Remote Teaching and Learning in the Context of COVID-19 Pandemic

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Abstract

This article aims to provide a clear lens of the new trend in the academe in terms of teaching and learning in the context of COVID-19 pandemic in the Philippines. It also highlights the pedagogical approaches used in the conduct of online classes, challenges, and opportunities in teaching and learning. Through literature-based methodology, the authors as academicians, described, summarized and analysed data using the four-step approach by UNESCO (2020). Findings showed that the most common strategy that had been designed and utilized to mirror the classroom environment was the synchronous and the asynchronous online teaching and learning approach. The implementation of online teaching and learning modality was embraced by both teachers and students despite being unprepared to the abrupt change. Educational institutions had sustained the delivery of education for the past school year despite noticeable risks, problems and challenges. The continuous improvement is still underway and educational administrators are looking at possible means to fill the identified gaps. The abrupt change in the teaching and learning has given an opportunity for teachers to teach innovatively and students learn independently. Providing a full report on the status of teaching and learning during the pandemic gives a full overview of the actual academe scenario as an effect of the pandemic. Challenges and opportunities identified provide the real scenario of online teaching.

Keywords: Remote Teaching and learning, Challenges, Opportunities, COVID-19 Pandemic

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1. Introduction

The battle against Covid-19 pandemic has brought a lot of adverse effects in almost all sectors. This resulted to worldwide disruption in terms of global economy, travel restrictions, closure of educational institutions, and many other effects. One of the most affected is the education sector. When the pandemic was on its peak, almost all countries all over the world have ordered temporary closure of all educational institutions to contain the spread of the disease, reduce the infection and ensure the safety of the teachers and students (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, 2020). In the Philippines, the closure followed by lock downs and community quarantine led to the conduct a remote teaching and learning. This prompted teachers and students to study and work from home through online learning platforms (Crawford et al., 2020).

When schools, colleges and universities have been closed to manage the global pandemic, teachers, students and parents all over the world felt its unexpected effects on educational landscape. While government and health organizations are doing their best to control the outbreak, educational institutions still try to continue providing quality education services amidst the difficult times. In the Philippines, educational institutions can opt to deliver quality education but through distance modality, as the best practice possible, to keep students stay at home (Petrie, 2020). In order to ensure the continuity of almost 28 million learners in the Philippines (UNESCO, 2021), educational institutions implemented proactive policies through adoption of new trend in teaching and learning at the onset of school year 2020-2021. For instance, the basic education institution level, the Department of Education (DepED) required all schools to submit learning continuity plan (Department of Education, 2020) while the higher education institutions (HEIs) were given educational freedom to implement distance learning or e-learning delivery modes (Commission on Higher Education, 2020).

Being educators, the researchers had also faced challenges and opportunities when face to face teaching and learning was converted into online. Being trained as classroom teachers, switching into online teaching was a big challenge. Almost all teachers around the world were not ready for the drastic change but need to adapt the teaching and learning trend in the new normal. With these premises, this article aims to provide a clear lens on the new trend in teaching and learning in the context of COVID-19 pandemic. Specifically, this answers the following questions:
a) What are the new teaching and learning trends in the context of COVID-19 pandemic in the Philippines?
b) What are the pedagogical approaches in remote teaching and learning utilized by educational institutions in the Philippines during COVID-19 pandemic?
c) What are the challenges in remote teaching and learning encountered by teachers and students?
d) How the challenges were turned into opportunities for teaching and learning?

Providing a full report on the status of teaching and learning during the pandemic gives an overview of the real picture of the academe. The identified challenges and opportunities provide a clear view of the real scenario of online classes in lieu of the traditional face-to-face teaching and learning. For teachers, this article will provide an opportunity to evaluate their strategies and approaches in conducting online classes. Since most of the teachers are not ready for this set up, some still use the similar approach in offline teaching. The best practices in the face-to-face classroom teaching may not be effective for students in learning the subject matter remotely. For students, this article will give an idea on how to respond to the guided and independent learning activities provided by their teachers. It will provide full readiness in using the modern technology as an alternative device to continuously earn knowledge and skills in times of pandemic. Students will have a clear realization that their engagement in online classes is a big factor for their teachers to strategize on best approach fits them to achieve the desired learning outcomes. For educational leaders and school administrators, this article will provide a clear overview of what happens in the virtual classroom to find out the teachers’ struggles in delivering the lessons using the remote teaching and learning modality and the students’ adjustments to absorb the quality learning they deserve. It will also provide a reflection on the support they can provide to both teachers and students and the areas to be improved as far as remote teaching and learning is concerned.

2. Literature Review

Lockdown, community quarantine and social distancing measures due to the COVID-19 pandemic led to temporary closures of schools, colleges and universities in almost all countries. The temporary closure made educational institutions to shift from traditional face-to-face
classroom to remote learning through various online platforms. The online learning, distance learning, home-based learning, and continuing education became a global trend despite the challenges posed to both teachers and students. The transition from traditional face-to-face learning to online learning is entirely new for the students and teachers but they have to adapt as there is no other alternative. The use of e-learning devices played an important role during this pandemic. It helps schools, colleges and universities facilitate teaching and learning (Subedi, 2020).

While adapting to the new normal, teachers and students’ readiness needs to be evaluated and reinforced accordingly (Doucet, 2020). The students with a stable mindset find it difficult to adapt and adjust, whereas the students with an advanced mindset can easily adapt to a new learning environment. There is no pedagogical methodology that fits all. It depends upon the needs of the learning areas; different learning areas and age groups require different methodology to online learning. Online learning, however, is challenging for both teachers and students. It allows physically challenged students with more freedom to participate in virtual class which require limited movement and participation (Basilaia & Kvavadze, 2020).

The use of appropriate and relevant pedagogy for online education depends on the know-how and experience in the use of information and communications technology (ICT) tools. Some of the online platforms used so far by educational institutions are Microsoft Teams, Google Classroom, Canvas and Blackboard, which help teachers to post teaching materials, assessments, quizzes, guided learning activities and home works. These platforms can also replicate face-to-face classroom through chat, video conferencing and file storage that keep classes more organized. These can also share files, PowerPoint slides, Word, Excel and PDF files, audio and videos. Assignments of students and assessments can be uploaded and submitted (Petrie, 2020). The use of these online platforms is new to both teachers and students that they faced a lot of challenges. Some challenges identified by many studies include accessibility, affordability, flexibility, learning pedagogy, life-long learning and educational policy (Murgatrot, 2020). Many countries have stable internet connection and access to digital tools while developing countries, the economically and under privileged children cannot afford online learning devices. Therefore, it has become indispensable for students to participate in offline activities and self-exploratory learning. Another challenge is the lack of parental support, especially for basic education students whose parents are working. These learners need minimum supervision and guidance while the vulnerable group, students who are slow learners, faced difficulties. In
addition, students who are fast learners but economically disadvantaged are unable to access and afford online learning. Therefore, the level of their academic performance is likely to drop due to reduced contact hour and lack of attendance due to difficulties in accessing online platform (Sintema, 2020).

The reopening of classes during the time of school closures became a priority for governments all over the world. This priority turned to an option to utilize the information and communication technology, requiring teachers to move to online delivery of classes. From the start of the pandemic, teachers were instructed to implement distance learning modalities, often without sufficient training. In many contexts, teacher professional development has moved online or been disseminated via email and video applications, but vulnerable teachers may have missed out on such support. Virtual class meeting with their students and the education community has been utilized (International Task Force on Teachers for Education, 2020).

**Theoretical Framework**

This study was based on the theories of constructivism and connectivism. Elliot et al. (2000) argued that constructivism is an approach to learning that makes students actively construct their own knowledge wherein reality is determined by their experiences. Constructivist learning theory reinforces a various student-centered teaching methods and techniques which is in contrast with traditional education where knowledge is transferred by teachers to students (Mcleod, 2019). On the other hand, connectivism theory is the integration of principles explored by network, complexity and self-organization theories. Learning is taken place through nebulous environment shifting from core elements not under the control of the students to connecting information for them to learn more (Siemens, 2005). Under this theoretical approach, the use of digital tools will add value to the student’s understanding on the teaching and learning of the 21st century skills which contribute to the transformation of educational institutions.

3. **Methodology**

3.1. **Research Method**

This study used a literature-based methodology, an effective tool to provide description, summary and critical analysis of the existing literatures as the sources of information. It can also be used as a systematic way of collecting and synthesizing previous researches (Ancheta & Ancheta, 2020).
3.2. Research Model

The authors based their arguments from the current situations as well as cited literature and studies. The four-step approach suggested by UNESCO in support of COVID-19 global education coalition was used as a research model in analyzing the new trend in teaching and learning, pedagogical approaches, and the challenges encountered in the implementation of remote teaching. These include: a) understanding and envisioning the remote teaching and learning; b) deciding and designing remote learning solutions; c) execution of the learning solutions; and d) monitoring and evaluation of the remote learning strategy implementation (UNESCO, 2020).

3.3. Data Collection

Due to the limited studies in the Philippines, the actual experience of the authors as a teacher in higher education and basic education institutions were considered. Also the actual classroom observation conducted by the author as school principal has been used as input to the discussion and analysis. After identifying all the needed information, details were presented and discussed. In addition, the challenges encountered in running their own private pre-school were also considered.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 New Trend in Teaching and Learning in the Context of COVID-19 Pandemic

Educational institutions are bound to pursue their mission in delivering quality education to their students but the pandemic has created disruptions on their mission and vision. In order to continue the education process in times of Covid-19 pandemic, the remote teaching and learning was adopted as a new trend in the educational system. However, adopting the remote learning as a new trend is not easy; a concrete policy on the delivery of instructions needs to be strengthened. In order to support the government all over the world in their educational response to COVID-19, the UNESCO (2020) recommended a four-step approach framework in adopting the remote learning strategy as a key element in ensuring continued learning. This approach has been the framework of educational institutions in the implementation of the remote learning which include understand and envision, decide and design, enable and execute, and monitor and adjust (UNESCO, 2020).
In the Philippines, remote teaching and learning consisted of different approaches depending on the capacity of the students and the availability of the educational institution’s resources. For instance, basic education opted blended learning while others opted the modular approach. Normally, private schools in the city have online blended approach using synchronous and asynchronous teaching and learning modality. However, public schools opted modular approach to cater students in the remote areas. The online class is a flexible form of learning in the Philippines wherein courses are held on the internet. Due to the pandemic, remote learning is the only way to continue either online or modular style to ensure that children would not miss school when the government imposed community lockdowns (Magsambol, 2021).

For higher education, HEIs implemented a proactive policy to continue education despite the closure. These initiatives include modified forms of online learning either synchronous or asynchronous. However, other private universities have an option either to go online, blended, or flexible learning. Flexible learning doesn’t require internet connectivity. Instead, it is focused on the design and delivery of the programs, courses and learning interventions that address the needs of pace, place, and processes of learning. Flexible learning is also one of the approaches in response to the pandemic issue as more encompassing than online learning (Parrocha, 2020).

### 4.2. Understanding and Envisioning the Remote Teaching and Learning

Before selecting teaching and learning modality, all educational institutions start by envisioning how it will be rolled out. In this context, teachers and students’ digital capabilities were considered as well as the availability of the device and access to internet connectivity. This is done to ensure that the remote learning strategy fits the needs of the students. There are many innovative learning platforms identified by various education sectors. As per DepEd No. 13 s. 2020, basic education institutions have an option to deliver remote learning either through modular, online, and blended approach. Since Learning Continuity Plan (LCP) was a requirement by DepEd in the reopening of classes in SY 2020-2021, public schools opted to use modular approach while the private schools used online approach as teaching and learning modality to ensure that remote learning is a choice in this new normal situation (DepEd, 2020). On the other hand, the choice of the HEIs was flexible learning through virtual classes. The Commission on Higher Education (CHED) suggested to strengthen the flexible learning through online class and blended learning using various platforms like Google classroom, Zoom, Facebook messenger and YouTube (CHED, 2020).
4.3. Pedagogical Approaches in Remote Teaching and Learning

According to a British educator Gilly Salmon, pedagogical approaches in online learning can be: a) individual learning approach; b) facilitated learning approach; and c) collaborative learning approach. Progress in online learning involves movement in steps and eventually arrive through stages of learning in order to construct new knowledge. Bjorke (2014) presented the three main pedagogical approaches to e-learning as shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1
Three Main Pedagogical Approaches to E-learning

These approaches are in line with the constructivist point of view that students have to be active learners and construct knowledge by themselves based on what they already know. The main role of the students is to process and understand the information they heard from the teacher, which is considered learner-centered approach. As per constructivists point of view, the students have to participate at all levels and be responsible for their task, which is considered a problem-based learning approach (Bjorke, 2014).
a. *Facilitated Learning Approach.* Since remote teaching occurs outside the physical classroom, the teacher is using a facilitated learning approach. Classes are facilitated through the use of modern technology using various computer platforms and the learning management system (LMS). This can be synchronous or asynchronous approach. During the synchronous class, the students listen to the live lecture of the teacher and can interact via two-way communication technologies. The teacher delivers the lesson using PowerPoint slides and discusses each content of the slides and ensures that students are participating during the virtual lecture and discussion. During the asynchronous class, the students are given some independent learning activities to be done at their own pace. This includes seatwork, exercises, homework and other performance task relevant to the lesson discussed during the synchronous session.

b. *Collaborative Learning Approach.* During the online classes, students are given activities and seat works similar to face-to-face scenario. However, the procedures are different since all the exercises and seat works are uploaded to the teaching and learning platform where students are given time to access them and answer right away. This allows teacher to use collaborative learning approach where students are given enough time to do the performance task relevant to the required learning outcomes. In this approach, the students develop their problem solving skills with the guidance of the teacher. One of the best practices in remote teaching is providing assignments or home works for the students to use online resources. It is a problem-based learning where students are given a chance to learn new information and skills by working actively in a purposeful way. Teachers who are using a collaborative approach have to design activities which make use of the student’s intellectual experiences. Collaborative activities may vary depending upon the capability of the students to perform. It can be a structured task, case study, and a discussion forum (Smith & McGregor, 1992).

c. *Individual Learning.* Remote learning occurs when the teacher and the learner are separated by time and distance and unable to meet in a traditional classroom. In remote learning, students are far distanced from their teachers and peers. The learnings are delivered via modern technology to avoid physical presence in the classroom either synchronous and asynchronous where students can learn at the same time. Individual learning entails working independently. In this type of approach, students are given home works and assignments for their independent learning activities. This include library works, research work, and other performance tasks that require independent learning. Independent learning activities are needed for online learning to maximize the time allotted to each of the learning areas, modules or courses. Performance
outputs are uploaded to the LMS to ensure students’ engagement. It is important to note that in remote learning, the student and the teacher are not familiar to having distance during instruction. This may cause a challenge to both teacher and student that need support from the school management. For remote learning to be more effective, a well-defined structure should be in placed so that it can support a well-developed instructional plan (Ray, 2020).

4.3.1. Deciding and Designing Remote Teaching and Learning Solutions

A strategy for remote teaching has been decided and designed by educational institutions ensuring that the strategy meets the students of all ages and the course they are taking. The most common strategy that has been designed and utilized to mirror the classroom environment is the synchronous and the asynchronous online teaching and learning approach. Each of the learning area or course has specific number of hours to be spent for synchronous and asynchronous class. For synchronous class, students attend classes and listen to their teacher in real time. In this type of teaching approach, both teacher and students need to have computer, laptop or mobile phone with internet access. The teacher shares the learning process through discussion, lecture, presentation and other strategy to make teaching and learning effective. During the synchronous class, the students can be engaged through active participation in the virtual class discussion like recitation, role play, and group discussion. For asynchronous class, students are doing the learning process at their own pace. Home works, assignments, and other performance tasks are given by the teacher to be done by the students in a specific time duration. These performance tasks can be submitted through the LMS adopted by the educational institutions.

The use of synchronous and asynchronous approach in online teaching needs LMS for the school, colleges or universities to communicate to their students and parents. LMS refers to the delivery platform used in the implementation of online learning. It contains learning materials like modules, teaching materials, teaching plan, class exercises and activities and other learning materials needed in the conduct of remote teaching and learning. There are many LMS that have been used by educational institutions prior to the pandemic. These include Moodle, blackboard, canvas, and others. During the pandemic, there are other platforms that have been utilized like Google classroom, Zoom, and MS Teams (Thompson, 2020).

All of these platforms are useful in the administration of online classes. Teachers make use of the LMS to communicate to their students in terms of assignments, homework and other performance tasks. It provides opportunity for teachers to design and develop learning
informative contents and deliver it to the desired group of students. It also provides an opportunity for teachers to monitor the progress of their students and provide feedback on the students’ performance. Learners, on the other hand, are benefited by the contents of the LMS and the possible feedback they received from their teachers. It is a tool that contains features that help stimulate learning experiences and activities that are also happening in the traditional classroom. Teachers can upload power point slides relevant to the daily or weekly topics, upload, seatwork, homework, quizzes, and other performance tasks to the platform. Teachers can post announcements, reminders, summative test, and other learning materials (Maske, 2020).

In the new normal, LMS serves as a virtual classroom in which teachers and students can interact and conduct guided and independent learning activities online. It is very useful during this time wherein social distancing and lockdown are in place. It provides continuity in education despite of the temporary closure of educational institutions. It also gives an opportunity for students to learn and study at home despite the distance. What the students and teachers need is the internet connectivity to ensure that communication and participation of students are guaranteed (Thompson, 2020).

4.2.2 Execution and Implementation of Remote Teaching and Learning

After deciding the teaching and learning modality platform, teachers were trained in the use of the chosen online platform. The common platforms used by educational institutions are MS Teams, Zoom, and Google Meet.

Before the chosen platform was rolled out to the students, teachers were oriented on how to use the platform and familiarize them on the various features of the software application. A trial class was scheduled to students before the SY 2020-2021 started. The trial class was conducted to familiarize students on how to use the platform. The conduct of training for teachers and the trial class for students gave an opportunity to be ready on the remote teaching and learning. Parents were also oriented about their role in the implementation of the remote learning through parents’ orientation. During the orientation, the teaching and learning modality were introduced as well as the needs of the children in the conduct of virtual classes. The role as parents was emphasized to get the support. The creation of online learning platforms was in response to the school closure. However, not all students have the same access to the modern technologies which also varies across countries (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2020).
Support from the school administration was also needed to ensure that students vulnerable to the remote learning are addressed. In the public schools where vulnerable and disadvantaged students exist, the DepEd set a distance remote learning approach utilizing delivery of prepared modules to students, access to DepEd Commons, an online DepEd platform to support alternative modes of learning, and the delivery of lessons or self-learning modules via radio and television. The specific guidelines on the implementation of remote learning are still under review (Magsambol, 2020).

4.3 Challenges in Remote Teaching and Learning

The implementation of online classes in response to remote teaching and learning strategy requires internet access. However, not all students have access to internet and that posed problems to students who have limited access to internet as well as those who have no gadgets and poor. According to the report of Akamai (2017), the Philippines has the lowest internet connectivity in Asia. Other challenges would be equity gaps, students’ security and safety, quality of learning compromised and poor assessment results. Thus, private educational institutions adapted to this limitation to either go on fully online or blended learning.

a. Monitoring and Evaluation of Remote Teaching and Learning Strategy

The use of remote learning platform is a challenge to both students and teachers as not all of them are ICT savvy. Most of the teachers are not ready to this kind of teaching and learning set up because online platforms like MS Teams, Zoom, and Google meet are new them. Teachers being unfamiliar with all these remote-learning solutions faced difficulty in adjusting what appropriate strategies and methods in teaching to be used that would engage students. A trial and error strategy has been utilized by teachers to ensure students engagement which can lead to compromise the quality of learning the students get. However, this strategy is time consuming and risky. In some cases, it may be useful but most often it is idiosyncratic. The student may risk and become bored (Bjorke, 2014).

Student engagement using the remote learning platform is passive. They are inactive compared to face-to-face learning where students are very participative in most of the cases. In online classes, students are inactive especially if student’s web camera is off. Thus, teaching is a one-way communication. It is difficult to assure how much learning the students get. Some good students are participating but weak students may risk especially those who particularly need
academic support. Other students who are undisciplined may simply give up and do other things to make themselves get away from boredom (Bjorke, 2014).

Teacher’s role in remote learning is purely a presenter or a facilitator of the lesson and discuss it with a very limited students’ interaction. Students participation is very limited even teacher is calling student’s name. Students’ engagement is just observed on their involvement in the guided and independent learning activities given by the teachers during the asynchronous time schedule. Though the teacher is just a facilitator of learning, he plays the role of guiding the students all throughout the virtual class in both synchronous and asynchronous. The teacher needs to provide formative and or constructive feedback to attain the desired learning outcomes (Bull, 2013).

Parents engagement, on the other hand, matters most especially for grade school children. The support of the parents and guardian is very crucial especially in the setting up of computer device, guidance on explaining and discussion instructions in the guided learning activities as well as submission of home works and other performance tasks using the LMS. High school and undergraduate students need minimal parental support as most of them are matured enough to use the learning platform. However, guidance of the parents still necessary by monitoring their attendance to online classes and submission of necessary required performance tasks both formative and summative assessments. It is indeed an added responsibility for parents considering that they are also working from home, and the same time doing household chores. Since there is a correlation that parents’ involvement is very crucial in the academic performance of their children, their engagement, be it the traditional learning environment and the present remote learning, is imperative (Sarkar, 2020).

Monitoring and evaluation of the remote teaching and learning to ensure the continuity of quality learning throughout the COVID-19 pandemic is focused on the following:

a. Challenges for Students. Self-learning and self-motivation among students is one of the biggest challenge that needs to be monitored and evaluated. Learning autonomy is important in distance learning. However, many students, particularly younger children, may not yet have developed sufficient autonomy for self-learning. Distance learning programs lack mechanisms for teachers to assess and provide feedback and formative guidance to students. Learning levels of students may be affected and students will have endured varying levels of isolation and stress during the school closure and students will need to readapt to social life (UNICEF, 2020). Most students do not have access to the
modern technology and gadgets. Some of them don’t have even safe and quiet place at home study and some do not have full support from the parents which are the core requirements of the remote learning. This kind of scenario can bring students into disadvantage and will compromise the quality of learning. Students who are living in the countryside may have poor internet access or even have no access at all. This situation can contribute to the students’ performance at the end of the semester or school year.

b. **Challenges for Teachers.** The new procedures for remote learning require teachers to abruptly change their practices including daily tasks, responsibilities and accountabilities. Teachers may be asked to develop new alternative and varied approaches to monitor children's learning outcomes (from assessment to remediation) during the COVID-19 crisis both formative and summative evaluation. Various strategies may be required per level and learning area during the synchronous and asynchronous classes. Teachers may lack relevant resources at home, training and experience, particularly on digital learning platforms. Some programs may largely reduce the amount of time allocated to teacher-directed learning processes by focusing on children’s self-learning. Teachers may also struggle to assess students’ learning levels to identify whether students are on track, and any learning gaps or losses resulting from the school closure and for remedial actions (UNICEF, 2020).

c. **Challenges for Educational Institutions.** Schools, colleges and universities are called to deliver and/or develop assessment resources through non-traditional channels (e.g. digital platforms, radio, etc.) and to push the development of home-based assessment, student self-assessment, especially in situations where schools are closed due to pandemic. Such changes may represent major shifts in assessment culture for schools (UNICEF, 2020). Since educational institutions have to sustain the delivery of quality education during the pandemic time despite of noticeable risks, problems and challenges to both teachers and students, continuous improvement is underway. Every educational institution has to evaluate these gaps to assess if the implementation of remote teaching and learning can still provide quality education and outcomes-based teaching and learning to students in lieu of the face-to-face classroom teaching and learning (Basilaia & Kvavadze, 2020).
d. **Challenges for Educational Leaders.** Educational leaders faced challenges on measuring the coverage and accessibility of the remote teaching and learning effectiveness in terms of children's learning outcomes. Government agencies responsible for monitoring all these issues may face significant pressure from parents and students to address assessment concerns quickly. Schools, teachers and parents may also have unrealistic expectations of what students can achieve through distance learning, so efforts may be needed to manage those expectations (UNICEF, 2020). Educational leaders and school administrators should look into not compromising quality of learning and assessment results during the pandemic year since grading system has no changes. Other learning areas that have been assessed through paper and pen will in fact have to be physically assessed like science laboratory activities, physical education activities and arts and culture activities. In addition, extracurricular activities like scouting, Junior Senior Proms, Sports Intramurals, foundation day are discontinued. Educational leaders are looking at possible means on how to fill the gap encountered for the past years when the new trend in teaching and learning in the context of COVID-19 was implemented particularly on the limited budget, digital maturity and operational capacity.

4.4 **Opportunities for Teaching and Learning**

The use of online platforms such as MS Teams, Google Classroom, Zoom, and other social media applications like Messenger, WhatsApp and the use of MS Outlook were explored and tried for teaching and learning. Teachers and students were forced to utilize their computer skills in manipulating these platforms and enhanced their skills that can be used not only during the online classes but also in the future undertaking. For teachers, this can be used further even face-to-face teaching will be back to normal; these platforms can be an additional resources and coaching mechanism. Teachers are forced to develop initiatives that help overcome the boundaries of remote teaching. They learned how to collaborate actively with one another to improve online teaching methodology. Online teaching provided an opportunity for teachers to teach innovatively different from the usual normal classroom setting. There are incomparable opportunities for cooperation, creative strategies and willingness to learn from others and try new tools as educators, parents and students share similar experiences (Doucet, 2020).

Online learning has given opportunity for students to use appropriate technology needed in the interaction with their teacher. Students became responsible for their own learning.
Students also enhanced their research skills in solving problems relevant to their assessments and utilized wide range knowledge of these platforms that can still be applied in higher level of study or even at the workplace in the future. They developed independent learning and became more resilient, more engaged and diligent as learning was entirely different from the face-to-face classroom (Isman, 2004).

5. Conclusion

The educational institutions are the most affected sector during the pandemic. Due to lockdown and quarantine, schools, colleges and universities were temporarily closed. The reopening of classes for SY 2020-2021 was a big challenge not only to educational leaders and school administrators but also to teachers and students. A proactive policy for the continuance of education in times of the pandemic was formulated and decided to adopt the new trend in teaching and learning which led teachers and students to study and work from home through online learning platforms.

The implementation of remote learning as a new trend in teaching and learning during the pandemic was not so easy. A strategy for remote teaching decided and designed by educational institutions to mirror the classroom environment was the synchronous and the asynchronous online teaching and learning approach. The use of synchronous and asynchronous approach in online teaching utilized LMS for the school, colleges or universities to communicate to their students and parents. In the new normal, LMS served as a virtual classroom in which teachers and students interact and conduct independent learning activities. However, teachers and students were not so ready to use the teaching and learning modality. Instant training was given to teachers to familiarize the platform. However, a trial and error in familiarizing the features of the software was done by teachers to suit their teaching strategy. As students were not used to the strategy, they tend to be passive during the virtual classes. Despite the challenges brought by the pandemic, educational institutions had sustained the delivery of quality education for the past school year despite noticeable risks, problems and challenges to both teachers and students. Continuous improvement is still underway and educational/school administrators are looking at possible means on how to fill these gaps.

Despite of the abrupt change in the teaching and learning, the new normal has given opportunities to both teachers and students. Online learning provided an opportunity for teachers to teach innovatively different from the usual normal classroom setting. Students developed independent
learning and became more resilient, more engaged and diligent as learning was entirely different from the face-to-face classroom.

In light of the results, the study recommends that educational leaders and school administrators look into means on how to fill the gaps encountered by both teachers and students in the conduct of online classes. Specifically, the following are recommended:

**a. For Educational Institutions**

- A proactive policy for the continuance of education in times of the pandemic must be formulated, implemented and carefully evaluated.
- Every educational institution needs to study how successful online learning is in providing quality education and outcomes-based education to students.
- A specific LMS must be adapted and implemented not only in times of the pandemic but all throughout the educational processes.
- Employ ICT specialist to ensure that problems encountered by teachers and students in the use of LMS particularly in the implementation of remote teaching and learning can be addressed.
- Educational institutions should provide in-house capability building to their staff regularly not only to cope with the challenges faced during the pandemic but for the professional development needs of their staff.
- Close monitoring and evaluation of the remote learning should be administered to find out the strengths and weaknesses of the chosen approaches to teaching and learning in the new normal.
- Educational institutions must ensure that all resources needed by both teachers and students in remote teaching and learning are available.
- Every educational institution has to evaluate the gaps encountered during the implementation of the chosen approaches to assess if the remote teaching and learning can still provide quality education and outcomes-based learning outcomes are attained in lieu of the face-to-face classroom teaching and learning.
- Educational institutions must include in their strategic plan initiatives to develop resiliency in coping with the challenges brought by the worldwide pandemic.
b. *For Educational Leaders*

- Educational leaders should look for possible means to fill the gap encountered for the past year when the new trend in teaching and learning was implemented particularly on the limited budget, digital maturity and operational capacity.
- Educational leaders and school administrators need to look into how students will not be compromised in terms of quality of learning and assessment results.
- Maintain the effectiveness of the implementation of educational programs and promote improvement of teaching and learning not only in times of the pandemic.
- Spearhead the training and development of teachers in the use of ICT as part of the in-service training.
- Monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of using the chosen approaches in remote learning.
- Recommend possible solutions to the challenges encountered by both teachers and students in the conduct of remote teaching and learning.
- School heads must also address issues and concerns on distance learning immediately to avoid bigger problems.
- Support from the school administrators are needed to ensure that students who are vulnerable to the remote learning are addressed.

c. *For Teachers*

- Teachers need to be competent in both pedagogy and technology.
- Develop initiatives that help overcome the boundaries of remote teaching.
- Teachers must be proficient in the use of online platform chosen by an educational institution.
- Teachers must be innovative and creative in conducting online classes to ensure students engagement.
- Teachers must use multiple approaches applicable to the learning areas of teaching to ensure students’ participation.
- Teachers must establish a sense of comfort and develop a community of learners to ensure students participation.
• When face-to-face classroom returns to normal, teachers are encouraged to continue using online tools to enhance teaching and learning.

References


