

# Experiences In Teaching Literature of Malungon Elementary School Teachers During the Pandemic

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*Abstract* — According to the interviews conducted with the five participants (teachers of Malungon Elementary School), there are various experiences that they have experienced in teaching literature during the pandemic. These are categorized according to the theme that has been developed: the challenges in transportation and communication, difficulty in understanding the lessons, and the outcome of the tasks not being good. In these themes, the voice and experiences of teachers in teaching literature during the pandemic are contained. The teachers found ways to overcome challenges. So, the following are the themes developed for coping mechanisms; acceptance and encouragement, working with colleagues at school, and finding ways to monitor students. These themes are the teacher's ways to overcome all the difficulties encountered. Participating teachers coped with the challenges through their effort, believing in themselves, unity, and togetherness with their colleagues at school. So, they realized from the events the following insights and the following themes have been developed; difficulty in teaching, quality of learning is low, and poor reading comprehension. It is difficult to teach literature in a modular way. In addition, it is essential for teachers and even at the institutional level to come up with a new strategy and initiative to fill the lack of a modular method, and to be ready and resist any situation in the coming challenges in the world or any eventualities brought by the disease that may hamper the teaching-learning process. The fact that no one knows exactly what the condition of the COVID-19 pandemic is, teachers need to be resilient and prepared always.

*Keywords* — *Experiences, Teaching Literature, Pandemic, Modules*

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## I. Introduction

In the process of online/ virtual learning, the disciplines of literature, though it seems to be based on theoretical aspects of the subjects, is limited and compromised. Schott (2019) described the importance of classroom interaction and physical presence by expressing his view that the absence of physical presence of both the tutor as well as other students would make students feel e-learning process as isolated and apprehensive. The importance of being within the group helps in learning the concepts more accurately with the presence of a physically present teacher among them. It would be equally difficult for the instructor or the teacher who tries to teach a group of students with the help of a screen and a microphone. Technical errors and disturbances between lectures would make it difficult for an untrained or a trained teacher to tackle the issues. As this change is sudden to most of the teachers in the world, especially in countries where the online

teaching-learning process was not even a parallel process to the traditional classroom teaching (Calvert, 2021). With no or less knowledge in handling resources, many could face troubles during their initial phase of the teaching process and also it may continue with the change in the batch of students (Angelina, 2022).

As literary courses are unique in the way it needs the involvement of active discussion between teacher and the students, the one-at-a-time mode in online/ virtual education for live classes are difficult. The discipline relies more on interpretations and discussion on various themes and topics in the subjects. While being in an online/virtual platform, the possibility for active group participation decreases tremendously leaving no space for the real essence of literary courses to get shared among the group. As same with physical science laboratory students having trouble in getting the true benefit from the teaching-learning process (Vernon, 2022), the students enrolled to literary courses too have a similar or less problematic situation regarding getting the true benefit of the course. In teaching genres such as theatre plays and related topics that need performance-based lectures, the involvement of the class as well as the presentation skills of the teacher is equally important. While in the classroom settings, it would be easier to deliver the classes linking the performance through the effective use of gestures and variation of tones. Unlike any other disciplines, literature subjects require the presence of an effective performer than a lecturer in the classroom. Being in virtual classes with limited sources to enhance the teaching atmosphere, it would be difficult for teachers to be the same as they were in the classroom settings. Facial and hand gestures are crucial in teaching (Meyer, 2020) and it would be more important in a subject that seeks more performance-oriented teaching than a mere lecture. In such a performance of the subject-oriented stories, poems or plays, the connection between the teacher and the students are more than that of the lectures conducted in any other discipline.

As there would be more than one screen for the teacher, even if the video is open, it would be difficult to manage in a small space. The interaction between a teacher-student needs to be a two-way process where it progresses with identifying every minute detail of expression from each other. In a literary course, the importance of emotions and expressions in dealing with certain topics are much higher than any other disciplines. It is very much applicable in the teaching-learning process that "... omission of observation of student emotions may prevent professors or instructors from responding to student's needs" (Wong, 2019). A meaningful interaction happens between two people when they share their emotions through expressions, gestures and complete presence with the other. Likewise, in a classroom atmosphere, with the presence of a group in front of the teacher, it is easier for him/her to convey the meanings through such different sources of communication. Contrary to this accessibility, the online/ virtual platforms provide the least opportunity to the teacher as well as the students to interact in such an atmosphere. With possible interruption to the network signals and software issues, the process of learning through online/ virtual platforms become less effective considering the teaching-learning scenario concerning the disciplines that come under the wide scope of literature.

Albert Bandura's Social Learning Theory (SLT) is used in this study. Social learning proposes that individuals learn through the observation of "models," such as friends and family members, movie and television characters, or — most significantly for educators — their teachers and other authority figures at school. According to Social Learning Theory, observers process and think about what they witness being modeled, which — combined with environmental factors — results in the assimilation and imitation of positive or negative behaviors. During the 1980s, Bandura broadened and renamed his theory to "Social Cognitive Theory," or SCT.

SLT (and its offshoot, SCT) remain relevant to contemporary educators at all grade levels. According to one study, "Due to the affinity that Generation Z learners show toward technology advances and supporting social learning tools, the overall teaching-learning experience was perceived [as] more positive and rewarding." The same research found that "social learning tools can enhance the teaching-learning experience of generation Z learners."

Learning is about interacting with the environment and making a permanent change in knowledge or behavior that improves human performance (Driscoll, 2019). According to Bandura's SLT, we learn from interacting with others in a social context. We observe, assimilate, and imitate others' behavior when witnessing positive or rewarding experiences (Nabavi, 2019).

The SLT states that we acquire behaviors through a combination of [reinforcement and imitation](#), where "imitation is the reproduction of learning through observation" (Gross, 2020).

Bandura proposed that learning is composed of four mediational processes or conditions that must be met (Horsburgh & Ippolito, 2018; Nabavi, 2019): Attention (*We must pay attention to the model. Our attention increases when behavior is more striking, different, or prestigious, and when the model is more similar to ourselves*); Retention (*We must be able to remember the observed behavior; this can be increased through rehearsal*); Reproduction (*We must be capable of replicating the behavior just observed*); and Motivation (*We must be motivated to demonstrate what we have learned. This can be influenced by both [reinforcement and punishment](#)*).

## II. Methodology

This is a qualitative study design focusing on phenomenology studies. Because of the in-depth nature of phenomenology studies, five (5) to twenty (20) number of participants are most desired (Conner & Bohan, 2018). The qualitative method is utilized to explain, clarify and elaborate the meanings of different aspects of the human life experience. This study involved five (5) participants.

To ensure the achievement of the objective and in-depth investigation, purposeful sampling was used in which only five participants (teachers of Malugon Elementary School of Magsaysay South District, Davao del Sur) were needed with predetermined criteria, and the most prominent criterion was the participant's experience. Other criteria are the following: teaching literature for 3

years and above; of either sex; resident of the locality; willingness to participate evidence by the signed informed consent given; and willingness to be interviewed. The participants were coded as P1 to P5 for their anonymity.

The data collected was through interviews using the questionnaire developed by the researcher who went through the experts. Finally, thematic analysis was used to describe and discuss the data collected. Moreover, in data collection, informed consent letters were attached to the interview questionnaires that the participants signed to ensure that they voluntarily agreed to the interview. More importantly, the identity of the participants and selected schools were not disclosed in any chapter of this study.

Interviews consisted of semi-structured questions that were open-ended to allow scope for teachers to express themselves. Initial questions were used as triggers but additional questions were not used in order to avoid potentially leading responses (Green, 2005). Interviews continued until the position was reached where the experience and perceptions had been described.

Just as in quantitative research, the academic rigor of the research namely its “‘validity and reliability’” is extremely important to the qualitative researcher and, therefore, demands much attention. Depending on the type of qualitative research, there are differing perspectives on how to address the quality or rigor or the trustworthiness of the study. However, all agree that the research has to demonstrate ‘truth value’ and this should be consistent in the terms and methods used to demonstrate this. The trustworthiness of the study is supported by providing examples of raw data (often interview quotes) and an analysis process that exemplifies the results.

### III. Results and Discussion

According to the interviews conducted with the participants, there are various experiences that they have experienced in teaching literature during the pandemic. These are categorized according to the theme that has been developed: *the challenges in transportation and communication, difficulty in understanding the lessons, and the work of the students are not good*. In these themes, the voice and experiences of teachers in teaching literature during the pandemic are contained.

the teachers did not budge from the various challenges they encountered in teaching literature during the pandemic, and they found ways to overcome those challenges. So, the following are the themes developed for coping mechanisms; *acceptance and encouragement, working with colleagues at school, and finding ways to monitor students*. These themes are the teacher’s ways to overcome all the difficulties encountered.

Participating teachers coped with the challenges through their effort, believing in themselves, unity, and togetherness with their colleagues at school. So, they realized from the

events the following insights and the following themes have been developed; *difficulty in teaching, quality of learning is low, and poor reading comprehension.*

### *Analysis*

It is hard to detach education from sociocultural, sociopolitical, and socioeconomic situations (Welsh & W. A. Swain, 2020). According to the study of Dubey and Pandey (2020); and Efriana (2021), the majority of the student population lives in remote areas, and the technological facilities in this region are not efficiently defined and managed. Because of this incident, the teachers really had to take a difficult way such as going to the houses even if it is very far just to deliver to the students the education they need. Another difficulty is the access to technology that every student does not feel its existence. In this kind of learning system, the following are necessary; technology, time, motivation, and support from parents [Dubey & Pandey, 2020; Efriana, 2021]. Instead, teachers triple their service, effort, and perseverance to students who are below the poverty line, especially during the pandemic. This attests in the study of Aringay and Prado (2019), that the intrapersonal intelligence of teachers emerge indicating that they generally have high self-awareness and are capable of understanding their own feelings, goals, and motivations.

One of the macro skills in Filipino subjects is reading comprehension. For Setyosari, D. Kuswandi & U. Widiati (2021), Asri, B. E. H. Cahyono and Trisnani. (2021), reading comprehension is the ability to understand and summarize a reading material well and the ability of students to conclude and understand the content and main ideas correctly. According to Badriyah and Rahmawati (2020), if a student learns to read while at home, he uses the internet and what they do is use Google Translate to translate the content of the text when the student does not know the meaning of the text read. However, it does not rule out the possibility that some of the students have difficulty learning to read during the pandemic because it complains about the internet connection and excessive quota to read. For Sun, Wang and Wang (2021), there is a strategy designed to help students improve their reading comprehension and it consists of four reading strategies: predicting, questioning, clarifying, and summarizing. In addition, a study by Setyowati, Sukmawan and El-Sulukkiyah (2021) states that in the task of reading during the pandemic, silent reading, skimming, and scanning methods are effective in their study.

In the study by Mohmmed, Khidhir, Nazeer and Vijayan (2020), students were interested and eager to get modules with tests and presentations. So, what the participants did was they just chose the topics to teach from the module and they made their own self-learning modules and activity sheets. The initiative of the participating teachers agrees with the study of Dubey and Pandey (2020) that it is necessary to come up with some strategies and initiatives both at the individual and the institutional level to fight the situation of the COVID-19 pandemic. Also, the same in the study of Sari and Nayır (2020); Butial, Santos, Juanito, Francisco, Abequibel, Deran, and Toribio. (2022), teachers make changes in lesson plans, try the use of attractive materials, use motivational strategies in words for students, and prepare additional tasks for the lesson. This is



an indication that teachers are still trying to unravel the method in traditional ways. In the attitude that students show that the answers are not of quality, they express boredom in the activities that supported the study of Ismaili (2021) that most students indicated that online classes alone are more useful rather than with the integration of materials or modules provided.

it is true that the biggest challenge of teaching during the COVID-19 pandemic is to arouse the interest of teachers to continue teaching and learning. According to Panisoara, Lazar, Panisoara, Chirca and Ursu. (2020); Kraft and Simon (2020), even though teachers are motivated to work, it can still be seen that there are changes in behavior regarding their continuation of work due to being influenced by the negative effects of the pandemic such as burnout due to extra work and technostress. However, the participating teachers accepted the challenge and slowly coped and went back to the path – to teach the students. What they did is related to the study of Panisoara, Lazar, Panisoara, Chirca and Ursu (2020) that it is better that the teachers were aware of the level of stress early because it will lead them to earlier control of their own emotions and strengthen more effective ways to avoid the dimensions of burnout.

as teachers struggle during the pandemic, the school environment is filled with confidence. According to Code, Ralph and Forde (2020), the school environment cannot be separated from the real work of teachers and must remain part of a whole. Without the management of the administration, the teachers are like pieces that will struggle on their own. Additionally, like teachers, school leaders around the world were facing an extraordinary crisis in education also Karakose, Polat and Papadakis. (2021). But even so, they still stayed to support the teachers at the school. From the study of Zahed-Babelan, Koulaei, M. Moeinikia and Sharif (2019); Reyes-Guerra, P.Maslin-Ostrowski, Barakat and Stefanovic (2021), to build a meaningful and productive school, leaders must shape a culture in which each teacher can make a change and every student can learn rooted in the passion of teachers and above all the school leaders have committed to promoting each other's success. On the other hand, the teachers who were in school not only play the role of knowledge or knowledge provider, but they also play the role of counselor and companion (Yao, Rao, Jiang & Xiong, 2020).

One of the parents' sources of help for their children is the guidance and teachings of the teachers. According to Kidd and Murray (2020), in this time when it is not yet certain how long the pandemic will last, these educators have improved in teaching students about their work while they are not working at school because they have moved the place of this teaching method. In the transfer of the place and teaching, only the essential topics were applied in the new normal set up yet even if everything changes in the new normal, still it helps their development (Kidd & Murray, 2020). Since the online platform in the country is difficult, the participating teachers preferred the essential methods, which are to go for home visitations, call the students, and ask the parents for help. It supported the study of Dubey & D. Pandey (2020); Mustakim, Trisnansih and Adha (2021) that during the pandemic, the teacher should be more prepared and should be ready to work the extra mile because time requires fast innovation and rapid adoption of online platforms. In

addition, teachers should collaborate with parents during the pandemic because according to Tiwery (2021); Olentsova (2020); Mustakim, Trisnaningsih and Adha (2021) whenever there is communication between parents and teachers about the lessons to students, it influences the result and their learning.

a strategy that emerged in the study of Orlov, McKee, Berry, Boyle, DiCiccio, Ransom and Stoye (2021); Mustakim, Trisnaningsih and Adha. (2021), was that students working together in answering challenging questions and engaging in peer tutoring was associated with positive outcomes of the student. It means, students' learning is helped if it is accompanied by a neighbor who may be a classmate. Because it is difficult for teachers to serve all students, it is possible to do "peer instruction" or peer teaching to ease their work and make it easier for students to learn. Furthermore, according to Wang (2021), the CAFE (Content, Activities, Facilitation, and Evaluation) model designed for teaching during the pandemic can be used to address the urgent needs of K-12 teachers to teachers clearly teach and understand students especially their learning desires, accessible technology and resources for home education, and their instructional content. However, teachers are humans too who were affected by the pandemic because they too have experienced extreme fatigue, illness, and stress that may be directly or indirectly through their various jobs that have weakened them more which has affected their health and professional performance, thus also affecting students' performance (Prado-Gascó, Gómez-Domínguez, Soto-Rubio, Díaz-Rodríguez & Navarro-Mateu, 2020).

the activities, assessments, and evaluation in the modules encouraged independence and responsibility toward students' own learning and provide different opportunities to express their learning, and served as a guide to develop new understandings (Funa & Talaue, 2021; Chan, Marasigan & Santander, 2021). Also, in the study by Laksana. (2021), it showed that students with fast learning abilities can memorize the content of the module and were able to learn independently while those students whose learning ability is weak can learn by repeatedly reading parts that were not understood until they understand it on their own. Further, the experiences of the participating teachers were contrary to Laksana (2021) study because the student's perception of the module was very helpful to learn alone and the modules developed were very helpful in implementing the learning process during the pandemic.

The pandemic did not stop education, even if it stopped for a while but DepEd found a way to reopen it, but with a new method and a new system that tested the capabilities of teachers. According to Chin, Ching, del Castillo, Wen, Huang, D. del Castillo and Trajera (2020), educational institutions should ensure that their teachers are given adequate support because it is helpful in providing quality education to students. Van der Spoel, Noroozi, Schuurink and van Ginkel (2020) stated in their study that teachers experienced great pressure in time and increased their workload during the pandemic which caused severe fatigue. There were also factors that caused stress to teachers and caused negativity and it affected their performance; one of which is that some students cannot enter education due to poor learning conditions and poor internet

connection in some parts of the country and the motivation of learning that is an important ingredient in effective learning during the pandemic (Chin, Ching, F. del Castillo, Wen, Huang, D. del Castillo & Trajera, 2020; Ionescu, Paschia, Gudanescu Nicolau, Stanescu, Neacsu Stancescu, Coman & Uzlau (2020). Adding to the fatigue of teachers is how to get students interested in participating in learning and then once engaged how to help them focus amid the distractions at home (Reich, Buttimer, Coleman, D. Colwell, Faruqi & Larke. (2020).

#### IV. Conclusion

This study indicates that it is good to strengthen the information communication technology (ICT) of each school to promote tools such as videos for filling the gaps in modules to ensure continuity of education that can be used even without connection to the internet. It is also helpful if team building and recreational activities are included in the school work because these are phased activities designed to motivate teachers to be strong and resilient and activities that promote development, cooperation, and unity.

In addition, it is also important to promote reading works in all subjects that can be accompanied by a literary genre that is related to the events of the COVID-19 pandemic. Furthermore, different strategies can support the teachers to practice the students' writing skills, develop the students' how to express their radical thinking skills, and teach them the importance of proper research to prevent plagiarism.

In the end, it is suggested that teachers to continue studying that have a vertical inclination in their field of specialization to increase the information that can help in the teaching method and to research and generate new notes that can be used in the field.

The similarity of the teachers in teaching literature during the pandemic: they discovered their other abilities, the passion for teaching still burns in them no matter the circumstances, and most of all they feel sorry for the students. While their differences are: there are few of them who eventually got used to the way the system works, appreciated them as a teacher, and continued to study.

Since the teaching method was new and the participants wanted to facilitate the students' learning, they discovered that they still had something to learn. Accordingly, some of their talents emerged during the pandemic. However, their passion as teachers remained for their mind and hearts are focused on really teaching. Above all, they have done everything because they felt accountable for the students if they do not do their jobs well.

While some of them eventually got used to it because they accepted the system already. In addition to the positive side, one of them realized that teachers were important because even though the work was difficult during the pandemic, the value of being a teacher has been acknowledged.



Above all, the participant also benefited from his graduate studies. He continued his degree which also helped him to become better at teaching during the pandemic.

Moreover, teachers continue to make learning possible as they help themselves and students to keep pace with the new environment. According to (Reich, Buttimer, Coleman, Colwell, Faruqi & Larke, 2020) in their study, few teachers commented on the effectiveness and professional satisfaction of planning together and schools should consider emphasizing the structures that allow teachers to work together to solve problems encountered. Also, in the study of Caratiquit & J. Caratiquit, 2022; Ionescu, Paschia, Gudanescu Nicolau, Stanescu, Neacsu Stancescu, Coman & Uzla, 2020), they mentioned that collaboration is one of the important skills in the 21st century because it has become easier to collaborate with other teachers, with stakeholders of the school, to the students, and the school officials that can be considered the benefits of the advancement of technology. In the end, the teachers showed that everything is possible with an optimistic tactic to difficulties.

Furthermore, the implications of teachers in their teaching just to convey knowledge to the students, the teachers must be prepared for every situation. Their implications are in consonance with the study of Caratiquit and Caratiquit (2022); and Lestiyanawati (2020) that teachers should deliver different teaching strategies based on the abilities of their students. According to O'Brien, Adamakis, O'Brien, Onofre, Martins, Dania and Costa (2020), it is also necessary to identify alternative strategies for meaningful educational experiences after COVID-19 for further tertiary education. In addition, it is important to have a positive view of the negative situation because the success of distance teaching and distance learning affects how to accept and the feelings of teachers that can be reflected towards their teaching (Cardullo, Wang, Burton, & Dong, 2021).

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