



## LIVED EXPERIENCES OF MASTER TEACHERS IN MONITORING MODULAR DISTANCE LEARNING (MDL) TEACHERS AT TMCNHS

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### ABSTRACT

*School Year 2020 -2021 ushered the beginning of the so-called “Education in the New Normal”. The sudden shift from face-to-face learning to distance learning threatened not only the parents and students but most especially the Department of Education, on what they can do to ensure that though the delivery of learning changes, the quality of the education remains the same. The study is qualitative in nature and was conducted to explain the lived experiences of Master Teachers in Monitoring Modular Distance Learning Teachers. Specifically, this aims in discussing the experiences and challenges encountered by the master teachers in monitoring MDL as part of the “New Normal”. Purposive sampling was used in selecting 5 master teachers that participated in the study. The researcher used FGD (Focal Group Discussion) and semi-structured interview to seek the in-depth information that revealed the current situation on how the informants responded newly implemented way of monitoring modular distance learning modality teachers. Thematic data analysis was utilized to analyze and interpret the results of this study. Findings from the study showed themes based on the experience of Master teachers in monitoring MDL teachers. It includes Change: Master teachers’ Insight where they shared that monitoring in the New Normal is a bit difficult; Focus: Master Teachers setting the path towards Modular Distance Learning, and Waves: Challenges encountered by the master teachers in monitoring MDL teachers. Through the result of this study, Trece Martires City National High School or even the Department of Education - Cavite may utilize the results in designing various Professional Development Programs/trainings that would enhance the capability of Master teachers to monitor teachers under the modular distance learning. It can also serve as baseline data in conducting related study in Elementary and Senior High School level.*

*Keywords: Modular Distance Learning, Master teachers, New Normal*

### INTRODUCTION

School Year 2020 -2021 is characterized as the beginning of “Education in the New Normal. The sudden transition from face-to-face learning to distance learning threatened not only the parents and students but most especially the Department of Education as it aims despite of changes on the delivery of learning, the quality of the education remains the same. As the country continues to confront

different issues brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic, the Department of Education is addressing the challenges in the basic education through its Basic Education Learning Continuity Plan (BE-LCP) under the Department of Education Order No. 012, s. 2020 aims to ensure the health, safety, and well-being of the learners, teachers, and personnel in the time of COVID-19, while finding ways for education to continue amidst the crisis. In particular, the BE-LCP has been



designed with a legal framework responsive to the “new normal,” keeping in mind the constitutional mandate to uphold the right of all citizens to quality education at all times.

The Department of Education ensures that all learners have access to quality Basic Education. They distributed Self Learning Modules (SLMs) that are used by the learners together with the modalities suited for them. According to Department of Education Secretary Leonor Briones “The Self Learning Modules and the other alternative learning delivery modalities are in place to address the needs, situations, and resources of each and every learner and covers all the bases in ensuring that basic education are accessible amid the present crisis posed by COVID-19,”. The claim is in line with the result of a study conducted by of Creus and Angeles (2019) where they found out that Module-based localized learning materials resulted to increase performance of most learners.

Trece Martires City National High School offered two types of learning modalities, Online Distance Learning (ODL) and Modular Distance Learning (MDL) to address the needs of the learners although the teacher and students are geographically away from one another. Learners were given Self Learning Modules even those enrolled in the Online Distance Learning modality this is to ensure that they would have materials to be used if the internet connection alters. From the study of (Sadiq et al., 2014) it was proven that Modular as a way of teaching is more effective in teaching learning process as compared to ordinary teaching methods. The modular approach helps to maximize the chances of student participation in the classroom in respect to fulfil the given tasks at the spot, so the students feel free to learn in their own style. The findings are the same as what Amboyan (2019) proved in his study that modular instruction is more effective in teaching learning method compared to usual teaching approaches because in this modular approach the students learn at their own stride.

To guarantee that learning delivery really takes place, there is a need for

monitoring and observation by the school head, head teachers, and master teachers to ensure that proper feedback and technical assistance will be given. From the study conducted by Arce (2019) it was found out that the Secondary Master Teachers of the Division of Cavite were “Mastered” and “Very High” in their instructional competence, educative leadership capacity showed “Highly Proficient” especially on curriculum content and pedagogy, planning, assessing, reporting and professional growth and development. Their instructional competence enables them to be the right person to assist and mentor other teachers. This is also congruent with the study conducted by Laude, Ralar and Arcenal (n.d) where they proved that master teachers of the secondary institutions in the Division of Biliran were “Mastered” and “Very High” in their instructional competence, they can guide in improving the academic performance of the students. Moreover, their instructional leadership capacity showed “Highly Proficient” especially on curriculum content and pedagogy, on planning, assessing, and reporting learners’ outcomes and on personal growth and professional development. The educators believed that the term “Master teacher” could still be used in the establishment of a possible post for excellent/expert teachers working in the Barbadian school system (Mc. Clean, 2009). Based on the result of the study conducted by Laude et al. (2018) Master teachers at the secondary schools in the Division of Biliran were excellent and “Mastered” their instructional competence. They showed expertise in subject skills, classroom management skills, evaluation skills, teaching strategy skills, and mentoring skills which are very evident in the academic performance of the students. Moreover, their instructional leadership capacity showed “Highly Proficient” especially on curriculum content and pedagogy, on planning, assessing, and reporting learners’ outcomes and on personal growth and professional development.

Interpretivist/constructivist approaches to research have the intention of understanding



“the world of human experience” (Cohen & Manion, 1994, p.36), suggesting that “the reality is socially constructed” (Mertens, 2005, p.12). The interpretivist/constructivist researcher tends to rely upon the “participants’ views of the situation being studied” (Creswell, 2003, p.8) and recognizes the impact of the research on their background and experiences. Constructivists do not generally begin with a theory (as with post-positivists) rather they “generate or inductively develop a theory or pattern of meanings” (Creswell, 2003, p.9) throughout the research process. This theoretical framework was utilized by the researcher in understanding the Master teachers and their monitoring experiences in Trece Martires City National High School.

### OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The study was conducted to explain the lived experiences of Master teachers in monitoring Modular Distance Learning teachers. Specifically, this study aimed to:

1. Determine the experiences of the Master teachers of Trece Martires City National High School in monitoring modular distance learning teachers.
2. Discuss the different challenges encountered by the master teachers in monitoring modular distance learning teachers in Trece Martires City National High School.
3. Determine the future direction of this study after knowing the experiences and difficulty encountered by the Master teachers in monitoring modular distance learning teachers in Trece Martires City National High School.

### METHODOLOGY

This study utilized a phenomenological method of research to determine the lived experiences of master teachers in monitoring modular distance learning teachers. It was mentioned by Giorgi (2009) that the phenomenological research culminates in the essence of the experiences for several

individuals who have all experienced the phenomenon.

The sampling technique that was used is non-probability sampling, particularly the purposive sampling technique. The participants needed in the study were selected according to the needs of the study; they were the master teachers that teach different subjects. Among 5 participants, 2 of them served as a Master teacher for more than five years while others were newly promoted and serving for less than a year. The participants are all female and are all teaching at Trece Martires City National High School. The study was conducted during the first quarter, from October to December of School Year 2020 – 2021.

The researcher made use of interview guide/ questionnaires in the Focal Group Discussion and semi-structured interview to seek in-depth information that revealed the current situation on how the informants responded to the newly implemented way of monitoring modular distance learning modality teachers.

After seeking help from the experts for the validation of guide questions used in the conduct of the study, the researcher sought permission to conduct the study from Trece Martires City National High School’s principal. Upon approval, the purpose of the study was explained to the selected participants. Permission to look at their observation notes as well as the sample Weekly Home Learning of the teachers they are monitoring were also requested. Then, the time and date for the face-to-face interview and analysis of the document were set as agreed by the researcher and the participant. After the participants shared their stories, experiences, and challenges experienced in monitoring MDL teachers, the data were interpreted and analyzed.

In gathering the data, one of the participants showed an unwillingness to share her insights and experiences related to the study. This made the researcher decide of asking another Master teacher from a different department to be one of the key informants.



Luckily, she agreed and willingly gave her experiences in monitoring Modular Distance Learning teachers.

In the analysis of collected data, the researcher utilized the thematic data analysis, the steps introduced by Braun & Clarke, 2013 were applied. This includes transcribing, taking note of items of interest, coding across the entire data set, searching for themes, reviewing themes by mapping the provisional themes and their relationships, defining and naming themes, and the finalize analysis.

After following the phases of analyzing data, the outcome of the study was presented to the key informants/participants for the validation of their responses and the formulation of the action plan. The researcher sought assistance from the experts (internal and external validator) for the legitimacy of the themes used by the researcher anchored to the responses of the key informants.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In studying the lived experiences of Master Teachers in monitoring Modular Distance Learning teachers, qualitative means of investigation were employed. Through an interview and focus group discussion, the lived experiences of master teachers in monitoring the modular distance learning (MDL) teachers were identified.

The perspective of the teachers regarding some questions such as “What are the experiences of the secondary Master Teachers in monitoring modular distance learning teachers?”, “What should be the focus of a master teacher in monitoring MDL teachers?”, “As a Master teacher, how do you give feedback on your observations to different types of teachers?”, and “How do you address the identified problem (s) in the monitoring process?” served as a basis for the thematic analysis of data.

Master Teachers are highly skilled educators with a passion and drive to improve the instructional quality of their schools by extending their impact as teachers. Also, Master Teachers have a wealth of experience

facilitating professional learning for colleagues and leading school-wide initiatives. By working closely with school and/or district leadership, Master Teachers support the development of their peers by creating professional learning opportunities, leading teacher teams, and facilitating coaching conversations.

### 1. Experiences of the master teachers of Trece Martires City National High School in monitoring modular distance learning teacher

#### 1.1 Change Master Teachers’ insights

As Master teachers, it is their responsibility to monitor how the teachers, as well as the students, are performing in the new trend of delivering instruction as part of the “New Normal”. Some of the participants shared that monitoring MDL teachers and the learning process is quite different from that of face-to-face.

Master Teacher E said, “monitoring in the New Normal is a bit difficult (*mahirap kasi modular naman tapos kailangan mong malaman ung strategy na ginamit ni teacher at paano natuto si bata*)” and a lot of adjustment is needed for different materials and methods is needed to do the monitoring process efficiently.”

The statement is furthered by Master Teacher A “*It’s really hard to monitor Modular Distance Learning, lots of questions are being asked, adjustment on the delivery of teaching is a big concern to both teacher and students, and also questions on how monitoring of classes will be done in MDL. It’s quite challenging and fulfilling at the same time*”.

As added by Master Teacher C, “*monitoring the modular distance learning is quite difficult/ quite difficult since our way of monitoring is just based only on the documents submitted by the teachers such as their Weekly Home Learning Plan, Individual*



*Learning Monitoring Plan, monitoring log sheets and others.”*

Master Teacher G shared *“monitoring the MDL is very difficult and challenging especially that I am new to the position, I find it hard in giving feedback and recommendation to teachers of modular distance learning.”*

Since face-to-face is not possible due to the current situation, observation of classes to monitor the performance of MDL teachers is not possible, as mentioned by the participants monitoring teachers in the new normal is a lot different from before. Transition/ change in the monitoring process, presenting pieces of evidence, and feedbacking happen. Master teachers rely on what the teachers are told during the monitoring period and what documents they are present to support their claim. Numerical values to rate the performance of the teacher are now out of the picture, it was replaced by an observation notes where all the information given by the teacher as well as the interpretation of the master teacher were written.

### **1.2 Focus: Master Teachers setting the path towards Modular Distance Learning**

From the interview, Master teachers also pointed out that the primary concern of education in the “New Normal” only includes pedagogies and assessment.

In terms of pedagogies, master teachers claim that the strategies applied by the teachers to deliver instruction and learning to the students were hard to determine.

As shared by Master Teacher G *“Although lessons are carefully chosen by the experts and objectives are taken congruently from MELCs and scheduled activities were delivered among their students’ but the satisfaction of each teacher is really incomplete.” (sabi ng mga guro “ hindi naming alam kung natuto nga ba ang bata namin, kung*

*nakasagot naman ang mga bata, sila kaya talaga ang nagsagot noon?”)*

The claim was supported by Master Teacher E according to her *“it is very hard to know how well the teachers do their part in the learning process, after sending the Weekly Home Learning Plan, what did the teacher do to ensure that students are really working on their own on the set date and time.”*

Master teachers also claim that monitoring teachers in terms of administering assessment as well as feedbacking between the teacher, the learning facilitators and students should also be a primary concern. Master Teacher S mentioned *“I think the focus should also include how teachers’ utilized assessment and how they communicate to their learners as well as the learning facilitators. The way they instructed the students in accomplishing the different learning tasks and how they communicate the result of the assessment must be giving great consideration.”*

Master Teacher E mentioned that *“it is important for us to determine on how the learning facilitators at home communicate the result of what the students did to the teacher. At the same time, what the teacher did in response to what the facilitators shared to them. If it happens the many students failed, anon na ang ginawa o gagawin p ni teacher?”. Master Teacher A added “kung nagbigay tayo ng 15 items summative assessment, paano natin naensure na sila nga ang sumagot noon?”*

From the shared insights of the participants, it can be inferred that master teachers are adapting to change with difficulty, though they are experts in their field monitoring MDL teachers are a new thing to them. Giving feedback seems to be difficult especially that they don’t observe what the teacher is doing in her class. Some objectives applicable for modular distance learning are difficult to interpret since there are times that narration by the teacher and the documents, they



presented are not enough to justify the attainment of the objectives. From DepEd Order No. 42 s. 2017, the 7 Domains included in the Result-based Management System (RPMS) that are required to be accomplished by teachers to be effective in the 21st Century in the Philippines includes: 1) content, knowledge, and pedagogies, 2) learning environment, 3) diversity of learners, 4) curriculum and planning, 5) Assessment and

Reporting, 6) Community Linkages and Professional Engagement, and 7) Personal Growth and Professional Development. The first 5 key result areas are observable in the classroom and concerns of the master teachers. Due to change caused by COVID 19 KRA, monitoring of MDL teachers focused on teaching standards and pedagogies and learning assessment.

**Table 1**  
*Experiences of master teachers in monitoring the modular distance learning teachers*

Responses	Code	Category	Theme
<i>Master Teacher A stated, "Lot of adjustment is needed since the materials and methods needed for monitoring are different from before."</i>	Adjustment (in the materials and method used)	New monitoring process	<b>Change</b> in the monitoring process
<i>Master teacher C mentioned "Monitoring MDL teachers in the new normal is different and quite difficult since observation is based only on documents."</i>	Document Analysis	Presented evidences (new way of presenting MOVs)	
<i>Master Teacher G shared "I find hard in giving my observations and recommendation and technical assistance to teachers of modular distance learning."</i>	Observations and recommendation and technical assistance	Feed backing	
<i>Master Teacher E claimed that "it is very hard to know how well the teachers do their part in the learning process"</i>	Learning process	Pedagogy	<b>Focus</b> of the Observation process  (based on the Domains in the RPMS for teachers)
<i>Master Teacher C said "monitoring the modular distance learning is a bit difficult since our way of monitoring is just based only on the documents submitted by the teachers"</i>	Monitoring the strategies used based Documents		
<i>Master Teacher S mentioned "I think the focus should also include how teachers' utilized assessment and how they communicate to their learners as well as the learning facilitators"</i>	Ways of utilizing assessment	Assessment	
<i>Master Teacher E mentioned that "it is important for us to determine on how the learning facilitators at home communicate the result of what the students did to the teacher."</i>	Communicating the result of student's performance		



**2. Different challenges encountered by the master teachers in monitoring modular distance learning teachers in Trece Martires City National High School.**

**2.1 The Waves in Monitoring Modular Distance Learning**

From the point of view of the master teachers, the following are the challenges in monitoring modular distance learning teachers: First, monitoring the teachers using their stories, WHLP and LE as evidence seems lacking.

As Master Teacher A mentioned *“since monitoring have limited basis and evidences, feedbacking or giving technical assistance also becomes a problem.”*(lalo na po sa amin na ang Weekly Home Learning Plan ay by grade level, pagkababa send na agad sa adviser, hindi na rin po sure kung ito ba e minomodify depende sa needs ng mga bata).

*Master Teacher E agrees with the claim, “although we do weekly Kamustahan where teachers share stories on how they deal with their students specifically when it comes to compliance of the given tasks, I think it’s not enough to determine how the teacher is really performing.”*

Second, since master teachers are also teaching several sections at the same time monitoring and giving technical assistance to their colleagues, scheduling of observation becomes a problem. According to Master Teacher G *“because of files of works in checking the output of my students (due to two weeks duration before the retrieval of output) as well as communicating with their parents and/or home learning facilitators I find it hard to schedule monitoring my 23 co-department teachers.”*

**Table 2**  
Challenges encountered by the master teachers in monitoring MDL teachers.

Responses	Code	Category	Theme
<i>Master Teacher A mentioned “since monitoring have limited basis, evidence, and feedbacking or giving technical assistance also becomes a problem.”</i>	Limited basis and evidence	Insufficient evidence presented	Challenges (in the Monitoring process)
<i>According to Master Teacher G “because of files of works in checking the output of my students, as well as communicating with their parents and/or home learning facilitators I find it hard to schedule monitoring my 23 co-department teachers.”</i>	Tons of assigned work	Jam – packed Schedule (Hard to schedule the monitoring)	
<i>Master Teacher A said “we find difficulty in meeting each other in school because selected teachers are requested to duty per day.”</i>	Difficulty in meeting	Time trouble	



Third, since no face-to-face observation happens Master Teacher A mentioned that she finds difficulty of reaching out the teachers due to differences in schedule. *“Google meet, text, phone call and video call are usually the platform we are using for monitoring purposes this is because we find difficulty in meeting each other in school because selected teachers are requested to duty per day. Though the previously mentioned online communication platform helps us to communicate easily, still there are schedules for monitoring that don’t match.”*

Master teacher C added *“monitoring is done after the conduct of classes which usually becomes a problem sometimes because since I also have classes on the set time, we sometimes agree to have the monitoring at 5 PM or even 6 PM which is supposed to be the time given for the family.”*

Based on the shared experiences of Master teachers the challenges that catches the attention and need to give immediate solution are the following: 1) monitoring through stories and insufficient evidence presented leads to a problem in feedbacking/giving technical assistance. 2) Jam-packed schedule due to master teachers’ other functions in school like teaching students, doing reports and others leading to the difficulty of setting the schedule to monitor MDL teachers and 3) Time trouble, the difficulty in reaching out teachers due to difference in schedule

### 3. Future Direction of the Study

Through the result of this study, TMCNHS may conduct a Learning Action Cell that focus on the enhanced strategies in monitoring MDL teachers. Also, DepEd-Cavite may utilize the results in designing various Professional Development Programs/trainings that would enhance the capability of Master teachers to monitor teachers teaching under the modular distance learning. It can also serve as baseline data in conducting related

study in Elementary and Senior High School level.

### CONCLUSIONS

Based on the findings, the following conclusions are drawn:

1. Master teachers experienced transition/change in the monitoring process, presenting pieces of evidence, and feedbacking. They rely on what the teachers told during the monitoring period and what documents they presented to support their claim.
2. Master teachers are adapting to change with difficulty. Giving feedback seems to be difficult, especially that they do not observe what the teacher is doing in the class. Some objectives applicable for modular distance learning are difficult to interpret, there are times that narration made by the teacher and the documents presented are not enough to justify the attainment of the objectives.
3. The challenges encountered by the Master teachers that should be prioritized and need to be given immediate action include:
  - a) Monitoring through stories and insufficient evidence presented leads to a problem in feedbacking/giving technical assistance.
  - b) Jam-packed schedule due to Master teachers’ other functions in school like teaching students, doing reports, and others leading to the difficulty of setting the schedule to monitor MDL teachers and
  - c) Time for trouble, the difficulty in reaching out to teachers due to differences in the schedule.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations should be considered.



1. Conduct related studies to Master teachers teaching at the Elementary and Senior High School levels.
2. Investigate the lived experiences of the School Heads at the Junior High School Level in terms of monitoring Modular Distance Learning and Online Distance Learning teachers or master teachers.

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