

## **SPECIAL SUPPORT STRATEGY (SSS): AN AIDE IN MODULAR DISTANCE LEARNING OF STUDENTS FROM FAMILIES WITH LOW EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT**

**Junnel B. Amarilla, [junnel.amarilla@deped.gov.ph](mailto:junnel.amarilla@deped.gov.ph)  
Schools Division Office of Zamboanga del Sur, Region IX**

### **INTRODUCTION**

The global outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic has spread worldwide, affecting almost all countries and territories. In education, the pandemic wreaked havoc on its system, affecting nearly 1.6 billion students in over 200 countries. In the Philippines, ensuring the welfare of more than 27 million students in basic education calls for unwavering dedication despite the current health crisis. Through DepEd Order No. 12 s. 2020 titled "Adoption of the Basic Education Learning Continuity Plan for School Year 2020-2021 in the Light of the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency", various learning modalities aimed at maintaining the delivery of high-quality education to Filipino learners were introduced. Among those different distance learning modalities, modular learning is the most popular type (Bernardo, 2020).

In a survey conducted by Social Weather Stations (SWS) in March 2021, for families with children enrolled in school for SY 2020-2021, 89% of them perceived modular learning to be "more difficult" than traditional face-to-face instruction (Mercado, 2021). Students had difficulty with self-studying, and parents lacked the knowledge to academically guide their child/children (Herliandry et al., 2020).

Locally, this scenario is also deemed true at the Mahayag School of Arts and Trades. Learning loss was most pronounced among students from disadvantaged homes (Engzell et al., 2021). With these, a Special Support Strategy (SSS) was created with the drive to address the learners' struggles. It is a strategy to lighten the burden on students to achieve meaningful

learning in this new normal time. This strategy supports learners from families with low educational attainment through three primary approaches: the Buddy System, Teacher-KaPurok Sympathy, and the Foster Family Approach. The Buddy System pairs struggling students with academically capable peers nearby to assist with learning. Teacher-KaPurok Sympathy involves teachers or community members providing guidance with support from the local barangay. The Foster Family Approach engages well-educated families within the community to aid struggling students. The chosen method prioritizes both effective learning support and the students' health and safety by minimizing unnecessary movement.

The study seeks to establish a claim on the impact of the Special Support Strategy (SSS) on students learning through modular distance modality. A mixed method concurrent triangulation research design was utilized for twenty (20) Grade 12 students of Mahayag School of Arts and Trades, SY 2020-2021, as the study's participants, to determine the impact of the devised intervention.

### **DISCUSSION OF RESULTS**

Results of the quantitative analysis revealed that students' mean scores were low during the pretests compared to the student's scores in the posttests. Moreover, it can be seen in Figure 1 below that students' mean scores significantly increase after the implementation of the intervention, as represented by the borderline. The undeniably significant increase in mean scores of students after experiencing the intervention entails a lot

of the impact of SSS on students' achievement levels during this pandemic.



To corroborate the quantitative findings of this study, research participants' perceptions concerning their experience with the intervention were simultaneously gathered. The following themes were obtained: (a) ease of learning struggle, (b) boost in learners' interest, and (c) relief from mental pressure.

The study's quantitative and qualitative findings are clearly in consonance with each other. It unarguably shows that 'SSS' has an enormous positive impact on the modular approach of modality in this new normal time. This result conforms with the findings of Van De Pol, Volman, and Beishuizen (2010) in their research about scaffolding in teacher-student interaction, where they concluded that scaffolding [like having special support] is very effective in the teaching-learning process and it is more potent to improve students' academic achievement (Boris, 2020). Lastly, the result implies that a special support strategy is a promising innovation to complement students' attainment of meaningful learning with modular distance modality.

## CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

This study seeks to establish a claim on the impact of the Special Support Strategy (SSS) on students learning through modular distance modality. The data revealed a significant increase in students' achievement levels after students experienced the intervention, based on what was depicted in the interrupted time series analysis graph. Moreover, the

qualitative phase showed that SSS had eased learning struggles, boosted learners' interest, and relieved mental pressure. Hence, those were the emerging themes from the in-depth interview.

The conforming results of this study's quantitative and qualitative phases show that the Special Support Strategy (SSS) had addressed the current struggle on self-learning of students from low-educational attainment families on modular distance modality. It serves as a motivating factor and relieves the mental pressure most students need in this new normal time. Moreover, SSS is a suitable intervention that contributes to ensuring the delivery of quality education despite this pandemic. Thus, SSS is undoubtedly an aid to students learning in modular distance modality. Further, the outcome of the study recommended the following: (a) SSS must be considered by the teachers as one of the effective strategies to be maximized during this time, and (b) modification or strengthening of this strategy by the panel of experts in the education would be of big help to attain much meaningful learning on the part of the learners.

## REFERENCES

- Bernardo, Jaehwa. 2020. "Modular Learning most preferred parents: DepEd. ABS-CBN News."
- Boris, Olufunke O. 2020. "Effects of Problem-Solving Teaching Strategy on Secondary School Students' Academic Performance in Chemistry in Ondo State, Nigeria." *IJRAR-International Journal of Research and Analytical Reviews* 7, no. 2: 74-80.
- Department of Education Order No. 12, s. 2020. Adoption of the Basic Education Learning Continuity Plan for SY 2020-2021 in light of the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency.
- Engzell, Per, Arun Frey and Mark D. Verhagen. 2021. "Learning loss due to school closures during the COVID-19

pandemic." Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences 118, no. 17.

Herliandry, Luh Devi, Nurhasanah Nurhasanah, Maria Enjelina Suban and Heru Kuswanto. 2020. "Pembelajaran pada masa pandemi covid-19." JTP-Jurnal Teknologi Pendidikan 22, no. 1: 65-70.

Mercado, Neil Arwin. 2021. "SWS: 89% of families say blended learning is harder than face-to-face classes". Inquirer.net, March 14, 2021.

Van de Pol, Janneke, Monique Volman and Jos Beishuizen. 2010. "Scaffolding in teacher-student interaction: A decade of research." Educational psychology review 22, no. 3: 271-296.

**Disclaimer:**

*This Research Bulletin is an abridged version of the full manuscript of Mr. Amarilla and supplements his research presentation during the Research O'clock last September 19, 2023, under the topic, "Valuing Remediation Programs: Strategies and Approaches". To request a copy of their manuscript, send an email to [ps.prd@deped.gov.ph](mailto:ps.prd@deped.gov.ph).*