing their inner selves through social media. Arts then, serve as an outlet for them to express their emotions, thoughts, or opinions on things about themselves, or toward other people.

The research shows that introducing short mindfulness practice before the lesson started had prepared the learners' emotions, helped them feel motivated to learn, and showed a significant improvement in their emotional well-being. The learners who were interviewed had begun practicing mindfulness meditation since the integration of the AMEN approach during online class and they disclosed its positive effect on their state of mind. Thus, integrating discussions about observing one's feelings and state of mind into daily lessons could benefit students and contribute to their attainment of positive mental health.

On the whole, Arts and Mindfulness Exercises iNtegration (AMEN) approach in an online class this pandemic has helped out the participants in maintaining or improving their mental health amid the COVID-19 crisis. This type of approach can be utilized in classroom instruction and management, where educators may use methods to maintain a classroom environment that is conducive to student success and learning, with added benefits of the attainment of positive mental health.

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## Appendices

### A. INSTRUMENT/S RYFFS' SCALE OF PSYCHOLOGICAL WELL-BEING

#### RYFF SCALES OF PSYCHOLOGICAL WELL-BEING

The following set of statements deals with how you might feel about yourself and your life. Please remember that there are neither right nor wrong answers.

Circle the number that best describes the degree to which you agree or disagree with each statement.	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree Slightly	Agree Slightly	Agree	Strongly Agree
1. Most people see me as loving and affectionate.	1	2	3	4	5	6
2. I am not afraid to voice my opinion, even when they are in opposition to the opinions of most people.	1	2	3	4	5	6
3. In general, I feel I am in charge of the situation in which I live.	1	2	3	4	5	6
4. I am not interested in activities that will expand my horizons.	1	2	3	4	5	6
5. I live life one day at a time and don't really think about the future.	1	2	3	4	5	6
6. When I look at the story of my life, I am pleased with how things have turned out.	1	2	3	4	5	6
7. Maintaining close relationships has been difficult and frustrating for me.	1	2	3	4	5	6
8. My decisions are not usually influenced by what everyone else is doing.	1	2	3	4	5	6
9. The demands of everyday life often get me down.	1	2	3	4	5	6
10. I don't want to try new ways of doing things—my life is fine the way it is.	1	2	3	4	5	6
11. I tend to focus on the present, because the future always brings me problems.	1	2	3	4	5	6
12. In general, I feel confident and positive about myself.	1	2	3	4	5	6
13. I often feel lonely because I have few close friends with whom to share my concerns.	1	2	3	4	5	6
14. I tend to worry about what other people think of me.	1	2	3	4	5	6
15. I do not fit very well with the people and the community around me.	1	2	3	4	5	6
16. I think it is important to have new experiences that challenge how you think about yourself and the world.	1	2	3	4	5	6
17. My daily activities often seem trivial and unimportant to me.	1	2	3	4	5	6
18. I feel like many of the people I know have gotten more out of life than I have.	1	2	3	4	5	6
19. I enjoy personal and mutual conversations with family members or friends.	1	2	3	4	5	6
20. Being happy with myself is more important to me than having others approve of me.	1	2	3	4	5	6

Circle the number that best describes the degree to which you agree or disagree with each statement.	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree Slightly	Agree Slightly	Agree	Strongly Agree
21. I am quite good at managing the many responsibilities of my daily life.	1	2	3	4	5	6
22. When I think about it, I haven't really improved much as a person over the years.	1	2	3	4	5	6
23. I don't have a good sense of what it is I'm trying to accomplish in my life.	1	2	3	4	5	6
24. I like most aspects of my personality.	1	2	3	4	5	6
25. I don't have many people who want to listen when I need to talk.	1	2	3	4	5	6
26. I tend to be influenced by people with strong opinions.	1	2	3	4	5	6
27. I often feel overwhelmed by my responsibilities.	1	2	3	4	5	6
28. I have a sense that I have developed a lot as a person over time.	1	2	3	4	5	6
29. I used to set goals for myself, but that now seems a waste of time.	1	2	3	4	5	6
30. I made some mistakes in the past, but I feel that all in all everything has worked out for the best.	1	2	3	4	5	6
31. It seems to me that most other people have more friends than I do.	1	2	3	4	5	6
32. I have confidence in my opinions, even if they are contrary to the general consensus.	1	2	3	4	5	6
33. I generally do a good job of taking care of my personal finances and affairs.	1	2	3	4	5	6
34. I do not enjoy being in new situations that require me to change my old familiar ways of doing things.	1	2	3	4	5	6
35. I enjoy making plans for the future and working to make them a reality.	1	2	3	4	5	6
36. In many ways, I feel disappointed about my achievements in my life.	1	2	3	4	5	6
37. People would describe me as a giving person, willing to share my time with others.	1	2	3	4	5	6
38. It's difficult for me to voice my own opinions on controversial matters.	1	2	3	4	5	6
39. I am good at juggling my time so that I can fit everything in that needs to be done.	1	2	3	4	5	6
40. For me, life has been a continuous process of learning, changing, and growth.	1	2	3	4	5	6
41. I am an active person in carrying out the plans I set for myself.	1	2	3	4	5	6
42. My attitude about myself is probably not as positive as most people feel about themselves.	1	2	3	4	5	6

Circle the number that best describes the degree to which you agree or disagree with each statement.	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree Slightly	Agree Slightly	Agree	Strongly Agree
43. I have not experienced many warm and trusting relationships with others.	1	2	3	4	5	6
44. I often change my mind about decisions if my friends or family disagree.	1	2	3	4	5	6
45. I have difficulty arranging my life in a way that is satisfying to me.	1	2	3	4	5	6
46. I gave up trying to make big improvements or change in my life a long time ago.	1	2	3	4	5	6
47. Some people wander aimlessly through life, but I am not one of them.	1	2	3	4	5	6
48. The past has its ups and downs, but in general, I wouldn't want to change it.	1	2	3	4	5	6
49. I know that I can trust my friends, and they know they can trust me.	1	2	3	4	5	6
50. I judge myself by what I think is important, not by the values of what others think is important.	1	2	3	4	5	6
51. I have been able to build a home and a lifestyle for myself that is much to my liking.	1	2	3	4	5	6
52. There is truth to the saying that you can't teach an old dog new tricks.	1	2	3	4	5	6
53. I sometimes feel as if I've done all there is to do in life.	1	2	3	4	5	6
54. When I compare myself to friends and acquaintances, it makes me feel good about who I am.	1	2	3	4	5	6



**B. CAPTURED SCREENSHOT SAMPLE OF MINDFULNESS EXERCISES  
EXCERPT FROM THE CONCEPTUALIZED COMPILATION OF  
ACTIVITIES**

Here are some of the steps/ procedures in practicing Mindfulness technique. This will be integrated in the class before the start of the lesson proper.

**Week 1:****1. The 3-Step Mindfulness Exercise**

*Step 1:* bring awareness to what you are doing, thinking, and sensing at this moment.

- Try to pause and take a comfortable but dignified posture. Notice the thoughts that come up and acknowledge your feelings, but let them pass. Attune yourself to who you are and your current state.

*Step 2:* bring awareness to the breathing for six breaths or a minute.

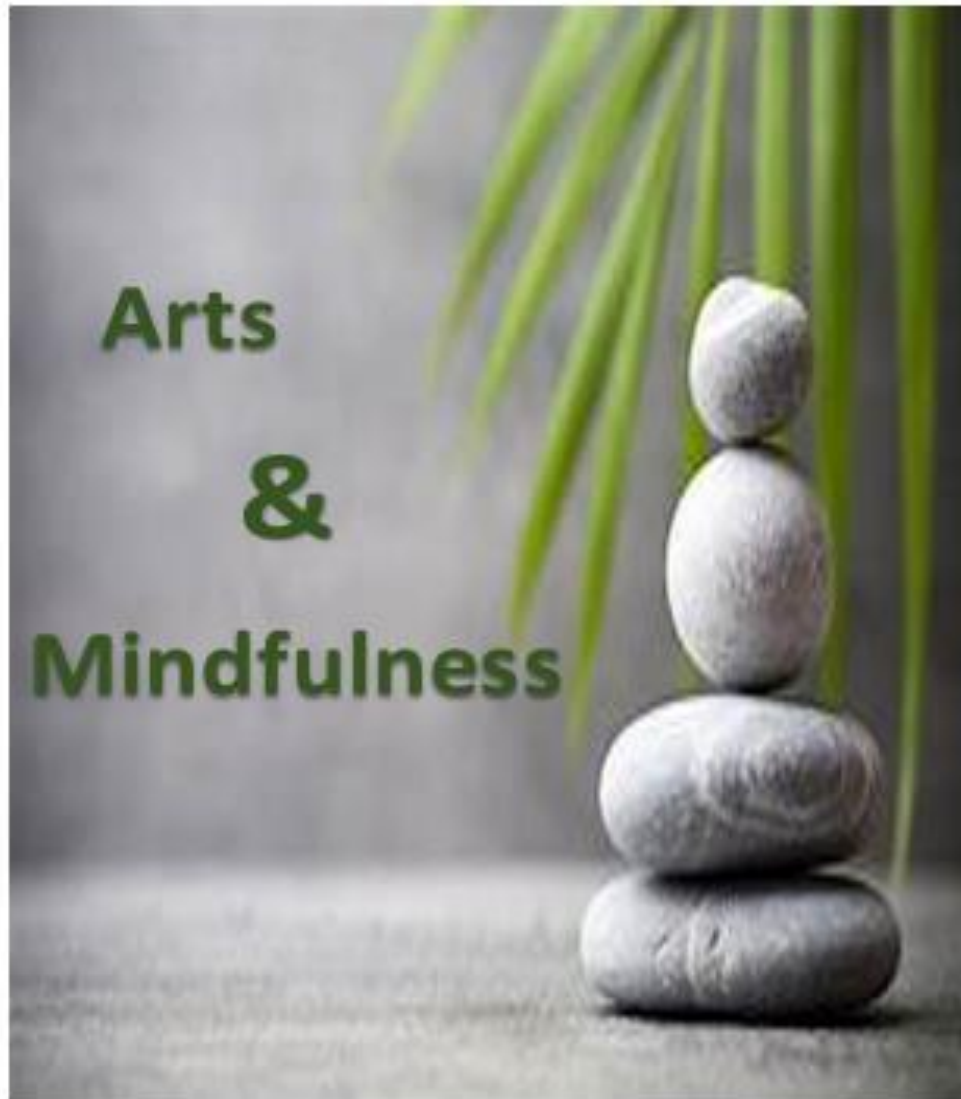
- The goal is to focus attention on one thing: your breath. Be aware of the movement of your body with each breath, of how your chest rises and falls, how your belly pushes in and out, and how your lungs expand and contract. Find the pattern of your breath and anchor yourself to the present with this awareness.

*Step 3:* expand awareness outward, first to the body then to the environment.

- Allow the awareness to expand out to your body. Notice the sensations you are experiencing, like tightness, aches, or perhaps a lightness in your face or shoulders. Keep in mind your body as a whole, as a complete vessel for your inner self;
- If you wish, you can then expand your awareness even further to the environment around you. Bring your attention to what is in front of you. Notice the colors, shapes, patterns, and textures of the objects you can see. Be present at this moment, in your awareness of your surroundings.

When you are ready to finish the exercise, open your eyes slowly and try to carry that mindfulness with you as you go about your day.

**A.M.E.N ACTIVITIES FOR THE LEARNERS**



## ART INTEGRATION

These are the activities intended for the learners to produce as an output per week. The purpose of art integration is for the students to find ways on channeling out their emotions to express their feelings and thoughts through creative means of artworks.

### Week 1

#### Self-Acceptance

Self-acceptance refers to the act or state of understanding and recognizing one's own abilities and limitations (Merriam Webster Dictionary, 2020). This is where individuals give their lives meaning.

#### Activity:

- Think of an object or a symbol that best describes yourself as of this moment. Draw or paint it on a clean sheet of paper. Then answer these questions:
  1. Tell the reasons why you think the object/symbol best describes you in the present.
  2. Are there any negative / unpleasant emotion you are feeling at the moment? If there is, are there ways on how you can change it for the better? How?

Note to Self



*Talk to yourself in a letter. Tell him/her that no amount of imperfection can wield the acceptance you could give. Embellish the letter the way you would want to accept it and put it in a box or container that you could read every time you feel you are unlovable or unworthy---to remind you that you are not.*

### Week 2

#### Purpose in Life

The scope to which an individual gives life meaning pertains to their purpose in life. Purpose can guide life decisions, influence behavior, shape goals, offer a sense of direction, and create meaning (Leonard, 2016).

#### Activity:

- Compose a lyric of a song or a jingle that corresponds to your purpose in life. The tune of the song/jingle may be your original composition or any melody adopted from a song that fits the lyric.
 

These questions may serve as your guide in creating your output:

  1. What are your goals in life? How will you attain them?
  2. What motivates me to do and be my very best?

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These questions may serve as your guide in creating your output:

1. What are your goals in life? How will you attain them?
2. What motivates me to do and be my very best?

3. Who do I think I am, who do I want to become?
4. If life is a mission, then what is your mission?

Note to Self



*Talk to yourself in a letter. Tell him/her your realizations that lead you to your life's purpose. Remind him/her that you will make it happen no matter what it takes. Embellish the letter the way you would want to accept it and put it in a box or container that you could read every time you feel you are lost of track or demotivated.*

### Week 3

#### Personal Growth

Personal growth is the ongoing process of understanding and developing oneself in order to achieve one's fullest potential (World-Minded, 2016). This is the extent to which a person has a sense of continued development and self-improvement.

#### Activity:

- Write a poetry, a prose or an essay that tells something about the things that you enjoy doing and plans on how to improve them.  
You may consider the following questions as your guide:
  1. What do I really love in life? How can I have more of this?
  2. How do I define my success?
  3. Are you willing to explore and take chances in order to fulfill your goals? If yes, how do you intend to attain them? If no, cite the reasons why.

Note to Self



*Talk to yourself in a letter. Remind him/her the many challenges, failure, and victories you've been through. Tell him/her how you surpassed them all and how did they help you to grow personally in every aspect. Embellish the letter the way you would want to accept it and put it in a box or container that you could read every time you feel you are going nowhere.*

### Week 4

#### Autonomy

Autonomy refers to the capacity of the individual to make their own choices and go their own direction. In other words, autonomy is how people view themselves as being independent and able to resist social pressures.

3. Who do I think I am, who do I want to become?
4. If life is a mission, then what is your mission?

Note to Self



*Talk to yourself in a letter. Tell him/her your realizations that lead you to your life's purpose. Remind him/her that you will make it happen no matter what it takes. Embellish the letter the way you would want to accept it and put it in a box or container that you could read every time you feel you are lost of track or demotivated.*

### Week 3

#### Personal Growth

Personal growth is the ongoing process of understanding and developing oneself in order to achieve one's fullest potential (World-Minded, 2016). This is the extent to which a person has a sense of continued development and self-improvement.

#### Activity:

- Write a poetry, a prose or an essay that tells something about the things that you enjoy doing and plans on how to improve them.  
You may consider the following questions as your guide:
  1. What do I really love in life? How can I have more of this?
  2. How do I define my success?
  3. Are you willing to explore and take chances in order to fulfill your goals?  
If yes, how do you intend to attain them? If no, cite the reasons why.

Note to Self



*Talk to yourself in a letter. Remind him/her the many challenges, failure, and victories you've been through. Tell him/her how you surpassed them all and how did they help you to grow personally in every aspect. Embellish the letter the way you would want to accept it and put it in a box or container that you could read every time you feel you are going nowhere.*

### Week 4

#### Autonomy

Autonomy refers to the capacity of the individual to make their own choices and go their own direction. In other words, autonomy is how people view themselves as being independent and able to resist social pressures.

**Activity:**

- Take a photograph of yourself or of anything that may represent your perception about one's independence and resistance of social pressure.
- Guide Questions:
  1. Explain the picture and its relationship to your view.
  2. Do you care what other people might think of you? Why/Why not?
  3. Do you easily get swayed by other people's opinions? Why? Why not?
  4. Do you accept the consequences of your actions and face it responsibly?



*Talk to yourself in a letter. Remind him/her the many situations you decided on your own. Tell him/her the output or result of each whether good or bad, talk about it still. Embellish the letter the way you would want to accept it and put it in a box or container that you could read every time you doubt yourself from making your own decisions and standing still for it.*

**Week 5****Positive Relations with Others**

The extent to which a person has a satisfying, trusting relationships with other people is what positive relations with others is all about.

**Activity:**

- Make a collage showing your visual representations on how you relate with others.
- Your output should answer these guided questions:
1. How do you value other people?
  2. How do you relate with them?
  3. How do you nurture your relationship with the people around you?
  4. Do the people in your life reflect who you are?



*Talk to yourself in a letter. Talk about your friends and your relationship with other people. Remind him/her the trust that was once broken and fixed. Embellish the letter the way you would want to accept it and put it in a box or container that you could read every time you find it difficult to trust anyone.*

**Week 6****Environmental Mastery**

According to Ryff's Scale of Psychological Wellbeing, environmental mastery pertains to one's competence in managing the environment; make effective use of

surrounding opportunities; and able to choose or create contexts suitable to one's personal needs and values. This is the degree to which a person feels in control of his life and is able to act well in his/her environment.

#### Activity:

- Instead of throwing away your old stuff like t-shirts, tumbler, mug and the like, use it as a material to create a piece of art that will explain your thoughts on the quotation, "I am the master of my fate, the captain of my destiny" by Nelson Mandela. (Your output may be a drawing, a doodle, or anything that represents your idea.)

#### Guide Questions:

1. Do you share the same beliefs with Nelson Mandela?
2. How do you take charge of your life?
3. Are you satisfied with how you respond on your day to day activities? If not, what will you do to improve it?

#### Note to Self



*Talk to yourself in a letter. Talk about your view of the phrase "one with nature". Embellish the letter the way you would want to accept it and put it in a box or container.*



## MINDFULNESS-BASED MEDITATION

Mindfulness-based meditation is a form of meditation or induced relaxation that focuses awareness on breathing and encourages positive attitudes to achieve a healthy, balanced mental state (Medical Dictionary, 2009).

Mindfulness exercises will be introduced to the learners before the start of the lesson proper. Breathing exercises (either through downloaded videos/researcher's recorded audio) will be practiced three to ten minutes every meeting.

Here are some of the steps/ procedures in practicing Mindfulness exercises. This will be integrated in the class before the start of the lesson proper.

### **Week 1:**

#### **The 3-Step Mindfulness Exercise**

*Step 1:* bring awareness to what you are doing, thinking, and sensing at this moment.

- Try to pause and take a comfortable but dignified posture. Notice the thoughts that come up and acknowledge your feelings, but let them pass. Attune yourself to who you are and your current state.

*Step 2:* bring awareness to the breathing for six breaths or a minute.

- The goal is to focus attention on one thing: your breath. Be aware of the movement of your body with each breath, of how your chest rises and falls, how your belly pushes in and out, and how your lungs expand and contract. Find the pattern of your breath and anchor yourself to the present with this awareness.

*Step 3:* expand awareness outward, first to the body then to the environment.

- Allow the awareness to expand out to your body. Notice the sensations you are experiencing, like tightness, aches, or perhaps a lightness in your face or shoulders. Keep in mind your body as a whole, as a complete vessel for your inner self;
- If you wish, you can then expand your awareness even further to the environment around you. Bring your attention to what is in front of you. Notice the colors, shapes, patterns, and textures of the objects you can see. Be present at this moment, in your awareness of your surroundings.

When you are ready to finish the exercise, open your eyes slowly and try to carry that mindfulness with you as you go about your day.

Reference: Ackerman, C. (2020). 22 Mindfulness, Techniques and Activities. Positive Psychology.com <https://positivepsychology.com/mindfulness-exercises-techniques-activities/>

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## Week 2

### Basic Steps in Mindfulness-Meditation

No matter how many thoughts are racing around your mind; no matter how your body's feeling, take a moment to sit down.

- Big deep breath- in through the nose, out through the mouth. Taking in fresh air, lungs expanding. Breathe out, letting go of stress in the body, in the mind, feeling the muscles soften and relax.
- Close your eyes if you'd like to. One more breathing deeply. In through the nose, out through the mouth...
- Allow thoughts to come and go gently opening the eyes again.

Reference: From headspace mini meditation

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## Week 3

### Five Senses Exercise

This exercise is called "five senses," and provides guidelines on practicing mindfulness quickly in nearly any situation. All that is needed is to notice something you are experiencing with each of the five senses.

Follow this order to practice the Five Senses Exercise:

- Notice five things that you can *see*.

Look around you and bring your attention to five things that you can see. Pick something that you don't normally notice, like a shadow or a small crack in the concrete.

- Notice four things that you can *feel*.

Bring awareness to four things that you are currently feeling, like the texture of your pants, the feeling of the breeze on your skin, or the smooth surface of a table you are resting your hands on.

- Notice three things you can *hear*.

Take a moment to listen, and note three things that you hear in the background. This can be the chirp of a bird, the hum of the refrigerator, or the faint sounds of traffic from a nearby road.

- Notice two things you can *smell*.

Bring your awareness to smells that you usually filter out, whether they're pleasant or unpleasant. Perhaps the breeze is carrying a whiff of pine trees if you're outside, or the smell of a fast-food restaurant across the street.

- Notice one thing you can *taste*.

Focus on one thing that you can taste right now, at this moment. You can take a sip of a drink, chew a piece of gum, eat something, notice the current taste in your mouth, or even open your mouth to search the air for a taste.

Reference: Ackerman, C. (2020). 22 Mindfulness, Techniques and Activities. Positive Psychology.com <https://positivepsychology.com/mindfulness-exercises-techniques-activities/>

## Week 4

### Mindfulness Techniques for Anger/Unpleasant Emotions

This technique can help you deal with the experience of anger (Cullen, Pons, & Mindful Staff, 2016):

- First, sit in a comfortable position with your eyes closed and notice the places where your body is touching the floor, cushion, or chair;
- Draw in a few deep breaths, completely filling up your lungs and quickly exhaling;
- Think back to a time that you recently experienced anger, preferably a mild or quickly addressed episode. Allow yourself to experience the anger you felt in that moment;
- Disregard any other feelings that come up with this memory, like guilt or sadness;
- Turn your attention to how you are experiencing anger in your body. Notice whether any parts of your body are manifesting your anger with sensations like warmth or cold, the intensity of these reactions and whether they change as you observe them or move through your body;
- Bring compassion to the anger. This can be a difficult step, but remind yourself that anger is a natural human emotion that affects us all at one point or another. Try to hold your anger "like a mother cradling a newborn," with love and understanding;
- Say goodbye to your anger. Gradually bring your attention back to your breath and rest here for a while until your emotions have subsided or settled down;
- Reflect on the experience. Notice the sensations that this exercise brought up in your body. Notice if they changed through the process. Take note of whether you applied

compassion to your anger, and if so, how you did it. Think about what happened to the anger when you showed it compassion.

This exercise can be repeated as many times as necessary. It is recommended to work your way up from milder experiences of anger to the most intense and memorable episodes.

Practicing this technique can help you to defuse chronic anger in a rather counterintuitive manner: by accepting and mindfully feeling your anger, you can take control of the experience and compassionately address it.

Reference: Ackerman, C. (2020). 22 Mindfulness, Techniques and Activities. Positive Psychology.com <https://positivepsychology.com/mindfulness-exercises-techniques-activities/>

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## Week 5

### *7 Mindfulness Steps:*

#### *Step 1.*

*Take a deep breath and relax, with your eyes open or closed.*

Be aware of sounds around you coming and going, and let them be whatever they are.

This is the simple first step in your practice of mindfulness meditation.

Keep taking in and releasing slow, deep breaths, while being aware of it.

#### *Step 2.*

*Close your eyes and drop all your concerns now, like setting down a heavy bag.*

After the meditation, you can pick those up again — if you want to. Realize you are allowing yourself this time to move away from worldly worries.

#### *Step 3.*

*Now focus on your breath. Bring your whole awareness to the sensation of your breathing.*

Sense the cool air coming in and the warm air going out. Feel the chest rising and falling, the belly expanding and contracting. Don't try to control your breath; let it be whatever it is, flowing in and out of its own.

#### *Step 4.*

*Start counting your breaths softly — count from one to ten, and then start over.*

*Start back from one if you notice you missed the sequence before reaching number ten, because your mind had wandered.*

It's normal for the mind to wander. And when it does, just return to counting the breaths again from the start. Be gentle on yourself, letting go of all self-criticism.

**Step 5.**

*Get more and more absorbed in your breathing. Start to notice the volume, speed, warmth and sound of the breath traveling in and out of your nostrils.*

Once your mind settles down during the first few minutes, you will find it easier to focus your attention on the air as it travels deeper, in through the wind-pipe and into your lungs, and back out again. Open your whole consciousness to the simple process of breathing.

**Step 6.**

*Now, bring your attention to the presence of the thoughts that are moving through your mind, trying to pull your attention away from your breath. Take notice of them. This is the **most important** step of practicing mindfulness meditation.*

Let yourself be aware of those thoughts and feelings, wishes and plans, images and memories. Your streams of thoughts will keep alluring your mind away from your breath. Tell yourself: I'm noticing my thoughts, yet I'm not getting carried away by them.

Don't get caught up or fascinated in them to start thinking yourself away. But also, don't struggle with them. *The idea is to sit with your thoughts and let them be whatever they are.*

Most of all, just notice their impermanence as they finally fade off. And yet have an attitude of acceptance toward those free-flowing thoughts.

Each time you catch yourself being dragged away by a thought, gently bring back your focus to your breath — *again and again.*

**Step 7.**

*Feel a growing sense of peacefulness within as you keep settling into the breath with more focus.*

Notice how it feels to get caught up in the passing contents of awareness—and how it feels to let them go by. Be aware of peaceful awareness itself.

Once you're there in the state of *peaceful awareness*, you may decide to sit in that state for as long as you want.

Finally, you may bring the meditation to an end by opening your eyes, stretching out your hands and getting up.

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**Reference:** Roy, S. (2018). How To Practice Mindfulness In 7 Steps: The Easiest Guide For Beginners. Happiness India Project. <https://happyproject.in/happy-project/>

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**Week 6**

- Breathing in to the nose, out to the mouth (3x)...

Close your eyes and be aware of your other physical senses. Focus your attention on the sensation of touch and in particular the feeling of the body pressing down on the chair/floor.

Noticing whether your body is leaning to the left or perhaps to the right... Notice the sensation of your feet on the floor/chair and at the same way noticing the weight of the hands and the arms where its resting on your lap. Notice the sound around you – an obstacle that gets in the way of a quiet mind. Take five to ten seconds to notice all the different sounds around you, no matter how pleasant or unpleasant it is. Gently bring your attention back to your body. Notice how your body feels as you sit there normally...

Starting at the top of your head, take ten seconds to scan down to your body, noticing which part of the body feels relaxed, comfortable and at ease and which part of the body feels tense and tight in some way, just build up a picture of how your body feels... Maybe your mind wanders off while you're doing this is normal. Just bring your attention back again and as you're doing this, you might begin to notice the underlying mood or quality of your mind... And as you are sitting there, allow your body to breathe naturally, just noticing which part of the body you feel that movement and the rhythm of the breath... Maintain your focus on the breath. Slowly begin to count your breaths as they pass. If you feel the rising sensation, you count 1, if you feel the falling sensation, count 2, then 3, 4... and stop at the count of 10.

You are not thinking of the breath. You are just simply aware of it, as they come and go... Don't worry if you get distracted, just try to go back where you left of on. And for just a moment, I want you to let go of any focus at all. Just let your mind do whatever it wants to do, to think, to be busy with, with no sense of control. Just allow your mind to be completely be free, and then gently bring back the attention to the body, back to the sensation of the chair, feet on the floor and arms and hands just resting on legs, bring the mind to its physical senses, and in your own time, just gently open your eyes and have a stretch when you're ready.

Reference: ~~Buddicombe~~, A. (2016). How Mindfulness can change your life in 10 minutes. Goodreads. <https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/13575298-how-mindfulness-can-change-your-life-in-10-minutes-a-day>

**B. CONSENT AND ASSENT LETTERS****LETTER OF ASSENT**

Dear Participants,

I am currently doing a research study on “Arts and Mindfulness Exercises Integration (AMEN) Approach in Promoting Positive Mental Health Amid the COVID-19 Pandemic”. The purpose of this study is to help the learners cope up with the pandemic crisis and uplift the state of mental health of the Senior High School learners at Tarlac National High School during first semester of the school year 2020-2021.

If you decide to be part of this study, you will be asked to participate in the experimentation and be subjected to use AMEN approach. The study will cover a six-week period during the first semester of 2020-2021 and will be incorporated in the subject Introduction to World Religions and Belief Systems.

If you agree to participate, you will be highly appreciated. One of the benefits of participating in this study is that you will be able to channel your negative emotions through arts and mindfulness exercises which hopefully can lead to attaining positive mental health during this pandemic that we are experiencing at the present. However, you still have the choice to discontinue participating in the study, in the event that you feel the need to do so. Always, your decision as participant will be highly respected.

Once the study is completed, a final report will be furnished, and your anonymity will be strictly observed in the preparation of documents relevant to the conduct of this research.

Thank you very much, and I am looking forward to your participation in this research study.

Very truly yours,

**ANA GRACIA G. CATALAN**

Senior High School Teacher Researcher

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If you finally decide to participate in this study, please write your name below and affix your signature.

I, \_\_\_\_\_ (Full Name), of \_\_\_\_\_ (Grade Level and Class)  
want to participate in this research study.

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(Signature)

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(Date)



**CONSENT LETTER**

Dear Parents/Guardians,

I am currently doing a research study on “Arts and Mindfulness Exercises Integration (AMEN) Approach in Promoting Positive Mental Health Amid the COVID-19 Pandemic”. The purpose of this study is to help the learners cope up with the pandemic crisis and uplift the state of mental health of the Senior High School learners at Tarlac National High School during first semester of the school year 2020-2021.

The conduct of the study will start on the last week of August 2020 and will end on the 3<sup>rd</sup> week of October 2020. The experimentation will run for six weeks and will be incorporated in our Introduction to World Religions and Belief Systems class.

This letter is to ask consent from you as parents or guardians of the prospective participants of the study. As the researcher, I am assuring you that the future involvement of your children is of bonafide interest and is only for the purpose of testing the effectiveness of an intervention innovation during the pandemic.

The anonymity and safety of your children will also be taken into great consideration before, during, and after the fulfillment of the entire experimentation. In the event that your child would want to withdraw his or her participation in the study, the decision will be completely respected. The participation of your child would really be of great help in the completion of this study.

Thank you very much, and God bless you!

Very truly yours,

**ANA GRACIA G. CATALAN**

Senior High School Teacher Researcher

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If you decide to allow your child to participate in this study, please write your name below and affix your signature.

I, \_\_\_\_\_ (Full Name), parent/guardian of \_\_\_\_\_ (Name of Child, Grade Level and Section), is giving the researcher the consent and have my child participate in his research study.

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(Signature)

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(Date)