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## Research Article

### Lived Experiences of Public Elementary SLM Writers: Basis for the Development of a Training Program

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#### ABSTRACT

The study aimed to explore the lived experiences of Public Elementary SLM writers in the new normal education who were required to write modules for various subjects in the elementary level and had difficulties in crafting the modules. The researchers made use of a qualitative approach specifically, descriptive phenomenology to understand the personal experiences of the key informants. A semi-structured online interview was conducted with the eleven selected key informants from various schools. The research study used the purposive sampling technique, open-ended questions as instrument, and data collected were analyzed using Colaizzi's 1978 phenomenological method. Findings show mastery of content, creativity, time management skills, grammar skills, information and communication technology skills, good communication skills and flexibility are the skills needed to possess as a SLM writer. While the challenges and difficulties encountered are lack of training programs for SLM writers, difficulties in making suitable activities for learners, time constraint in writing modules, overlapping responsibilities, lay-outing difficulties, running out of ideas in content delivery, less proficiency in computer literacy. Different coping practices were also identified by collaboration among colleagues, utilizing academic peripheral resources, time management through priorities, devising ways for the improvement of modules content, and SLM writer's motivation such as children's educational success and professional development success. The evaluators, criteria and common feedback received during evaluation of SLM were identified. SLM Writers addressed the feedback through considering and taking it as constructive ones. Researchers recommended training and webinars about writing modules. Writers should be resourceful to compensate for the shortcomings of their needs and the children.

**Keywords:** Colaizzi's 1978 method, descriptive phenomenology, SLM writers

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## Background

This pandemic has been one of the significant challenges on how to sustain children's education. That is why Self-learning modules (SLMs) are designed to help and sustain students' learning. Sequeira (2012) defined that SLMs are printed materials that the students can use for learning independently since face-to-face interaction between teachers and learners is not allowed. He added that SLMs are also called individualized methods of learning. According to Knights (2002), modules are not designed independently but are part of a course or program structure. Teachers must be informed of the concepts of deep and fundamental approaches to learning while constructing modules (Brown and Atkins, 2002). The modular learning approach is now being controversial, and it is not the teachers' fault nor the learners. Given the reality that in public schools, many learners cannot be given equal attention to providing the same quality education because of the reality of the young children today. In a statement issued last July 6, the Teachers' Dignity Coalition (TDC) claimed that among pressing concerns pointed out by teachers in the field, there is a need to create modules to implement blended and distance learning even though specialists from DepEd should be doing this. However, Secretary of Education Leonor Briones admitted that creating modules for learners is a "specialized kind of activity" that requires training, but they are not forced to do it (Malipot, 2020).

The dilemma now is the experiences of SLM writers to achieve the quality of education amidst the pandemic. Discussion and examples in the lesson are also limited to the printed modules because the number of pages made for writers is also limited. Without someone knowledgeable to further explain the lessons written on it, learners will have difficulty understanding their lessons. The truth is contents also depend on the teacher who wrote the materials. Some learners may not have a problem understanding the lessons because they are well-explained, but others may not. As a result, the level of learning varies.

Given this, the approach becomes endless paperwork for both the teacher and learner. With the current situation in the DepEd,

especially for the elementary schools, the possibility of anyone learning is very low. It shows that modules cannot substitute teachers. Considering the challenges that emerged, both teacher and learner are at a disadvantage. Consequently, the quality of education is dropping. The researchers have not found any published references or journals with the topic that researchers want to study. The study focused on identifying the different experiences of teachers who write modules. It aimed to provide a clear understanding of the problem and possible solutions to prove its existence in the education system. Also, this study will be a basis for a training program of SLM writers once the study is done. Thus, by knowing the lived experiences of SLM writers, this study can help strengthen them as the primary source of education.

## Statement of the Problem

The study explored the lived experiences of public elementary SLM writers in the new normal education who were required to write modules for various subjects in the elementary level and had difficulties in crafting the modules.

Specifically, this study sought to answer the following:

1. How may the key informants' experiences as SLM writers be described in terms of:
  - 1.1 required skills;
  - 1.2 challenges and difficulties; and
  - 1.3 coping practices?
2. How do teachers receive feedback in the evaluation of their SLM?
3. How do these SLM writers address the feedback they received?

## Methods

### Research Design

The researchers utilized the qualitative approach, specifically descriptive phenomenology. The goal is to know the people's lives, what they do, how they use things, and what they need in their daily or professional lives (Jost, 2016). The researchers used descriptive phenomenology to gather data focusing on lived experience, which refers to the teacher's experiences in writing a module in the new normal. The phenomenon of this study is the issues or

challenges that SLM writers encountered in writing modules in the new normal. Diaz (2015) defined descriptive-phenomenology as the study of personal experience, and it involves description or analysis of the meanings of phenomena encountered by participants in a study.

### ***Sampling Technique***

In determining the sample, the researchers employed purposive sampling. In determining the sample, the researchers employed purposive sampling. Purposive sampling's fundamental goal is to generate a sample that can be considered representative of the population (Lavrakas, 2008). Alchemer (2019) stated that for a survey administered using an online platform, prior understanding of the study's purpose is required for researchers to accurately select and approach qualified participants using the purposive sampling strategy. The key informants were selected based on the set criteria by researchers. First, must be a public elementary teacher and second, writer of a module in any subject, and lastly, currently residing in Pampanga.

### ***Key Informants of the Study***

The key informants in this study are eleven (11) elementary SLM writers. Key Informants came from selected Public Elementary Schools of Pampanga. At the same time, considering the researcher's access to module writers, only those who accepted the request are included in the study.

### ***Data Gathering Instrument***

The researchers utilized a semi-structured, open-ended interview guide to gather relevant data needed for the study. The semi-structured interview guide is composed of an open-ended question that allows the respondent to freely express himself or herself on a particular topic (Fauvelle, 2021). The questions are focused on the key informant's experiences regarding the theme in question. There were three (3) professors from the College of Education (COE), who validated the research questionnaire. Their comments and suggestions were considered in the final draft of the questionnaire. Upon

approval, the questionnaire was used for data collection.

### ***Data Collection***

The researchers asked for the approval of the Dean of the College of Education for permission to conduct the study via online interview, considering the key informant's safety and health protocols. Then the researchers sent letters to the principal after being approved a letter for key informants and informed consent was also sent to ask permission to gather the necessary data needed for the study. The researchers asked the key informants for their convenient time on their schedule. After that, the researchers collected the data using an open-ended questionnaire through a semi-structured virtual interview using Google Meet or Messenger. Doyle (2020) stated semi-structured interview is one in which the interviewer does not exactly follow a prescribed set of questions. Instead of a traditional question and response approach, they offered more open-ended questions, allowing for a discussion with the interviewee. Recorded interviews through virtual sessions or calls were done for the authenticity of data. The researchers created a transcript of the recorded discussion of gathered data after the interview.

### ***Data Analysis***

The researchers analyzed the key informants' explanations and categorized them as meaning-laden statements. Colaizzi's (1978) descriptive phenomenological method used to interpret the data. The Colaizzi's phenomenology method is composed of seven (7) step strategy that guarantees a detailed study by keeping each step close to the information. (1) Familiarization. The researchers become familiar with the information provided by the participants by reading and reviewing the transcripts many times. (2) Extracting significant statements. The researchers identified important statements from the transcript that are directly related to SLM writers' lived experiences. (3) Formulating meanings. The researchers ensured that the formulated meanings are correlated to the participants' significant statements. (4) Clustering themes. The researchers arranged all formulated meanings into patterns to fall

under one code. (5) Establishing exhaustive description. The researcher subsequently provided a complete and comprehensive description of the phenomenon. The researchers made sure that all emergent themes are related to the phenomenon being studied. (6) Producing the fundamental structure. The researchers assured that all emergent themes are comprehensively explained into a brief, encompassing only those aspects considered essential to the study. (7) Inquiring fundamental structure. The researchers ensured that findings were validated by the participants to ascertain if it accurately describes their experience.

### **Ethical Consideration**

The researchers guaranteed that proper guidelines are carefully followed in the study. Before doing the interview, the researcher sends the paper's purpose to the participants for them to fully understand the study's objective. Also, the researchers informed and asked permission from the participants about the online or phone recording of the interview. Information gathered from the participants were all treated with confidentiality and anonymity. Thus, proper handling of data recorded for the protection of the participants was done and was used for the academic purpose of the study only.

### **Findings and Discussions**

In this chapter, the researchers discussed and presented the findings obtained from the eleven (11) participants. This study aimed to explore the lived experiences of public elementary SLM writers by understanding their responses; the researchers have been able to identify the required skills, challenges and difficulties encountered, coping practices, and motivation done by the participants. Also, the findings of this study revealed how their written SLMs are being evaluated and how they address the feedback received in self-learning modules. The following are the emergent themes and cluster themes analyzed using Colaizzi's 1978 phenomenological method.

### **Skills of Self-Learning Modules Writers**

Skills are an essential component of facing the demands of everyday life in a continuously changing world (House, 2019). In this theme, most participants identified the required skills they usually consider when writing the Self-learning modules.

#### *Mastery of Subject Matter*

According to Hammond (2006), a teacher's success is mostly determined by his or her knowledge of teaching and content and the qualifications obtained during teaching practice. Some participants stated that mastery of subject matter is essential because having a strong background, they can provide a good module for their pupils to learn despite the modular distance learning.

*"The mastery of the content because you know what to write and you know what you will do". -P2*

*"You need to master the content, because if you don't know it, you can't connect it to our learning objectives or MELC". -P11*

*You must have strong background when it comes to the subjects, content, and pedagogy of what he/she wrote, because if he/she don't know, then how he/she will provide good and reliable module". -P1*

#### *Creativity*

Most of the participants said that being creative is necessary. Like giving examples in the discussion, making their illustrations for Math writers, crafting activities, and pictures will catch children's attention and interest. To commence, it is vital to note that a creative pedagogy entails a collaboration between creative teaching and creative learning. Therefore, teachers should be more creative to foster creativity in the classroom (Lin Y, 2019).

*"You should be creative when it comes to the activities while writing the SLM, more on pictures, because I noticed that students are visual learners, that's why they are more attracted when SLM has pictures". -P11*

*"You must be creative, don't depend on others that are only looking on the internet. Much better if you think of new activities, for the*

learners to be engaged on the module that you will do". -P2

*"You just have to be creative; you know I made my illustrations out of paint, out of shapes. Math writers are not able to get illustrations from Google unlike the other subjects we are forced to make our own illustrations". -P3*

#### *Time Management Skills*

Time management entails making an effort to make productive use of time. Some participants mentioned that managing their time is needed to balance their work and finish the module on time. Horng (2010) and Master (2013) reported that time management is vital for teachers' efficacy and school achievements. It is the skill of organizing, scheduling, and budgeting one's time to accomplish goals (Mohanty, 2003).

*"They should know how to manage their time to accomplish it with the time frame given". -P3*

*"Second, the task should be done ahead of time, you should do it right, because sometimes, when we have a lot to do, we should know how to manage time". -P8*

#### *Grammar Skills*

Most of the participants said that grammar skill is significant for them to create a module that is easy to understand because instructions and discussion will be clear and easy to follow considering children's abilities. Crystal (2004) stated that grammar is the structural underpinning of our ability to communicate; the more the writers understand how it works, the better they can keep track of the meaning and effectiveness of the language used. Additionally, he stated that good grammar knowledge allows writers to comprehend what makes a writing piece successful in capturing the reader's interest and understanding.

*"About grammar skills, yes, it is very important of course so that the learners will understand what you want to impart to them". -P3*

*"Grammar skills of course, not only the students can see that, it will be critiqued also by your co-teachers, that is why the grammar at least should be okay". -P4*

*"Grammar skills especially kapampangan, kapampangan is a little bit hard, that's why we*

*should have some research about those deep kapampangan words". -P11*

#### *Information and Communication Technology Skills*

Some participants stated that ICT skills are essential because everyone relies on technology in this new normal education. It plays a vital role for every writer to continue their work. Technological improvements, particularly in information and communication technology (ICT), allow teachers to use various techniques to actively engage students' interests (Rahman, 2014).

*First, you must be computer literate because in this time of pandemic, we all need technology, so one skill that a teacher should have is being computer literate. -P8*

*ICT skill because you must know how to layout, at the same time, the photos that you will use shouldn't be taken from the internet, because you need to provide your own. -P1*

#### *Good Communication Skills*

Based on the acquired responses, writers see to it that through writing, pupils can still feel the presence of their teacher by using and reading the module. Silver (2018) stated that to cooperate with colleagues and update administrators on student achievement effectively, writers must communicate effectively. Teachers must be capable of both listening to and communicating concepts to their students.

*"Communication Skills, for it to be more effective because the writer should be good in communication". -P7*

*"Socialize, believe it or not when they said 'writer' you should be good in socializing to people, also in writing module, you need to express yourself in writing module". -P7*

*"Communication skills because you need to communicate with your co teachers and to your students too". -P9*

#### *Flexibility*

As Hogarty (2021) mentioned, flexibility in the workplace refers to adapting to changing conditions quickly. Flexible employees can adjust their strategies to navigate or overcome unexpected challenges. Some participants

mentioned that being flexible is also important because they need to think of an alternative way immediately for them to make their work easier amidst pandemic.

*"You should be flexible, because that's not the only work you have as a public teacher, that's why, you should know how to manage your time". -P4*

*"Flexible, you should think faster, like now, the MELC, you should be thinking for a lot of activities for children". -P5*

*"You have to be flexible, of course. Instead of waiting for someone to lay out for you, you provide your own" -P1*

### **Challenges and Difficulties Experienced in writing Self-Learning Modules**

Challenges and difficulties faced in writing self-learning modules were identified in this study. In the study of Lodge et al. (2018), difficulties are often an inevitable but necessary aspect of the learning process.

#### *Lack of Training Programs for SLM Writers*

The participants are struggling because they do not have any formal training and lack experience writing a module since they cannot come up with the module back then. According to Kleiman (2000), the foundations of a successful employee training program are orientation, management experience, and employees' operational capabilities.

*"Lack of Experiences, I don't have a real idea on how to come-up with the module since we were not able to come-up with the module back then". -P3*

*"Lack of initial training programs for SLM writers, honestly in our case, they just provided a format which we were about to follow. Then as far as I know there were not even any single formal seminars on developing modules. Meetings, we have meetings but an intensive training to avoid mistakes I can't remember anything". -P1*

#### *Difficulties in making suitable activities for learners*

Most participants struggle to make and think of different activities because they need to make sure that activities are easy for them to understand. In the study of Vergara (2017),

Lardizabal (2004) stated that a module is a set of learning activities that students must complete. When planning learning activities, it is important to think about how students will absorb new knowledge, develop new skills, or have a new way of thinking (Bransford, Brown, & Cocking, 2000).

*"In making activities of course you need to give them easy they for them to understand especially that we are modular learning and we don't have face to face". -P4*

*"I have struggled in making unique activities that are suited to the needs and within the level of their understanding, easy to accomplish, motivating and truly 'bite-sized' content". -P3*

*"It's hard to make good activities because you will help your students cater their intelligence and skills". -P2*

#### *Time constraint in writing modules*

Based on the obtained responses from the participants, most of them shared that they are struggling to meet the deadline given because they have much work to do, and they are not only SLM writers but also layout artists and teachers at the same time. Time management training assists teachers in improving their time management abilities, but it does not immediately and instantly improve performance (Claessens, Eerde, Rutte, & Roe, 2007).

*"The limited time, this week you are given a module and then the next week you need to submit it with the correct grammar and correct punctuation". -P9*

*"Tight time frame, since we are not used to the new normal way there are a lot of revisions, and work that were given to us by the supervisor, by the division just like doing a weekly home learning plan, accomplishment report, attending webinars". -P3*

*"The time is not enough because sometimes you'll just be given, for example, this day you should pass it. Sometimes I'm not just a writer, I'm also a layout artist. So, what is difficult for us is really our time, it is not enough. It's not enough". -P2*

#### *Overlapping Responsibilities*

Some of the participants said they are having difficulty because of overlapping

activities, and there is much work to be done, such as attending webinars, meetings, etc. According to (Abazaoglu et al., 2014; Perring, 2009; Macready, 2009), teachers play a critical role in this regard, as they are responsible for teaching properly and imparting the necessary knowledge to the children.

*"While you are writing, here it is, I have already encountered that there are many things that need to be done aside from the module, there are still things that need to be worked on".* -P7

*"Overlapping activities, just what I have said there are many works from the division then suddenly we were asked to do something like attending webinars. Revising activities, planning of activities for the school year".* -P3

*"When there is a unexpected meeting, our principal will make a zoom then we cannot pass the SLM because there is something else that needs to be done".* -P6

#### *Lay-outing difficulties*

Some participants stated that they are having trouble generating their pictures or graphics because they cannot get them from the internet. According to a study by Türel and Johnson (2012), technical issues constitute a significant challenge for teachers.

*"Challenges, I had a hard time making pictures like that. Because when we make pictures for our SLM, we have a TG or Teacher's Guide, if the picture is on the teacher's guide, you should not copy it, think another one like that".* -P10

*"We struggle with layouting especially if you don't know how to draw, so you should be the one to draw".* -P2

*"We are the layout artist or illustrator, as I've said I do the layout, we are having difficulty with that because mathematics module writers are not allowed to get illustrations, photos, graphics from the internet".* -P3

#### *Running out of ideas on content delivery*

Some participants experienced problems in thinking ideas suited for learners' level because they cannot get information from a book or the internet then copy it. Teachers sometimes face a scarcity of resources as well as teaching and learning facilities, posing significant obstacles

to effective inclusion implementation (Crawford, 2004).

*"How you deliver it in the level of the grade 1 pupils it's a bit difficult because sometimes you run out of ideas. Writing a kapampangan module is not that easy, you cannot just look on the internet, then get the result you wanted".* -P9

*"Running out of ideas because you cannot get from the internet; you cannot get from the book because the division will own it because there is what you call 'credit to the owner', so it is forbidden because it will be the property of the division. You need to provide your own".* -P1

#### *Less proficiency in computer literacy*

Curriculum implementers (teachers) must be computer proficient in order for education to improve. Teachers should be aware of the importance and benefits of ICT to give a relevant lesson using ICT (Warwick and Kershner 2008). Some of the participants said they are having difficulty getting images for their modules. They are having trouble using technology, especially those teacher-writers who have been in the field for a long time.

*"I'm not computer literate because the pictures should be good to capture the interest of the children, you can't just draw you need to google".* -P6

*"I struggled with the pictures because I am not computer literate".* -P10

*"I am not that knowledgeable in technology, I only knew a little because when I was studying, there was no such thing like that. I told my child to allot 30 minutes, for us to do it, of course you will be ashamed too".* -P5

#### **Coping Practices of Self-Learning Module Writers**

In this theme, most of the participants experienced challenges and difficulties as they wrote self-learning modules. They found strategies that helped them to overcome these problems as dedication in their profession. Coping mechanisms that tend to lessen stress are necessary for avoiding the harmful effects of prolonged stress (William et al., 2010).

#### *Collaboration among colleagues*

Some participants asked for help to improve and elevate their skills in writing the

self-learning module. Teacher collaboration has much potential for helping teachers enhance their teaching. Teacher collaboration is widely employed as part of school improvement efforts in the United States and elsewhere (Public Agenda, 2017).

*"As they said I will be able to accomplish everything, and I overcome that, through my colleagues, support and guidance of planning instruction with my co-teachers, and also the master teachers". -P11*

*"That is it, I ask suggestions to the master teacher since I know they are more knowledgeable in Math". -P4*

*"I asked for help from my co teachers in their knowledge of Kapampangan medium and the lesson". -P9*

#### *Utilizing Academic Peripherals Resources*

Most of the participants became resourceful and hands-on in finding references to their subject that helped them in writing modules. Educators are the ones who are assigned the responsibility of putting into the teaching-learning resources effectively. Teachers need to possess the essential educational recommendations, skills, and abilities essential to creating a positive impact upon the academic achievement of students (Mugure, 2012).

*"Quality learning resources enable teachers to better assist and guide learners in mastering the skills, knowledge and experiences that will support learners in school and in life". -P11*

*"By utilizing academic peripherals resources like textbooks, teachers guide, curriculum, and the DepEd portal like DepEd commons and LRMS". -P3*

*"I read books, some references and manuals of grade 1 and grade 2 because they are the ones who have kapampangan modules". -P9*

#### *Time Management through priorities*

The majority of the participants find ways to manage their time in writing their self-learning modules to meet the given deadline. They set aside unnecessary things and listed down the important work they need to accomplish. According to Fazal (2012), adjusting using time management has much impact not just on achievement, but adopting

time management strategies serves several purposes.

*"I overcome those overlapping activities by managing my time well because I am making notes on what to accomplish by day so that I will not be bombarded with the activities. So that I can pass my reports on time". -P3*

*"I comprehensively budget my time to deal with different tasks I need to perform. I have to be more flexible to meet our deadlines". -P1*

*"Eliminate inevitable distractions and focus on your work. What are the most important things that you really need to do first, before anything else". -P2*

#### *Devising ways for the improvement of modules content*

Some of the participants find ways to improve and do their modules, an effective one that can arouse learners' interest in answering the given activities comprehensively. To become an effective teacher, requires seeking out numerous sources of information from which you may reflect on how to improve your teaching and learning. (Hoene, n.d.).

*"I keep on looking for ways to finish it, such as searching related activities on my illustrations, for example a bee on a mango, then I search a bee picture, and then I tried to draw it in paint so that it will be mine and I did not copy it from the internet, because we are forbidden for getting any picture from the google. I conducted a little bit of research on how to make it more attractive, colorful". -P3*

*"Sometimes I'm not that equip in computer, sometimes I watched youtube on how to use snipping tool until I learned to complete my SIPACKS". -P10*

*"Being a teacher, you need to have a lot of strategies or techniques for you to do it or for you to give everything to your students because that's your job as a teacher". -P10*

#### **SLM Writers Motivation**

Most of the participants identified that their motivations are their children and their professional growth to overcome the challenges they have experienced. As cited in Tentama (2016) journal, George and Jones defined work motivation as an individual's psychological strength, which determines his

attitude in an organization, degree of effort and perseverance in solving challenges, and self-determination toward the dimensions of their employment.

#### Children's Educational Success

The majority of the participants stated that children's education is one of their motivations to overcome all the challenges they have experienced. They see that they provide a good and quality module despite the difficulties they have encountered because they prioritized how their pupils will learn in modular distance modality. Salifu and Agbenyega (2013) argued that more significant consideration should be given to teacher motivation, as this motivation is linked to quality teaching and improved learning outcomes in schools.

*"For the children, isn't our profession a calling. Therefore, I can say that it does not work. It is a life that you have to live, and my eagerness to help our department, the learners, the parents in receiving quality education in this time of pandemic. It will come naturally; it will not be a burden to you. You will wake up in the morning motivated, thinking about student's welfare, continually providing quality education, the benefits and impact of these modules to the learners to continue the learning process despite the pandemic". -P3*

*"For the children, I do have this quote in my heart and in my mind every now and then since I started teaching. I always think of the impact that I can make if I produce a good module that pupils will use. In this simple thing I thought that I would extend a little help for the children so in the saying that, "for the children" is the one who drives me to do this thing". -P1*

*"For the children, it motivated me in the sense that how they will learn in this situation, despite this new normal situation, we really need to do it". -P11*

#### Professional Development Success

Some participants stated their professional growth is considered to be their motivation in writing self-learning modules. According to Richards and Farrell (2005), teacher professional development is long-term personal growth that helps instructors define

and make meaning of their learning process and themselves as persons.

*"One of the things that motivates me is for professional growth for future use. It is late when they said we can use it for promotion because they have certain points. But in the first place, we did not think that we could use it in that manner. Along the process, we only found out that we can use it in that factor". -P4*

*"I'm doing this for my profession. I choose this because I have to do what it takes to be a teacher". -P9*

*"It is professional growth. At first, I really didn't know what our incentives were after writing a module. I think until now, I still don't know, after getting a certificate, what it is for. But I know someday, this will help me in my professional growth and career". -P3*

#### Evaluation of Self-Learning Modules

In this theme, based on the obtained information from the participants, the evaluation process of self-learning modules was identified in this study. According to Goods (2021), evaluation determines the value of anything by specified appraisal. Agun (2003) mentioned that instructional resources in teaching are essential devices that both teachers and learners can utilize to enhance the learning experience and instruction.

#### Evaluators

Most of the participants mentioned that evaluators of their SLMS usually start with their subject coordinator, school head or principal. They have this Quality Assurance team (QA team) composed of master teachers from the Division who checked for the content, language, and layout. Then each subject has its EPS (Education Program Supervisor) from the Division who evaluates after the QA team, and if there are no revisions to be made in the self-learning modules, it will be ready for production to be used for the whole division. Educators in conventional learning environments can generate high-quality educational materials that benefit both students and teachers with the proper training and support (Hoffman, B. & Ritchie, D. 2001).

*"We do have a Quality Assurance team composed of a master teacher and 3 teachers and they are chosen to be part of the QA team, plus we also have the EPS Education Program Supervisor from the division who will evaluate next after the quality assurance team. One for the format, one for the spelling and the other one is for the content. If it is not passed, it will return to the module writer. Then the EPS they are the supervisor from the division". -P1*

*"What we call them is a quality assurance team. So, these are, these people are from the Division of Pampanga and these are the experts and master teachers and then, they are the ones who check for the content of the modules". -P2*

*"We have a quality assurance team composed of master teachers, after the master teacher, it will be passed to the supervisor in charge for final evaluation, upon approval of the supervisor in charge it goes directly to the superintendent for her approval". -P4*

### **Criteria**

In ABS-CBN news, Bernardo (2021) reported, in evaluating the SLMs, the Department of Education stated that it would scrutinize the materials' content, language, layout, and design. The Department of Education said it would evaluate whether the goal MELCs (Most Essential Learning Competencies) for each quarter are adequately addressed. In 2020, Malipot stated that SLMs, according to the Department of Education, must be clear and free of grammatical, spelling, and punctuation problems and consistent in style.

Most of the participants mentioned that there are standards that need to be considered in evaluating the SLMs. Since there was no specific training that they have attended, writers mentioned no rubrics given to them. However, most of them said that before publishing their output, the evaluators see that first, the writers should attain the objective of the particular subject they wrote. Second, it should be clearly stated, and the content should align or be based on the MELC (Most Essential Learning Competencies). Third, the activities should be simplified, and it must be suited to the level of their students. Fourth, evaluators check the layout, illustrations, and designs, and

lastly, the proper use of language is easy to comprehend.

*"There are no rubrics in evaluating the modules we make, but usually, the module has learning objectives/outcomes that are measurable and clearly stated. Module activities promote learning based on Bloom's Taxonomy of Educational Objectives. Assessment(s) match learning objectives. Clear directions for assessment(s) are provided. It should be aligned to MELC". -P5*

*"Usually, they have no rubrics when they evaluate our DLP as long as it is aligned on the MELC or Most Essential Learning Competency, the activities are suited to the level of the students and that is okay". -P6*

*"Criteria? They didn't say, what is the criteria to be followed, I just follow the template and then, it is based on the MELC. That is what they told us and it should be child-friendly and can be understood by those grade levels that you write and the font should not be that small". -P9*

### **Common Feedback Received in the Evaluation**

In 2020, Race mentioned that one of the essential factors to examine when evaluating instructional materials is feedback. Feedback, as a kind of assessment, is one of the most significant impacts on learning and accomplishment (Hattie and Timperly 2007). Most of the participants received feedback in the evaluation, but those are just minor revisions and positive comments.

#### *Positive Comments*

According to Salandanan (2011), modules should be written in clear and concise language appropriate for the target learners' level to ensure effective communication between the student and the module. Participants mentioned that the feedback they received is good like the topic and content are good, and the activities are simplified.

*"In one of my grade 4 SLM modules that I wrote, the master teacher who evaluated the activities said that they are easy to understand, like the languages I used are appropriate for grade 4 level". -P4*

*"The feedback I received is that they said that my materials are good in terms of topic and*

content, that is why my activities are very simplified in terms of the numbers, the items, the problems, and the situation, I just simplified it". -P3

"The comment to me when it comes to the layout it is good, suited for children". -P7

#### *Typographical Errors and Format*

Chinwendu (2014), if not addressed, lexicosyntactic mistakes in teaching materials will turn students into a conveyor belt for the flaws in the teaching materials. The participants stated that there are some minimal typographical errors like spacing, grammar, and format.

"In my case, minimal typographical errors". -P1

"Mostly are typographical errors, sometimes format. Sometimes your supervisor will give you a font style". -P8

"Did not receive any negative feedback. Only comments like small glitches like spacing, moved format that I think, compatibility issue". -P3

#### *Confusing Instructions*

This interpretation is especially essential since learning confusion must be caused by instructional information seeking to be comprehended by a student (Silvia, 2010). Some of the participants mentioned that they received feedback about giving clear and straightforward directions so that children will not be confused.

"Sometimes, there needs to be a paraphrase in the directions that should be simple and not confusing". -P8

"They said that your instruction and explanation should be clear so that the child will not have difficulty especially when they answer". -P5

"My common feedback is that it is too long, the discussion is too long and needs to be shortened. For the students not to be confused and just choose the important ones". -P7

#### *Too many and not simplified activities*

According to Macarandang (2009), enrichment activities help students learn topics better. Also, the activities should be localized wherein students can relate. Teachers make learning activities more relevant by linking instructions to students' experiences, which

helps them relate learning to their real lives (Ferlazzo, 2015; Thoonen et al., 2011). Some participants stated that the feedback they received is they need to lessen the activities, and it should fit the level of students.

"Sometimes, minor revisions only occur when they say Ma'am, it seems like it's difficult in grade 2, just limit the number of figures". -P6

"My activities before were too broad. I'm not specific in terms of activities, especially in math that's why the students were being confused. The evaluator said that the students might be confused if I'm going to use that activity". -P2

"They also advise me to lessen the activities, that's why I lessen the number of items". -P1

#### **Addressing Feedback in the Evaluation**

In this theme, SLM writers mentioned how they addressed the feedback they received in the given evaluation. Saedon et al. (2012) describe feedback as particular information about comparing one's observed performance and a standard.

#### **Writers consider all feedbacks**

Most of the participants stated that they followed all the recommendations and suggestions from the evaluators to produce a quality module. Feedback has been shown in previous studies, and personal experiences to be effective in assisting individuals in learning essential information about their performance. Indeed, feedback is excellent for guiding individuals in adopting a positive mindset, allowing them to learn more about themselves, their behavior and eventually improve their performance (London & Smither, 2002).

"I just did what they wanted me to do, because in doing the activity you need to lower the level that is appropriate to them". -P6

"I just followed their feedback, because I know it is for the betterment". -P3

"The time I receive the email I follow their suggestion right away and edit it immediately so if there are some revisions, I can edit and revise it". -P7

#### **Writers take feedbacks as constructive ones**

Most participants accepted all the comments on the given evaluation and took it as a positive one. Accepting feedback involves self-

assurance and a measure of humility (Kowalski, 2017). Constructive criticism should be given as an unbiased explanation of what is done to correct mistakes and increase knowledge (Thomas & Arnold, 2011).

*"I always like to think that the feedback will help me to align my writing more closely to the objectives and goals of SLMs". -P5*

*"I didn't consider those as negative feedback; hence I took those as good advice which I followed". -P1*

*"You need to accept those constructive criticisms of them regarding yours. That is the thing you need to accept, because how can you learn from that if you do not accept feedback like that". -P5*

### **Synthesis of Interpretation**

The pandemic has shifted many schools and institutions into distance learning throughout the world; enormous adjustments have been made by people, especially in education. The traditional face-to-face interactions of learners in the classroom are greatly affected. For these reasons, many schools are closed, and some of the roles of the teachers shifted to being SLM writers to continue children's education at home. Consequently, teachers' roles became more crucial. They developed modules, checked papers, collected modules, and did paper works.

Doing modules is one of the most challenging tasks for teachers, especially for SLM writers because it all depends on what children learn on what they wrote. Many processes are needed to be done before modules can be produced. There are times that the modules are being rejected because there are some errors or there are things that need to be fixed. Since the education system is new today, there is a chance that writers are having difficulty in doing modules because they had no formal training to go through. However, there are seminars that they have attended, but these are not enough. Having a training program about writing modules or developing modules can help the SLM writers and other teachers, especially since we do not know how long this situation will last.

Thus, a teacher plays a more significant role in a child's life even before the pandemic; they

sacrificed a lot from the very beginning to overcome it. One motivation that teachers have is that this effort counts for a child's better future. Their commitment and desire to help the learners drive them to do their best because they care for their students. The most amazing things are the efforts and innovative solutions that teachers make to provide the best education for children. SLM writers are willing to do anything to carry out success for every child who uses the modules because this will be their most outstanding achievement.

### **Conclusion**

Being an SLM writer plays a crucial role in education in times of pandemic, for this requires the ability to write modules as compared to face-to-face class wherein lessons are easily discussed with the students. The occurrence of pandemic in the Philippines has shifted teachers' role from teaching to being teacher-writers. The absence of face-to-face learning and the implementation of modular distance learning has added responsibilities to teachers. Findings revealed that, SLM writers had not given any formal training on the development of learning modules. Seminars attended do not meet the required skills for writing modules. For these reasons, teachers were led to experience challenges and difficulties in developing these modules. Most writers have experienced time constraints in developing learning modules and difficulties in making suitable activities for learners. For these findings, researchers concluded that SLM writers adapted the situation for the provision of good learning modules with the lack of skills that should be provided by the department of education, this is for the reason that would give the students means of learning delivery mode for better future and success.

### **Recommendation**

Based on the findings of the study, the researchers have come up with some recommendations.

- The Department of Education should provide a training for the SLM writers to enhance their skills to provide high quality education amidst pandemic.

- The Education Program Supervisor (EPS) should monitor webinars on the writing modules of the SLM Writers.
- For SLM writers, their dedication for helping their pupils learn in this pandemic is essential.
- To the future researchers, who are planning to continue this study, the researchers suggest making an in-depth study about SLM writers to provide more understanding about their experiences and role as teacher-writers since the modular approach is a new learning modality.

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