

## STEM STUDENTS' EXPERIENCES IN MODULAR DISTANCE LEARNING AMIDST PANDEMIC: BASIS FOR ACADEMIC INTERVENTIONS

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### ABSTRACT

The face-to-face learning engagement of students and teachers within the school has been suspended due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Thus, the Department of Education's mantra of "no child left behind" paved the way for Modular Distance Learning (MDL) implementation as an immediate response to ensure educational continuity. This qualitative case study approach was conducted in Zamboanga del Sur National High School–Senior High School. The study employed multiple case studies on STEM students' experiences in MDL amidst the pandemic. The qualitative analysis revealed that the challenges encountered by STEM students on MDL are more prevalent on adjusting to a new setup, poor internet connection, and power interruption, lack of motivation, lack of presence of teachers, and learning loss, doing their households while trying to finish their modules. Students uttered that it felt foreign since everything is new and described it as hard, overwhelming, and unideal. They had a hard time adjusting to everything, notably for the first few weeks since self-learning is new to them, but making self-learning as their guide throughout everything is much more difficult. However, students emphasized that a sense of independence in learning, as it is a non-interactive manner, was cultivated. These claims were also confirmed by a teacher who handles STEM students and a parent whose learner is enrolled in the said strand. Both agreed that the learners are faced with vast challenges during this learning period. With all the challenges mentioned by the respondents, their central coping mechanism to battle against is to master the art of time management. Along with this is watching YouTube or playing mobile games during their self-imposed vacant time and staying positive. Based on the findings, an intervention program can be initiated to mitigate the situation. The Give E-CARE (Giving Electronic - Careful Attention and Relief Everywhere) program will benefit the students, the teachers, the parents, and, of course, the school on this pandemic education.

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