



MINDFULNESS YOUTH NOVEL DYNAMICS (MYND): A STRESS MANAGEMENT STRATEGY FOR JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

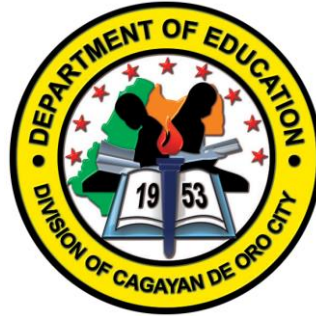
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Completed 2022



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MINDFULNESS YOUTH NOVEL DYNAMICS (MYND): A STRESS MANAGEMENT STRATEGY FOR JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS



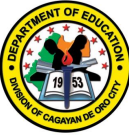
An Action Research Fund Study

Presented to the Regional Research Committee (RRC)
of the Department of Education 10

By:

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November 2022



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Abstract

The pandemic changed the world's way of life and had an impact on many areas of development, most notably in the field of education. In order to meet the demand for ongoing education, the Philippine educational system adopted a new paradigm of learning that was modeled after the bichronous teaching approach. Students and other stakeholders had a variety of reactions to this quick change in the learning process. Thus, the objective of this study is to determine the effectiveness of the Mindfulness Youth Novel Dynamic as stress coping strategy. The study used the Perceived Stress Scale Test (PSS) as standardized test to determine the students' level of stress. The test was administered to a sample of 90 Grade 9 students, 30 males and 60 females, at Gusa Regional Science High School-X. The results indicated that there is a significant difference of the level of stress between the pre- and post-PSS scores, thus MYND is effective as stress coping strategy. Result also shows that male students is better in coping stress compare to female students.

Keywords: mindfulness, novel dynamics, stress management, junior high school



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II. Acknowledgment

The researchers warmly convey their profound appreciation to the following people who helped them in the completion of this action research:

To Dr. Arturo B. Bayocot, Regional Director of Department of Education Region – X and to Dr. Cherry Mae L. Limbaco-Reyes, Schools Division Superintendent of the Division of Cagayan de Oro for this inimitable research opportunity;

To the Regional Research Committee (RRC) of the Department of Education 10 and to the Schools Division Research Committee for their diligent effort in implementing this research program;

To Dr. Joel D. Potane, for sharing his invaluable expertise and guidance throughout this study;

To the Principal, Ms. Charlyn S. Baylon, for her incomparable support and encouragement during the course of the study;

To the faculty and staff of Gusa Regional Science High School – X, especially the class advisers and subject teachers of Grade – 9 students for S.Y. 2021 – 2022, for their unwavering support and immediate approval to the vital requests sought by the researchers;

To all the Regionalistas, especially the Grade – 9 learners of S.Y. 2021-2022 who actively participated in the study;

Above all, to the Almighty God for His Divine provisions, for without which, the completion of this action research shall be deemed impossible.



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Context and Rationale

The Covid-19 pandemic causes several undesirable situations on everyone's daily lives – disrupting normal ways of life. As countries continue to struggle to end this pandemic, evolving Covid-19 variants continually drag the situation to a seemingly endless fight. As for the education sector in the Philippines, the Department of Education issued DepEd Order 029, series of 2021 which mandates that public schools are to implement blended learning and that the conduct of face-to-face classes, whether in partial or full-scale, will still not be allowed unless permitted by the President. Majority of the Filipino students are on remote learning modality, and the study of Rotas & Cahapay (2020) concluded that it causes several difficulties such as vague learning contents and limited teacher scaffolds, and mental health struggles among others.

Undeniably, students have experienced anxiety symptoms and one of the contributory factors are their concerns on academics (Cao et al., 2020). Filipino students are no exception to the effects of the pandemic. Locally, as concluded in the researchers' previous study in 2021 which was conducted to determine the stress level of Grade – 10 students of Gusa Regional Science High School – X in Cagayan de Oro City, it shows that students have had high level of emotional stress which are caused by massive school works, lack of sleep and academic burnout.

It is along this vein that prompted the researchers to integrate mindfulness strategy into the modular classes and examine its effects on students' stress level. Mindfulness as defined by Kabat-Zinn, cited in Ahmed et al., 2017, refers to



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‘paying attention in a particular way on purpose, in the present moment, and nonjudgmentally, to the unfolding of experience moment to moment.’ The Garrison Institute report (2005) indicated that many schools adopt mindfulness approaches because the techniques are easy to learn and may help students become more responsive, calm, and focused while experiencing less stress and distractions. This report implies that integrating mindfulness in the class may create more positive learning environments in which students are fostered to pay attention, and consequently, are better prepared to learn.

Mindfulness, although scientifically proven to be feasible and acceptable, is still a relatively new concept in the Philippines. To date, there is little research support for its effectiveness in the local educational setting. Considering that mindfulness has its Western origin, Alampay et al., (2020) in their study on pilot randomized controlled trial of a mindfulness program for Filipino children concludes that mindfulness-based intervention requires deeper contextual adaptation and facilitator preparation. In response to this limitation, the current study pursues a line of inquiry with the hope of reducing stress level of the students under distance learning through a stress management strategy, specifically the mindfulness youth novel dynamics (MYND). MYND is a teacher-made contextualized mindfulness strategy created specifically with an aim to reduce stress level of the participants. It is a contextualized packet that consists of varied mindfulness practices that include guided-meditation, creative visualization, and mindfulness art-based exercises. The strategy will aid the



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students in managing stress in which, the researchers seek to determine if it is an effective strategy that will help on the reduction of the students' stress.

Innovation, Intervention and Strategy

The study focuses on the effectiveness of the MYND strategies in managing stress and determination of emotional stress response of Junior High School students under bichronous teaching modality during this new normal education. The pre and post data collection will be done through online survey (Google Form) using the Perceived Stress Scale (Cohen, 1994) and to be administered to select Grade 9- Junior High School students of Gusa Regional Science High School – X, School Year 2021 – 2022. The study will be conducted in the third and fourth quarter of the school year.

Once the pre-test result of perceived stress scale is gathered, the students will undergo guided mindfulness exercises. The MYND strategies are adapted and modified from Achievers Dynamic System International, an international non-sectarian, non-profit and non-political group that focuses on the holistic development of a person with application on mindfulness and meditation exercises (www.adsi.info, 2022). These strategies were modified to fit the norms of the school and the current teaching modality.

1. The researchers sought approval of the school principal, the Grade – 9 advisers and subject teachers to conduct the research.
2. Provided that target respondents are minors, an assent form was provided to the parents of the respondents to signify their approval of



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their children's participation to the research. It was emphasized that such participation shall purely be voluntary and shall not affect the academic grades of the respondents.

3. Once approval was sought, MYND strategies were introduced to the student-respondents. The MYND strategies commenced in 3 cycles of mindfulness exercises anchored on the Intention-Attention-Attitude model of Dr. Shauna Shapiro. These cycles include, intention phase (cycle 1), attention phase (cycle 2) and attitude phase (cycle 3).

4. Pre-implementation Phase. The intervention was initially started with an orientation of the mindfulness activities. Also, a pre-implementation orientation and assessment was conducted to solicit feedback of their current emotional status and to identify possible factors that might contributed to their perceived stress level. This will serve as the basis to determine the degree of stress they are experiencing and the coping skills that are practiced (Matheny & McCarthy, 2000).

5. Implementation Phase. The student-respondents were exposed to the MYND interventions through virtual sessions. The MYND strategies consist of 3 cycles (IAA model) with major mindfulness exercises, specifically: creative visualization, guided meditation, breathing exercises, mind-focus-action exercise, and mindfulness art-visualization exercises. The student-respondents were guided with the mindfulness exercises through virtual synchronous sessions once a



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week. Furthermore, MYND strategies were implemented during the third and fourth quarter of the school year 2021-2022.

6. Post-implementation Phase. After the conduct of the entire MYND interventions, the student-respondents undergo post-test of the Perceived Stress Scale Test and post-implementation FGD. This is to determine their stress level and identify the effectiveness of the mindfulness program.

Feedback was solicited through guided reflection from the students during the MYND sessions and evaluation at the end of every session. Further, this study is limited to the following parameters: demographic profile of the respondents, pre and post perceived stress test of the respondents. The study adapted the Intention-Attention-Attitude (IAA) Mindfulness Model of Dr. Shauna Shapiro (2006). The structure of this spatial model will congruently determine the relationship of one's intention to attend to its current situation with conscious and mindful direction to attain a defining purpose in life (Shapiro, 2006). Directed by its purpose, its causal moment experiences will lead to more attention to gain more knowledge of the pressing scenarios the person involves thus leads to the construction of behaviors and attitudes that is evident through discernment and reflections upon one's life (Blaser, 2012). The ability to observe one's own inner existence and the act of understanding are both significant components of this concept. Further, the model assumes the following setup on the application of mindfulness in this study.



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A. *Intention* focuses on the purpose of practicing mindfulness and the will to alleviate stress and stressors in life. It is the guiding principle of the heart that fuels the goal and objective in life (Vysotskaya, 2020). This the moment the practitioner values his/her experience and acknowledges attention, time, and energies and the application of these factors for the benefit of personal holistic development (Palace Gate Counselling Service, 2014).

B. *Attention* is identifying the factors and requisites to follow up the intention to act or change. It is the moment that triggers the awareness of the person and controls the wandering mind into mind-action status, perceptive and introspective actions (Vysotskaya, 2020). In a recent study, it is stated that unhappiness related to mind wandering accounts to 46.9% in every person, and mind wandering usually happens in every moment if allowed without control (Killingsworth & Gilbert, 2010).

C. *Attitude* is the act of knowing how to concentrate and control the mind. To control the mind and maintain a mindfulness state, we should always practice kindness, liberation, acceptance, peace, harmony, confidence, and compassion (Vysotskaya, 2020).

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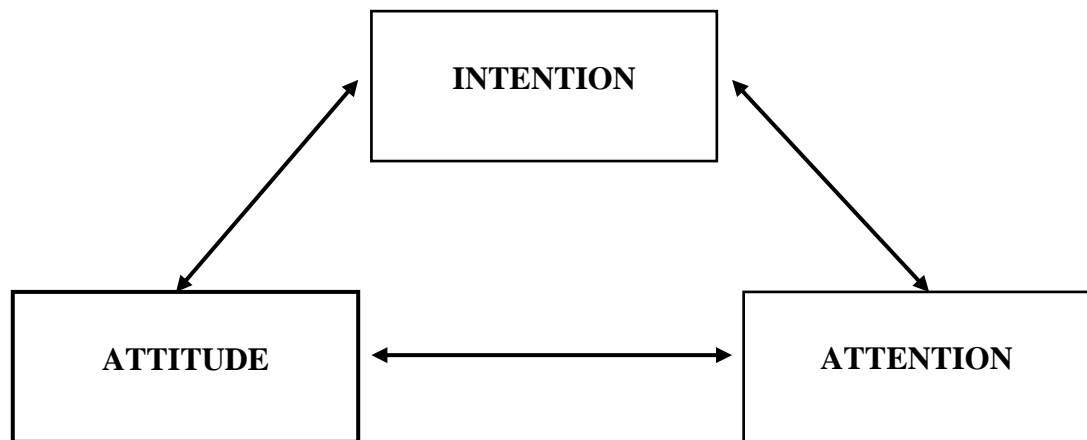


Figure 1: The interwoven aspects of the cyclic IAA Mindfulness Model by Dr. Shauna Shapiro (2006)

Action Research Questions

1. What is the emotional stress response of Junior High School students before and after the mindfulness youth novel dynamics exercises?
2. Is there any significant difference in the emotional stress response of students before and after the mindfulness youth novel dynamics exercises?

Action Research Methods

A. Participants and/or other Sources of Data

The respondents of this study are the select Grade - 9 Junior High School students of Gusa Regional Science High School – X who are officially enrolled for School year 2021 – 2022. To determine the participants, the researchers employed purposive sampling procedure.



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Grade 9 Junior High School students are chosen to be the respondents of this action research, because a high degree of stress was reported by about 26% to high school students especially to adolescents (Assana, Laohasiriwong, & Rangseekajee, 2017). In 2021, the World Health Organization (WHO) published research which revealed the following key facts:

“Adolescence is a crucial period for developing social and emotional habits important for mental well-being... The more risk factors adolescents are exposed to, the greater the potential impact on their mental health.

... It is estimated that 3.6% of 10-14 year-olds and 4.6% of 15-19 year-olds experience an anxiety disorder. Depression is estimated to occur among 1.1% of adolescents aged 10-14 years, and 2.8% of 15-19-year-olds.”

With the unique data provided by the WHO, the researchers observe that Grade 9 students who are usually in ages 15 – 17 are the ideal research participants since majority of them are within the age range mentioned who may be experiencing high level of anxiety or stress.

B. Data Gathering Methods

The researchers sought an approval for the conduct of this action research from the Schools Division Superintendent of the Division of Cagayan de Oro. Once permitted to conduct, the researcher sought the cooperation of the school principal and Junior High School teachers to successfully conduct the study. The researcher administered the questionnaires to the respondents through Google

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Form. The researchers ensured that the study's purpose, confidentiality, and instruction are thoroughly understood by the respondents by including an explanation on the Google Form Questionnaire and during the pre-implementation stage orientation. The respondents underwent mindfulness exercises based on the MYND modules. It has three cycles: Intention, Attention and Attitude phases.

Specifically, researchers employed **practical action research design**. This design is used to research a specific school and is usually taken in situation with a view toward improving practice. It involves a moderate research project, closely focuses on a specific problem or issue, and is undertaken by individual teachers or teams within a school or school district (Thanavathi, 2017). In the context of this research, the implementation of the MYND Modules adheres to the three axioms of mindfulness: Attention, Attention, and Attitude.

Table 1. Learning-Action Plan of MYND Exercise

Cycle No.	Stage	Activity/Questions	Topic/Session	Tasks/Output
Pre-implementation		Pre-test on PSS	Pre-assessment	PSS pretest scores
CYCLE 1: Intention phase	Implementation	Pose Essential Questions: 1. <i>What brings me alive?</i> 2. <i>What makes me happy?</i>	Session 1: Introduction to Mindfulness	MYND Orientation - Reflections - Do breathing exercise

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CYCLE 2: Attention phase'		Pose Essential Questions: <i>1. How does anger and happiness affect my body?</i> <i>2. What choice or decision I made need to be worked on?</i>	Session 2: "Who are you?" The Nature of Self	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Able to do guided meditation - Do heart meditation for 10 minutes - Reflections
		Pose Essential Questions: <i>1. What do I want in life?</i> <i>2. What task program would I start the next day if I knew I would succeed?</i>	Session 3: Positivity: The Power of Creative Visualization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Dream board - Do guided visualization exercise - Reflections
CYCLE 3: Attitude Phase		Pose Essential Questions: <i>1. How can I embrace who I am today?</i> <i>2. How can practice mindfulness living today?</i>	Session 4: How are you? The Power of Meditation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Mind-focus-action exercise - Reflective Journal
Post-implementation		Posttest on PSS Focus Group Discussion	Post-assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Posttest PSS Scores - Feedback

Further, this research used the following instruments to obtain the desired data, to wit:

Perceived Stress Scale

The Perceived Stress Scale is used to measure the level of coping from psychological stress of each respondent with reference to gender, age, education, status and other demographics. It measured how different factors affect the individual level of perceived stress based on their coping mechanisms

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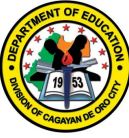
(Cohen, 1994). The PSS contains 10- items questions with several items structured in reversing response and then summed up to obtain the scores across the scale (www.mindgarden.com). The tool has been validated in both adolescent and adult populations. It can be freely used provided that it is for non-profit purposes such as in this research (Cohen, 1994).

Focus Group Discussion

The focus group discussion was used to gather the students of the same interest to obtain their experiences, feelings, feedbacks and opinions on the MYND exercise. The qualitative questions posed by the researcher has immensely contributed to dig intrinsic ideas and feelings from the participants, that are significant in understanding the nature of their emotional stress, the effect of mindfulness exercises in their coping management and possible areas in the MYND strategies that needs to be improved. The FGD has significantly contributed to the organized in-depth analysis of the student's affective responses that aid in the development of the MYND strategy.

Table 2: Distribution of Interview Questions

Area of Questions	Interview Research Questions
Engaging Questions	How are you?
I. How has the MYND Program helped you in managing stress?	
Exploratory Question	Did the MYND Program help you, in any way, in managing your stress? If yes, how? If no, state the reason/s.
	During the conduct of the MYND Program, did it help you to become more mindful, and in effect, lessen your stress?
	Can you think of a particular/feature/topic/activity of the MYND Program that helped you to cope with stress?
II. What are your recommendations for the MYND Program?	
	What are the advantages and disadvantages of the MYND



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Exploratory Question	Program?
	If you can change a thing or two on the MYND Program, what would it be? Why?
Exit Question	Are there any other insights that you would like to share?

D. Data Analysis Plan

To have an accurate interpretation of the obtained data, the following statistical tools were employed:

1. **Weighted Mean and Standard Deviation** was utilized to describe the respondents' mean sample size, sex, and level of stress. This has served as a descriptive parameter that may affect the emotional response of the students.

2. To determine significant difference obtained by the respondents' perceived emotional stress in terms of sex, **Independent Sample T-test and Paired T-test** was used. Such tests ascertain whether or not there is mean difference between the means of two correlated samples. The data, further, corresponding to "two samples" are the possible result of natural pairings," which means that, one observation is made on two sets of respondents.

Further, the independent sample t-test was utilized to identify the significant difference of the student's perceived stress response by gender. And the paired t-test was used to inferentially determine the mean difference of the students pretest and posttest emotional stress response scores.

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Discussion of Results and Reflection

TABLE 1: *Emotional Stress Level of Grade 9 Students in GRSHS-X*

GENDER	N	Mean	SD	Level of Stress
<i>PRE-PSS</i>				
Male	30	21.13	4.83	Very High
Female	60	24.43	6.09	Very High
Total	90	23.33	5.88	Very High
<i>POST-PSS</i>				
Male	30	15.40	3.00	Average
Female	60	17.90	5.00	High
Total	90	17.07	4.57	Very High

Stress Level (PSS): 0-7=very low stress, 8-11 is low stress, 12-15= average stress, 16-20=high stress, 21+ =very high stress;

Table 1 shows the level of emotional stress of Grade 9 students of Gusa Regional Science High School – X. The data show that the average mean score for the perceived stress level of Grade 9 students before MYND strategy is 23.33 and 5.88, respectively. Result interprets that students have very high level of stress during the bichronous modality. Females having a greater perceived stress mean score (24.43) is supported by the comparative study of stress in male and female by Omidullah Khadem in 2019, stating that female students have more stress than male students.

Further, the findings indicated that the common causes of their high levels of stress are school works, family-related problems, procrastination, missing deadlines, small scores and a lack of time management skills. The students expressed their personal reasons behind their stresses, to wit:



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“Procrastinating-This has been a really big issue in my schoolwork because I don't know how to stop procrastinating and even if I tried, I still do it. After neglecting my workload for so long, I immediately shift to self-blaming and I hate it.”

“Low module score and unnoticed new assignment. These things make me emotionally upset since I expected that I did great at doing my module but it came out to be bad. And unnoticed new assignment makes me emotionally upset too because it makes me submit late because of my lack of skill of checking things.”

“Basically because of my laziness and poor time management. I can't seem to do everything alright. It's just feels like everything what I do is wrong.”

Academic issues were the common thread throughout all the difficulties. These factors are also mentioned in the Students' coping with Stress at high school study. Having to study too much material, having trouble understanding what has been learned, having too much homework, and having a jam-packed class schedule were among the top ten stressors among students. (Shahmohammadi, 2011). Procrastination was the most predominant factors. When students repeatedly do this, they grow disinterested in working on that

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particular activity or assignment, and tension soon follows as they begin to worry about how to finish it before the deadline (Essel et al., 2017).

TABLE 2: Independent t-test result of PRE-PSS and POST PSS scores by gender

GENDER	N	Mean	SD	p-value
<i>PRE-PSS</i>				
Male	30	21.13	4.83	0.01
Female	60	24.43	6.09	
<i>POST-PSS</i>				
Male	30	15.40	3.00	0.01
Female	60	17.90	5.00	

Using an alpha level of .05, an independent-samples t-test was conducted to evaluate whether male group and female group differed significantly on pre-PSS and post-PSS scores. The test was significant on both pre and post-PSS scores having $t(88) = -2.59, p = .01$ and $t(88) = -2.51, p = 0.01$, respectively. An examination of the group means indicate that male group have lesser pre and post-PSS scores than the female group. Result shows that male students can manage their stress better compared to their female counterparts.

TABLE 3: Paired t-test result of PRE-PSS and POST PSS scores

GENDER	N	Mean	SD	p-value
PRE-PSS	90	23.33	5.88	0.01
POST-PSS	90	17.07	4.57	

Preliminary assumption testing was conducted. Shapiro Wilk test for normality shows that at $\alpha = .05$ there is no significant departure of the distribution of the paired differences from normality, $p > .26$. Thus, paired sample t-test was conducted. Using an alpha level of .05, a paired sample t-test show that the



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mean difference, 6.27, is statistically significant $t(89) = 8.27, p = .001$, which means that the post-PSS score ($M = 17.07, SD = 4.57, n = 90$) is significantly lesser than the pre-modular score ($M = 23.33, SD = 5.88, n = 89$). This shows that Mindfulness Youth Novel Dynamic Strategy activities are significantly effective as stress coping strategy. Activities such as meditation, 10-minute positivity and controlling ones-emotions are key coping activities that help students manage their stress. Students also responded on the question on how MYND helped them managing their stress:

“Yes, it gave me an option to do whenever I felt stressed or angry, like having 5 minutes of positivity”

“Yes, the MYND Program has helped me manage my stress by letting me know about proper stress management and that we all deserve even just five minutes of complete tranquility, in which we let go of everything stressing us out.”

“Yes, it helped me to get my priorities straight. Whenever I feel like things are too much and just want to disappear, I remember to calm down, breathe, manage my priorities, and keep going. It also taught me to be more positive, to see the beauty of every little things.’

These responses are mentioned on the study of neuroscience of mindfulness meditation of Tang, Holzel and Posner (2017), stating that Meditation practice

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has the potential to affect self-referential processing and improve present-moment awareness. Stress is decreased and emotion regulation is improved by mindfulness practice. Further, In mindfulness meditation, attention is purposefully kept broader, utilizing a more open and fluid focus but without engaging analytical thought or analysis (Kristeller, 2007).

Action Plan

Program/ Activity	Tasks	Timeframe	Output	Resources
Conceptualizing the Action Research	Identify classroom problems that needs to be addressed.	February 1-4, 2022	Action Research Problem	Personal
Writing proposal	Identify problems, research related studies and identify potential interventions.	February 7-15, 2022	Action Research Proposal Manuscript, Action Work Plan, Proposed Budget Proposal	Personal
Crafting of MYND activities and lessons	Construct mind-action activity sheets that are essential in implementing MYND exercises.	February 16- March 05, 2022	MYND activity sheets	Personal
Conduct of Initial Survey on Perceived Stress Response	Float initial PSS survey as pre-assessment and obtain pretest scores.	March 07-09, 2022	Pretest PSS scores, Reflections	Personal, BERF
Implementation of Intervention/Strategies	Application of MYND interventions with integrating of IAA cyclic model.	March 28-May 06, 2022	Reflections, Guided Meditation Exercise, Dream Board, Journals	Personal, BERF
Conduct of Post Survey on Emotional Stress Response	Administer post test on PSS, FGD and post-assessments.	June 06-10, 2022	Posttest PSS scores, FGD, Reflections	Personal, BERF
Gathering of data	Collect all data for descriptive and inferential analysis. Run independent and paired sample t-test for inferences.	June 13-30, 2022	Pre and Posttest PSS scores, reflections, FGD	Personal, BERF
Finalizing the Action Research.	Complete all necessary data and written outputs needed for the action research.	Sept. 19-Nov. 09, 2022	Hardcopy manuscripts	Personal, BERF



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Submission and Presentation of Action Research.	Prepare hardbound manuscript, powerpoint presentation and communication of results.	Nov. 11, 2022	Powerpoint presentation, Hardbound manuscripts	Personal, BERF
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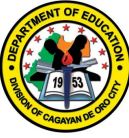
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III. Action Research Work Plan and Timelines

TIMELINE
SY 2022-2023

Activities	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug
Conceptualizing the Action Research							
Writing proposal							
Seeking approval of the Proposal							
Crafting of MYND Modules							
Checking & Validation of MYND modules							
Identification of Student Respondents							
Conduct of Initial Survey on Perceived Stress Response							
Implementation of Intervention/Strategies							
Conduct of Post Survey on Emotional Stress Response							
Gathering of data							
Finalizing the Action Research.							
Submission and Presentation of Action Research.							