

## **Interconnection Despite Limited Connection: Impact of Integrating Asynchronous, Social Constructivist Activities to Grade 10 Public School Students' Learning Experience in the Time of Covid-19**

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### **Abstract**

In a public high school in San Rafael, Bulacan, where this action research was conducted, it was identified through the Department of Education survey that the majority of students relied only on mobile phones and data to connect to the internet. Due to the students' varying situations, the school decided to adopt the Modular Distance Learning approach, where learning was done by answering self-learning modules (SLMs). Some synchronous classes were still conducted but observed to have low attendance. The current setup also limited peer-peer and student-teacher interaction and opportunities for collaborative work. This prompted the researchers to explore the opportunities and see the impact of integrating asynchronous, social constructivist activities with the SLMs. Specifically, the research aimed to find out if these activities can 1) aid in ensuring that the important knowledge, skills, attitudes are learned and applied, and 2) foster students' collaboration and active class participation. Influenced by backwards lesson planning, social constructivism, and the 70:20:10 frameworks, which all give emphasis to learner-centeredness, hands-on practice, and collaboration, the researchers planned asynchronous activities using the class' existing Facebook group. Students' learning artifacts, scores, and answers to reflection activities support that these asynchronous activities were useful in fostering better learning, participation, and interaction in modular teaching. The research findings also substantiate the remote learning best practices found in literature. By applying the recommended improvements to the approach, schools can benefit from the proposed activity planning strategy for remote learning during the pandemic.

**Keywords:** modular distance learning, remote learning, asynchronous tasks



## Introduction

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, school closures happened worldwide, which, according to UNESCO (2020), affected approximately 1.6 billion learners globally. As school after school shut down in the face of the crisis, remote learning had to be set up quickly, and suddenly, “online learning opportunities have risen from a nice-to-have extracurricular facility to become the lifeline for education”. (OECD, 2020)

In response to this challenge, the Department of Education (DepEd) of the Philippines created its Basic Education Learning Continuity Plan in the time of COVID 19 (BE-LCP) and proposed four Learning Delivery Modalities for schools to adopt, namely 1) Face-to-face, 2) Distance Learning (Modular, Online, TV/Radio-Based Instruction), 3) Blended Learning, and 4) Homeschooling. (DepEd, 2020) To determine parents’ preferred alternative learning mode and to profile the students’ readiness for distance education, the DepEd also rolled out the Learner Enrollment and Survey Form (LESF) in all Philippine public schools. (Bernardo, 2020)

In the public high school in San Rafael, Bulacan, where this action research was conducted, it was identified through the LESF that the majority of students do not have personal computers or home internet and only rely on mobile phones and data to go online. (CFGHS LESF, 2020) Due to the students’ varying home learning situations and resources, the school decided to adopt the Modular Distance Learning approach, which the DepEd (2020) defines as follows:

*Modular Distance Learning involves individualized instruction that allows learners to use self-learning modules (SLMs) in print or digital format whichever is applicable in the context of the learner, and other learning resources like learner’s materials, textbooks, activity sheets, study guides, and other study materials. Learners access electronic copies of learning materials on a computer, tablet PC, or smartphone. CDs, DVDs, USB storage, and computer-based applications can all be used to deliver e-learning materials, including offline e-books. The teacher takes the responsibility of monitoring the progress of the learners. The learners may ask assistance from the teacher via email, telephone, text message/instant messaging, etc. Where possible, the teacher shall do home visits to learners needing remediation or assistance. Any member of the family or other stakeholders in the community need to serve as para-teachers.*

Selected by 8.9 million public school parents, this approach was also the most preferred method according to the overall survey results released by the DepEd. (Bernardo, 2020)

The self-learning modules (SLMs) were designed and distributed by the DepEd regional offices for School Year 2020-2021. In the research locale, the

printed (and softcopy) of the modules were distributed once a week for the students to answer. Teachers provided support by being available online or through call, text, or instant messaging. Although mainly modular, non-mandatory synchronous classes were still held by the teachers through Zoom, Google Meet, or Facebook Live.

### **Statement of the Problem**

In the school's new normal, learning was mostly done by answering self-learning modules. Synchronous classes conducted were observed to have low attendance (less than half of the class in observed sessions). The current setup also limits peer-peer and student-teacher interaction and opportunities for collaborative work.

One of the major principles in the K to 12 Enhanced Basic Education Program is that the curriculum shall use "pedagogical approaches that are constructivist, inquiry-based, reflective, collaborative, differentiated, and integrative." (DepEd, 2019) The researchers believe in the importance of this principle, but with all the current challenges mentioned, it can be said that the application of this essential principle has become more limited.

This prompted the researchers to explore the opportunities in applying constructivist and collaborative approaches to the existing self-learning modules (SLMs) and answer the question:

*How can integrating asynchronous, social constructivist activities with the SLMs impact the learning experience of Grade 10 public high school students?*

Specifically, the researchers would like to find out if these activities can:

1. aid in ensuring that the important knowledge, skills, attitudes are learned and applied
2. foster students' collaboration and active class participation

The following section reviews literature on strategies that can help in designing asynchronous, student-centered learning experiences.

### **Literature Review**

This section outlines relevant studies on the pros and cons of asynchronous and synchronous learning, the benefits of collaboration and co-construction of knowledge, the 70:20:10 approach, as well as how to plan for asynchronous, constructivist activities.

### **Asynchronous vs Synchronous Online Learning**

In Khotimah's (2020) study on student's online learning experiences during the COVID-19 pandemic in Indonesia, she described some of the

advantages and disadvantages she found in asynchronous and synchronous online learning patterns.

She explained that asynchronous online learning allowed for more flexibility, where students can log on to the online learning environment at any time to download documents or send messages to lecturers or study colleagues. Also, when students learned asynchronously, recipients had more time to understand messages, because the sender does not expect an immediate response. However, this asynchronous pattern can make students feel frustrated because they feel alone in learning, and their needs for social interaction become more and more increasing.

On the other hand, synchronous learning can help students feel more attached and less isolated. Students become aware of themselves as members of the learning community rather than as isolated individuals communicating with computers. Also, students feel more stimulated and psychologically motivated because this type of communication is more similar to face-to-face communication. However, with the condition of Indonesia's internet infrastructure (similar to the Philippines), the cost to go online can be expensive. So in this pattern, she noted complaints from students who run out of internet quota, even though they wish to attend lectures.

In sum, synchronous patterns were observed to increase arousal and motivation, whereas asynchronous patterns were observed to increase the ability to process information.

### **Designing Asynchronous, Constructivist Learning Experiences**

Built upon the learning theories of Dewey, Piaget, Vygotsky, Gagne, and Bruner, the constructivist theory is based around the idea that learners are active participants in their learning journey and that knowledge is constructed based on experiences. Some of the important elements in constructivism are that 1) Knowledge is constructed, 2) Learning is a social activity, 3) Learning is an active process, 4) Learning is contextual, 5) Knowledge is personal, and that 6) Motivation is key to learning. (Kurt, 2021)

Kurt goes on to outline the key areas that are crucial to the success of a constructivist classroom: 1) The instructor takes on the role of a facilitator instead of a director, 2) There is equal authority and responsibility between the students and the instructor, 3) Learning occurs in small groups, and 4) Knowledge is shared between both the students and the instructor.

Social constructivism, according to Tagney, et al. (2001 as cited in Cherner, 2020), adds a layer of interaction to constructivism, and it emphasizes collaborative, interactive experiences for learners that results in their co-construction of knowledge.

In Cherner's (2020) article entitled "Take Back Social Constructivism: A Process for Teachers Educators to Design Collaborative, Asynchronous Learning Experiences for Pre-Service Teachers", he highlighted that when teacher

educators shifted their instruction in online learning, social constructivist teaching methods were largely replaced with instructor-led, video-conference sessions with limited interactivity. Supiano (2020) wrote about the poor experience of both instructors and students with these sessions due to several problems including exhaustion, equity, and teacher-centered learning.

In response to this problem, Cherner (2020), shares a process for designing instruction that combines social constructivist teaching methods with educational technologies using a combination of “backwards design” and Lee and Hannafin’s (2016) “Own It, Learn It, Share It” framework. As Cherner explains, the “Own It, Learn It, Share It” framework includes three stages for designing active learning experiences. First, students must “own” the learning if they are to be invested in it, which is built by students creating personalized learning goals and making relevant connections between the topic and themselves. Second, students “learn” the topic by instructors modeling skills, deconstructing complex points, and creating authentic experiences for students to engage. Finally, students “share” by creating a learning artifact of some kind and presenting it to an audience for feedback.

Backwards design, on the other hand, is a lesson planning technique that requires instructors to first identify the student learning outcomes – what students will know and/or be able to do – after completing a particular learning experience (Graff, 2011, as cited in Cherner, 2020). Next, they work in reverse order to plan the experiences students will need to satisfy the learning outcomes. Figure 1 below overlays a backwards design method onto the “Own It, Learn It, Share It” framework that is aligned to key pedagogical questions and technology recommendations to use when designing these learning experiences:

**Figure 1:** A design process for creating modules

Framework Stage	Key Pedagogical Questions	EdTech Recommendations
Share It	1. How will students demonstrate their knowledge of the content or competency of the skill?	Learning Artifacts
	2. What type of feedback will be provided to students?	Community Platforms
Learn It	1. How can the content or skill be presented in ways that engage students?	Engaging Platforms
	2. Where are the opportunities for collaboration and sharing ideas with the learning community?	Digital Networks
Own It	1. What pre-existing knowledge or experiences do students have about the topic?	Discussion Boards
	2. What differentiated strategies or personalized learning opportunities can be offered to students?	Mind Maps

*Note.* A Design Process for Creating Modules. Reprinted from “Take Back Social Constructivism: A Process for Teachers Educators to Design Collaborative, Asynchronous Learning Experiences for Pre-Service Teachers” by T. Cherner,

2020. Copyright 2020 by the Association for the Advancement of Computing in Education.

This pairing of pedagogical strategies and technologies intends to help engage students and promote social interaction, personalized instruction, and project-based learning in asynchronous instruction.

### **Designing Collaborative Learning Activities**

A concept that is closely-related to social constructivism is collaborative learning. Chandra (2015) explains that this involves students working together to solve problems and accomplish academic tasks, and studies show that it results in deeper learning, interpersonal skills, student retention, self-esteem, and responsibility. In carrying out her research procedure, the 40 student-participants were divided into two groups of 20. The first group were given tasks to be done collaboratively, while the second group was given tasks to be done individually. Surprisingly, the results convey that the students who work collaboratively performed better and got higher scores than those who did tasks individually.

It is also important to note the important elements when designing social or collaborative learning activities. Hall, in his 2014 study, derived relevant information from a synthesis of various sources on collaborative learning, and explains that there are four key points in designing effective collaborative activities. 1) Communication should enable unrestricted conversation and cultivate the process of substantial questioning and giving feedback. 2) Structure should have tasks, scripts, roles that are defined but flexible during collaborative tasks. 3) Group composition, group size and ability grouping, should be aligned with the nature of the collaborative activity. 4) Grounding, collaborative work areas, should allow and stimulate social interaction. Overall, collaborative learning occurs through joint activity related to the process of solving complex problems or engaging in authentic tasks during which any knowledge, skill, attitude, or attribute is acquired or any product or idea is discovered or created.

In a study by Le, Jansen and Wubbels (2017), on the other hand, they found four main obstacles to collaborative learning. 1) Lack of collaborative skills (i.e., accepting opposing viewpoints, explaining critically and constructively, providing and receiving help) prevented students from working productively and contributing fully in groups. 2) Free riding, wherein some students had little to no substantial contribution which negatively impacted the collaborative experience. 3) Competence status, wherein high-status students were dominant while low-status students were passive in contribution. 4) Friendship, wherein socializing was prioritized over working, and negligence was overlooked to maintain camaraderie instead of work productivity. Furthermore, there were also antecedents to the obstacles listed. Failing to establish, emphasize, and evaluate social or collaborative goals result in academic learning goals overshadowing the collaborative goals. Lack of preparation, instruction, focus in the syllabus as well as limited knowledge of and experience in the training made teachers

collaborative skills implementation as well. There was a predisposition towards individual academic learning and performance over collaborative performance.

### **The 70:20:10 Framework**

70:20:10 is a Learning and Development theory that encapsulates all of the different ways that people learn. Learning from experiences, interacting with others, or through training, are at the core of this approach. (McGarry, 2019) Although more widely used in andragogy or adult learning, the approach can also be useful in modular teaching at this time of pandemic (using andragogy for pedagogy). (Olegario, 2020)

Studies conducted on experiments of the 70:20:10 model have revealed that professional development results mostly from doing, and not merely from formal education and training. Learners learn most when they actually perform various tasks as part of their job profile. (Joshi, 2018) This framework purports that approximately 70% of time spent within a learning environment should focus on “experiential learning,” 20% on “social learning,” and 10% on “formal learning” (Jennings & Wargnier, 2011, as cited in Payne, 2019). “Experiential learning” refers to the time devoted to experimenting with the course material; “social learning” encompasses opportunities for learners to learn from one another and receive feedback from the instructor; and “formal learning” covers any direct forms of instruction such as lecturing. In addition, Arrets et al. (2015, as cited by Payne, 2019) highlights that the 70:20:10 framework shifts the emphasis from ‘know-what’ learning towards more effective ‘know-how’ learning.

It is important to note, however, that the 70:20:10 ratios are not set in stone. They should be viewed as a general guide to each type of learning. The specific breakdown may vary depending on the organization’s Learning and Development needs. (McGarry, 2019)

In his paper, Payne (2019) examined the application of innovative methods of instruction (including 70:20:10) to a learning practice in higher education. He highlighted that to do this successfully, it is important to not rely exclusively on lectures for course delivery as its effectiveness as a teaching method has been challenged for decades. He emphasized that if the goal of teaching is to engender understanding, educators must move from rote memorization of knowledge and facts, known as “surface learning,” toward “deep learning,” where understanding is developed through “active and constructive processes” (Ritchhart et al., 2011 as cited in Payne, 2019). Roehl, Reddy, and Shannon (2013) purport that to achieve this objective, educators must shift from a teaching-centered paradigm toward a learner-centered paradigm.

As a result of his use of the framework, the majority of study participants referred to the format and structure of the practice as a refreshing alternative to “normal” courses, characterized as being much more lecture-based and less “hands-on.” There were several positive comments related to the “hands-on” approach of the course, and how it allowed for more learning versus a lecture-

based course since it involved instructing to learn and not instructing to memorize. The practice had many non-traditional college students who work full-time, and many commented on how the format allowed them to both learn new skills and refine existing skills within the bounds of the class meeting. (Payne, 2019)

## **Methodology**

### **Research Locale**

The study was conducted in one of the Filipino 10 classes at a public high school in San Rafael, Bulacan. At the time of the research, the school was implementing a Set A and Set B strategy to address the undersupply of printed modules from the government. In this setup, the class takes half of their subjects (Set A) in a week, then takes the other subjects (Set B) the following week.

### **Research Participants**

The study was conducted in the resource teacher's advisory class, which is composed of 46 Grade 10 students (20 boys and 26 girls) of different backgrounds. 100% of the class has some means of connecting online (mobile data, prepaid WiFi, etc), which makes it possible to craft activities that will be done online.

### **Action Plan**

The researchers' activity planning was influenced by backwards design, social constructivism, and the 70-20-10 framework, which all give emphasis to learner-centeredness, hands-on practice, and collaboration.

First, the researchers reviewed the learning objectives and content of the DepEd-provided self-learning modules, then identified the sections that will be retained, removed, or modified to inject more experiential and collaborative opportunities. The teacher's calendar indicated that 3rd Quarter Modules 3-5 (main topics: anecdote, poem, short story) will be covered during the intervention week. This is a lot to cover for a week, but the researchers decided not to reduce the coverage and gather authentic feedback from the students.

The researchers requested for the majority of the individual module activities to be removed, then the following activities in Table 1 were incorporated, to be done in the class' existing Facebook group. The platform was selected for its availability, ease of use, and functionality. Cognizant of the students' different learning situations and resources, the activities were designed to be simple and low on mobile data demand.

**Table 1:** Description of planned activities

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Type</b>	<b>Description</b>
<b>Activity 1: <i>Say Mo</i></b> (What Can You Say?)	<b>Individual</b>	Activity 1 was a modification of the activity in the self-learning module. Students were asked to share their insights and understanding of the different quotes from their literary reading for the week. These quotes mostly discuss philosophies regarding facing life's challenges and achievement. Instead of answering this in the module, the students were asked to share their thoughts through an online discussion using the comments thread of the class Facebook group.
<b>Activity 2: <i>Karanasan Mo, i-Share Mo</i></b> (Share Your Experience)	<b>Individual</b>	Using 3-5 sentences, the students were tasked to write an original anecdote of an interesting event in their lives during the pandemic. The anecdote will be posted in the Comments section of the dedicated post in their class' Facebook group.
<b>Activity 3: Poetry Relay</b>	<b>Group</b>	In the Poetry Relay activity, each member of the group was asked to give a line in the single poem that the group is creating. The theme of the poem is " <i>Ang Aking Mga Pangarap</i> " ("My Dreams and Aspirations"), and the group should be able to use the elements of a poem in their writing. Each member will write in the Comments section of the dedicated post in their Facebook group, then work together for their final output.
<b>Activity 4: Discussion Forum</b>	<b>Individual</b>	In Activity 4, the students were tasked to answer a set of questions in the discussion forum of their FB Group. The aim of this activity was for the students to express their opinion and share their reflection from the narrative they read. The answers were posted in the Comments section of the dedicated post in their class' Facebook group.

<p><b>Activity Synthesis</b></p>	<p><b>5: Group</b></p>	<p>To synthesize what they have learned, the groups were asked to create a chart that differentiates the 3 literature types covered (anecdote, poem, short story) according to their:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Characteristics</li> <li>2) Elements</li> <li>3) Usage</li> </ol>
<p><b>Activity Reflection</b></p>	<p><b>6: Group</b></p>	<p>In the Group Reflection activity, the students were asked the following questions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) <i>Ano ang masasabi niyo sa mga gawain sa linggong ito? Ano ang mga nagustuhan niyo at hindi?</i> (What can you say about this week's activities? Which aspects did you like and not like?)</li> <li>2) <i>Ano ang mga dapat pag-isipan at isaalang-alang kapag nagbibigay ng opinyon, pagsusuri, at reaksyon, online man o harapan?</i> (What factors should we consider when giving our opinions, critique, and reactions, be it online or in person?)</li> <li>3) <i>Ano ang kahalagahan ng pagsusulat, pagsusuri, at paghahayag ng opinyon, damdamin, at reaksyon sa inyong buhay?</i> (What is the importance of writing, critiquing, and expressing opinions, feelings, and reactions in your life?)</li> </ol>

### Data Gathering Procedure

During the intervention week's online synchronous class, the resource teacher gave the instructions for the prepared activities. Screenshots of these slides were also posted in the class' group chat for those who were not able to attend the class.

The students' were asked to post their individual and group outputs in the class' Facebook Group. Each activity had a dedicated post, where the students would write their answers in the Comments section. The students had a week to complete the prepared activities.

To understand how much the students learned and interacted in the process, the researchers observed the students' Facebook movement and looked at the different outputs or learning artifacts produced during the intervention.

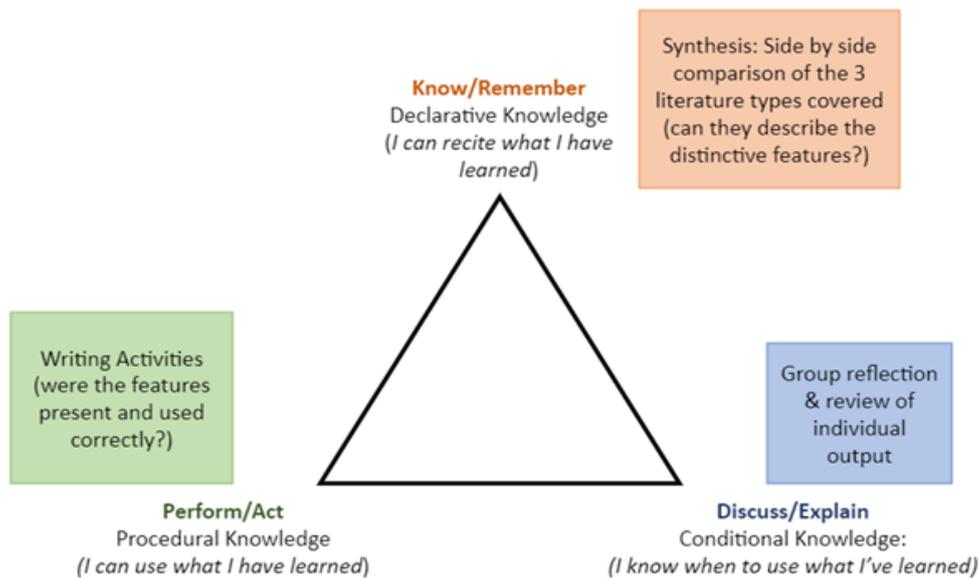
Rubrics and guidelines for the added activities were prepared to help the teacher and researchers in evaluating the tasks.

### Data Analysis

Using the rubrics prepared by the researchers, each of the student's outputs and entries were read, scored, recorded, and analyzed by looking at the mean scores and emerging themes. The researchers' observation notes were also discussed to find out if the research questions were answered. Answers from the reflection activity were also reviewed to gather the students' experience and feedback from the activities.

To enhance the validity and reliability of the findings, the triangulation process (using multiple independent sources of data to answer research questions) (Hollingsworth, 2004, as cited in Olegario, 2021) was also used for data analysis and presentation. As Figure 2 shows, the researchers used the triangulation method to answer the first research question on how much the students learned during the intervention week by gathering evidence of their declarative, procedural, and conditional knowledge.

**Figure 2:** *Triangulation Model: Declarative, Procedural, Conditional Knowledge*



*Note.* Triangulation Model. Adapted from “A Practical Guide to Action Research for Literacy Educators” (p. 38) by G. Nugent, S. Malik, and S. Hollingsworth, 2012. Copyright 2012 by the Global Operations Unit, International Reading Association.

Table 2 summarizes the action research plan for the intervention week.

**Table 2:** Action Research Intervention Plan

<b>Research Question</b>	<b>Procedure</b>	<b>Time Frame</b>	<b>Data Sources</b>	<b>Resources</b>	<b>Data Analysis and Presentation</b>
<b>How can integrating asynchronous, social constructivist activities with the SLMs impact the learning experience of Grade 10 public high school students?</b>	Review Modules 3-5.  Create activity plans for the week using backwards design, social constructivism, and the 70-20-10 framework	Week of April 12	DepEd Region 3 Filipino 10 modules	Researchers	NA
	Create assessment forms for planned activities	Week of April 19	NA	Researchers	NA
	Implement interventions to Grade 10-Narra Filipino class	Week of April 26 (until May 7 for outputs)	NA	Students, Teacher, FB Group	NA
	Observe the class' Facebook movement  Read and analyze students' output	Week of May 3	Students' output	Students, Teacher, FB Group	Check students' work using rubrics; find themes and trends in answers  Present mean scores and observations  Use triangulation method to analyze results

## Results And Discussion

The researchers were interested to know how the planned asynchronous, constructivist activities impacted the learning experience of Grade 10 students, specifically if they were 1) able to learn and apply the important knowledge, skills, attitudes, as well as 2) actively participate in class and collaborate with each other to co-construct knowledge. The following section answers these questions by outlining the researchers' findings.

**Research Question #1:** Can the planned asynchronous, constructivist activities aid in ensuring that the important knowledge, skills, attitudes are learned and applied?

To find out how much the students learned through the activities, the researchers looked at the Declarative, Procedural, and Conditional knowledge of the students. Figure 2 in the previous section plots the activities according to the type of knowledge being developed.

### Procedural Knowledge

The activities prepared focused on applying what the students learned from their SLMs. Activities 1-4 were all writing tasks, which aimed to assess the students' ability to apply the basic elements of the literature type discussed, or come up with their own insights, opinions, or reactions about their module readings. The following section discusses the scores and observations from these activities.

#### Activity 1: *Say Mo* (What Can You Say?)

In Activity 1, the students were asked to share their insights and understanding of the different quotes from their literary reading for the week. These quotes asked about their view of success and their opinion on the need for a degree/formal education to succeed. The literary quotes the students interpreted are the following:

1. *Hindi maikakaila na kung malaki ang puhunan ay maaaring tumubo rin iyon nang malaki kaysa maliit ang naturan.* (Without a doubt, a big investment, compared to a small one, results in a bigger return.)
2. *Karaniwan nang sa may mataas na pinag-aralan ay maamo ang kapalaran.* (Generally, fate is kinder to those with better/higher education.)
3. *Kung ang nais ninyo ay makapagpatubo ng isang mayabong na punong akasya, gugugol kayo ng puu-puung taon, subalit ang kakailanganin ninyo ay ilang buwan lamang upang makapag-halaman kayo ng isang kalabasa.* (If you want to grow a mighty acacia tree, you will have to wait many years; on the other hand, you'll only need a few months to grow a pumpkin.)

Table 3 below shows the class' mean scores using the assessment form criteria.

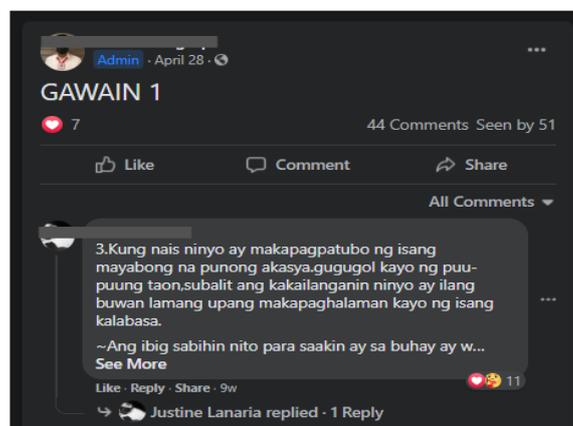
**Table 3:** Mean Score of Students in Activity 1 (Opinion Sharing)

CRITERIA				
Expresses Own Opinions (5)	Exchanged Opinions with Others (5)	Logical (5)	Interacts with Respect (5)	Score (15)
4.95	NA	4.76	4.97	14.68

The scores show the students fared well in giving their own opinions about the topic, and writing in a logical and tactful manner. From their insights, the students generally have similar values and views that education and hard work are important ingredients for success.

Part of the activity was responding to 1-2 classmates' entries, but unfortunately, it was observed that the task was not done by any of the students. One of the potential reasons could be that the rubric was only briefly shown during the synchronous class, and although it was shared in the class group chat, the instructions were no longer repeated in the actual post (see Figure 3 for screenshot). In addition, it was the class' first time to do this type of activity, which will take some time to get familiar with.

**Figure 3:** Screenshot of Activity 1 Facebook post



As seen in Figure 3, the post only contained *Gawain 1* (Activity 1). For the benefit of those who were not able to join the synchronous class or missed the instructions in the class' group chat, the instructions and rubrics could be repeated in the dedicated post.

**Activity 2: *Karanasan Mo, i-Share Mo*** (Share Your Experience)

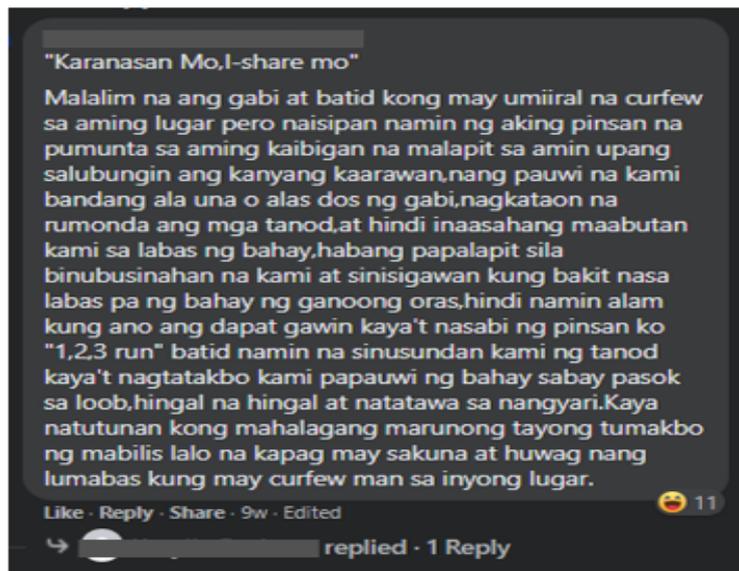
Using 3-5 sentences, the students were tasked to write an original anecdote of an interesting event in their lives during the pandemic. The anecdote was posted in the Comments section of the dedicated post in their class' Facebook group. Using the rubrics, these entries were scored, and Table 4 summarizes the class' average score on each of the criteria for this activity.

**Table 4:** Mean Score of Students in Activity 2 (Anecdote Writing)

CRITERIA					
Original (5)	Discoursal Strategic (5)	and	Entertaining (5)	Grammar (5)	Score (20)
5	4.69		4.52	3.21	17.43

The students were able to successfully write their own original anecdotes and apply discourse strategies in writing. They were also able to write entertaining anecdotes which were mostly funny or serious. The other stories were related to school or friendship. Overall, the anecdotes were fun to read due to the students' uplifting, positive, and humorous writing. Figure 4 shows a sample of a student's output, which had 11 (haha) Facebook reactions.

**Figure 4:** Sample screenshot of an Activity 2 Facebook entry



**Anecdote Translation:** *“It was late at night and I know that a curfew was being implemented at our place but my cousin and I were still at our friend's nearby house to celebrate his birthday. when we were already headed home at around one*

*or two o'clock in the morning, the town patrol guards, who were patrolling the area, saw that we were still out on the street. as they were approaching us, they kept scolding and honking at us asking why we were still outside, we didn't know what to do so my cousin said, "1, 2, 3, run!" we knew that the patrol guards were still chasing us so we ran as fast as we could until we reached and quickly entered our house, we were huffing and puffing, catching our breath from running and laughing too hard on what just happened. So I learned that it is important that we know how to run fast in case of emergency and that we shouldn't stay out past the time of curfew in your area."*

As the directly translated text shows, some punctuations and spaces were not used appropriately, and run-on sentences were common. The other students' entries had similar opportunities for improvement. Similar to Activity 1, clarity of expectations is observed to be a necessity in these asynchronous tasks. Since Facebook (a casual/informal platform) was used, a reminder to proofread their work and observe proper grammar and mechanics would be helpful.

### Activity 3: "Poetry Relay"

In the Poetry Relay activity, each member of the group was asked to give a line in the poem that the group is creating. The theme of the poem is "My Dreams and Aspirations" ("*Ang Aking Mga Pangarap*"), and the group should be able to use the elements of a poem in their writing. Table 5 summarizes the class' mean score on each of the criteria for this activity.

**Table 5:** Group Score of Students in Activity 3 (Poetry Relay)

	CRITERIA					
	Content or Topic (5)	Correct Usage of Poetry Elements (5)	Use of Symbolism (5)	Grammatically Correct (5)	Indiv. Score (20)	Group Score (20)
<b>Group 1</b>	5	5	5	4.82	19.82	20
<b>Group 2</b>	5	5	5	4.82	19.82	19
<b>Group 3</b>	5	5	5	4.91	19.82	20
<b>Group 4</b>	5	5	5	4.46	19.55	19

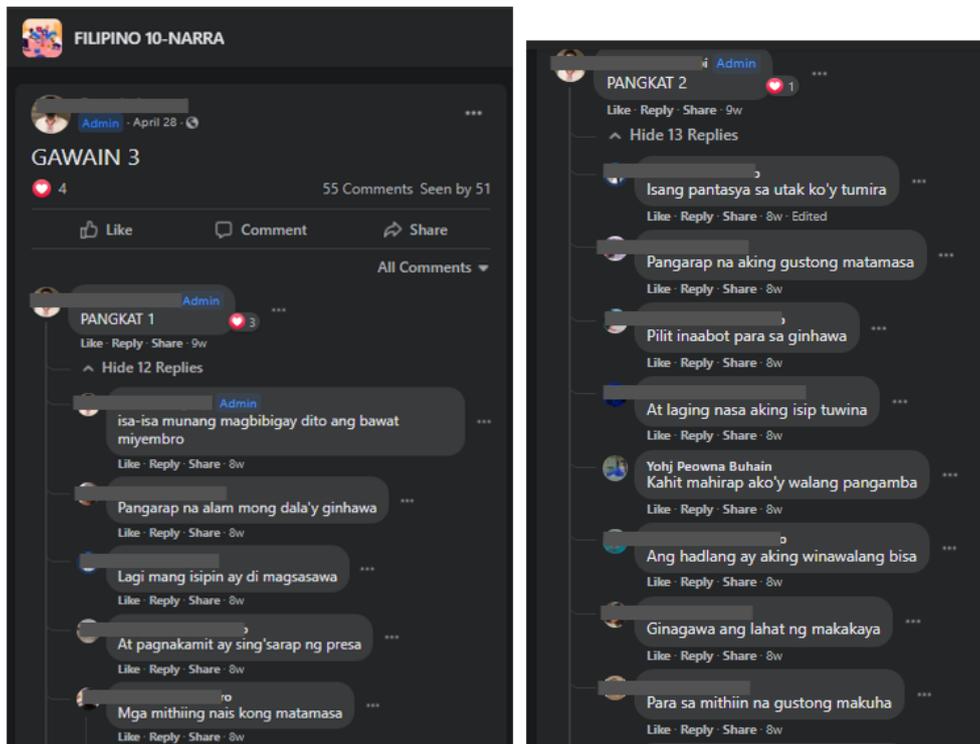
Except for 1 student, all students were able to participate in the activity. Each group member was able to contribute a line, helping their group come up with a cohesive poem. Although not part of the activity plan, the teacher added a

video output for this activity. The final outputs were creative and fun to watch, but may have added to the students' already loaded school requirements.

The groups were able to observe the technical rules in writing a poem. However, some groups did not have a uniformed meter, which affected their overall scores in the group output. Majority of the students were able to provide contributions while observing correct spelling, proper grammar, and correct punctuation, but there were few who did not. Since they were only required to input one final line, it is expected that these technicalities should already be observed.

Figure 5 shows a screenshot of how this activity was done using the Facebook comments. The main post was titled *Gawain 3* (Activity 3), then in the *Pangkat 1* (Group 1) comment, the group members provided their suggested lines for the poem. The same goes with *Pangkat 2* (Group 2), and so on.

**Figure 5:** Screenshot of Activity 3 group entries



#### Activity 4: Discussion Forum

In Activity 4, the students were tasked to answer a set of questions in the discussion forum of their FB Group. The aim of this activity was for the students to express their opinion and share their reflection from the narrative they read. The questions were the following:

1. *Ano ang mga bagay na tumatak sa iyo sa akdang binasa na "Ang Alaga"?* (What were the most striking ideas you got from the story "The Pet"?)
2. *Ano ang kahalagahan ng akda sa iyong sarili at ating lipunang pandaigdig lalo na ngayong panahon ng pandemya?* (What is the importance of the short story to yourself and to the society, especially now in the time of the pandemic?)

Table 6 summarizes the class' average score on each of the criteria for this activity.

**Table 6:** Mean Score of Students in Activity 4 (Discussion Forum)

<b>CRITERIA</b>				
<b>Expresses Own Opinions (5)</b>	<b>Exchanged Opinions with Others (5)</b>	<b>Logical (5)</b>	<b>Interacts with Respect (5)</b>	<b>Score (15)</b>
4.43	NA	4.57	5	14

In general, the students were able to express their thoughts well as they related the story to their personal experience and reflection. Most contextualized their answers to the current situation in society, and some related these to their personal beliefs and viewpoints. However, there were some disparities with the answer in the first item as some simply recounted the events from the story while some expounded their answers. It would thus be helpful if the teacher reminded the students to explain their answers in the first question.

Similar to the observations in the previous activities, some students were not able to observe the correct grammar (e.g. use of punctuation marks, capitalization) which affected the organization of their answers. Just like in Activity 1, the students were also unable to fulfill the task of replying to 1-2 posts by their classmates. It would thus be recommendable if the teacher posted the criteria for the activity so that the students will be guided accordingly. In addition, the students were able to express themselves in a generally respectful and discorsal way.

### **Declarative and Conditional Knowledge**

Activity 5 and 6 assess the students' declarative knowledge or ability to remember what they have learned, and conditional knowledge or ability to know when to use what they have learned.

**Activity 5: Synthesis**

In this activity, the groups were asked to create a chart that differentiates the 3 literature types covered (anecdote, poem, short story) according to their 1) Characteristics, 2) Elements, and 3) Usage. This allowed the researchers to see if the groups are able to summarize the concepts in their own words and understand the differences of the literature types.

Table 7 shows the group scores on each of the criteria for this activity.

**Table 7: Group Scores of Students in Activity 5 (Synthesis)**

	CRITERIA			
	Characteristics (5)	Elements (5)	Correct Usage (5)	Group Score (15)
<b>Group 1</b>	4	4	4	12
<b>Group 2</b>	5	4	5	14
<b>Group 3</b>	5	5	5	15
<b>Group 4</b>	5	5	4	14

Each group was able to create a comparative chart, which highlights each literature type’s features and application. They were also able to outline scenarios where the type of literature is appropriate to be used.

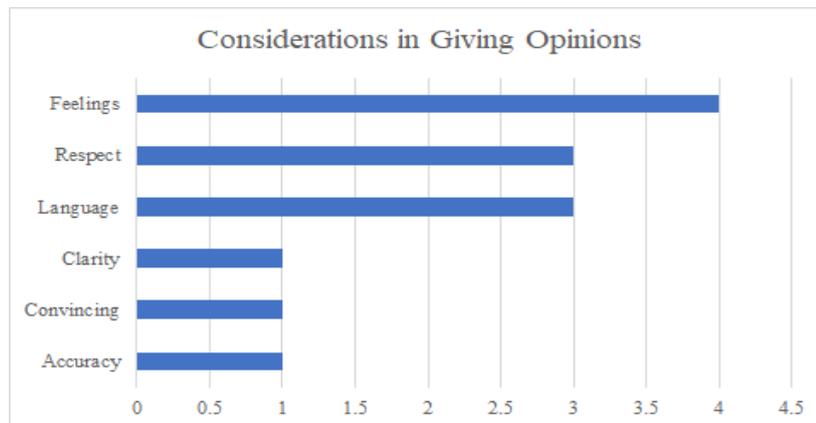
**Activity 6: Reflection**

Part of the reflection questions (Questions 2-3) also allowed students to contemplate on the importance of what they have learned and consider the appropriate conditions, behaviors, and values for writing and expressing opinions, critique, or reactions.

*Q2. Ano ang mga dapat pag-isipan at isaalang-alang kapag nagbibigay ng opinyon, pagsusuri, at reaksiyon, online man o harapan? (What factors should we consider when giving our opinions, critique, and reactions, be it online or in person?)*

Question 2 allows the researchers to get a glimpse of the affective learning of the students. All groups mentioned considering the other person’s feelings, having respect for the differences of opinions, and being tactful and careful with the language used. Other answers include clarity, accuracy, and persuasiveness of the statements. Figure 6 below shows the common themes from the answers.

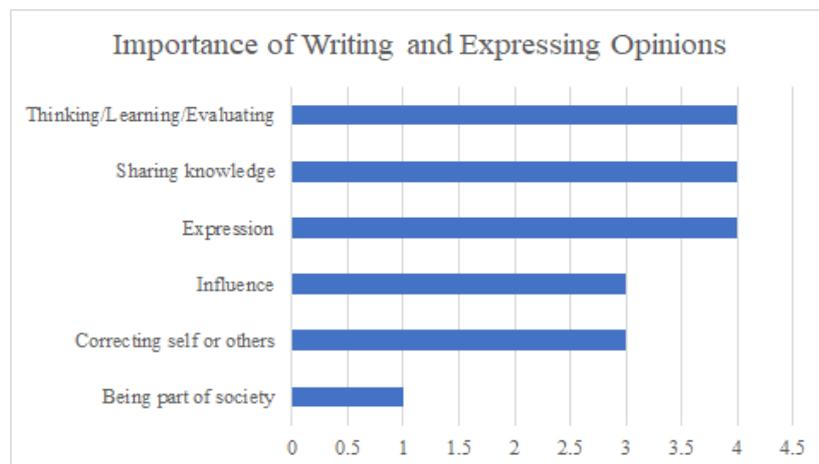
**Figure 6:** Common themes on students' Q2 answers



*Q3. Ano ang kahalagahan ng pagsusulat, pagsusuri, at paghahayag ng opinyon, damdamin, at reaksiyon sa inyong buhay? (What is the importance of writing, critiquing, and expressing opinions, feelings, and reactions in your life?)*

Similar to Question 2, this question allowed for reflection and affective learning. It helps connect what the students learned with its usage in their daily experiences and interactions. Figure 7 below summarizes what the students think as the relevance of writing, analyzing, and giving opinions.

**Figure 7:** Common themes on students' Q3 answers



Despite the minor grammatical errors observed in writing, it can be seen from the learning artifacts that overall, the students were able to meet the learning outcomes and demonstrated the knowledge, skills, and attitudes that were being targeted.

The researchers planned for the activities in a backwards approach (as described by Cherner, 2020) by first asking the question “what should the students know and/or be able to do at the end of this intervention?” Next, “what activities and experiences are needed to satisfy the learning outcomes?” While in this process, the researchers were guided by the constructivist principles of making the activities contextual (related/applied to real-life situations), personal (acknowledging their sense of identity and individual differences), hands-on (practical and experiential), shared, and learner-centered.

**Research Question #2:** Can the planned asynchronous, constructivist activities foster students’ collaboration and active class participation?

In this section, the researchers outline their observations on the participation and interaction between students during the intervention week.

### **Participation rate was better in asynchronous activities**

Prior to the intervention, the researchers observed two synchronous classes, and both sessions were attended by less than half of the class (21/46 students on the first session and 12/46 on the second one). This is unfortunate because the teacher obviously made an effort to prepare an interesting lecture, with supplemental videos to capture interest, etc. All the instructions for the activities for the week were also given during the synchronous class.

It was observed, however, that there was higher participation in personal, relatable activities such as anecdote writing, or in a group activity where contribution is imperative, such as the poetry relay. Table 8 below summarizes the participation rate per activity.

**Table 8:** Class Participation Rate in Activities

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Students with Answers</b>	<b>Class %</b>
1 - Opinion Sharing	36/46	78.3%
2 - Anecdote Writing	42/46	91.3%
3 - Poetry Relay	45/46	97.8%
4 - Discussion Form	41/46	89.1%

### **Students were Sharing and Reacting Freely**

In all the writing activities, it was observed that the students were sharing their thoughts, stories, and insights freely in the Comment section. For the opinion sharing activities (Activity 1 and 4), the entries were insightful and lengthy, which showed the students’ comfort level in sharing and using the platform.

Despite failing to respond to their classmates' comments for both activities, students received each other's opinions and interacted through Facebook reactions. As seen in the screenshots from the previous section, students used the like, love, and care Facebook reaction buttons to show this. Although the original intent of having deeper discussions was not achieved during this time, the open, supportive environment created can act as a springboard for future collaborative activities.

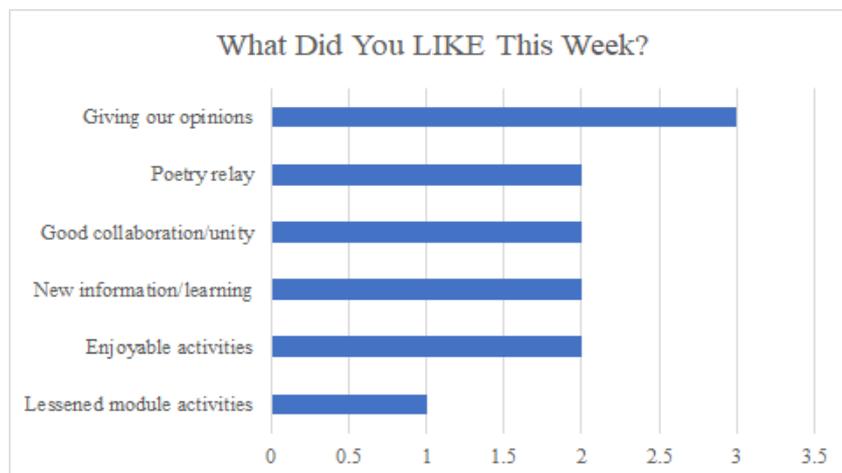
The same observation was seen in the anecdote writing activity (Activity 2). It was interesting to note that all entries had reactions from their classmates (FB reactions: haha, like, love, etc), which tells the researchers that their classmates took the time to read and react to each other's stories.

### Overall Intervention Feedback

In the Group Reflection activity, the first question intended to find out how the students felt about the experience. They were asked the following question: *Q1. Ano ang masasabi niyo sa mga gawain sa linggong ito? Ano ang mga nagustuhan niyo at hindi? (What can you say about this week's activities? What were the things you liked and didn't like about it?)*

Based on the group's answers, the students enjoyed the activities related to giving their opinion about a topic (Activities 1 and 4), as well as working with their classmates in the group activities. Figure 8 below shows the common themes from the students' answers:

**Figure 8:** Common themes on experiences that the students liked



Below are some of the verbatim from the groups:

*"Ang pinakanagustuhan namin ay ang Gawain 3. Dito, naipakita ng bawat miyembro ang galing nila sa paglikha ng tula at wastong paggamit ng mga*

*elemento nito tulad ng sukat at tugma. Naipakita din namin ang pagkakaisa. Bukod dito, ang bawat miyembro ay nakakapagpahayag ng kanilang saloobin para sa gawaing ito." - Group 3*

("We like Activity 3 the most. In this activity, every member was able to showcase their skills in creating poetry and the correct use of its elements like meter and rhyme. We were also able to show unity. Aside from that, in this activity, every member was also able to express their thoughts." - Group 3)

*"Isa pang napusuan namin ngayong linggo ay kung paanong ang aming mga kagrupo ay nagkaroon ng magandang samahan upang mabuo namin ng maayos ang aming gawain na pang pangkatan." - Group 1*

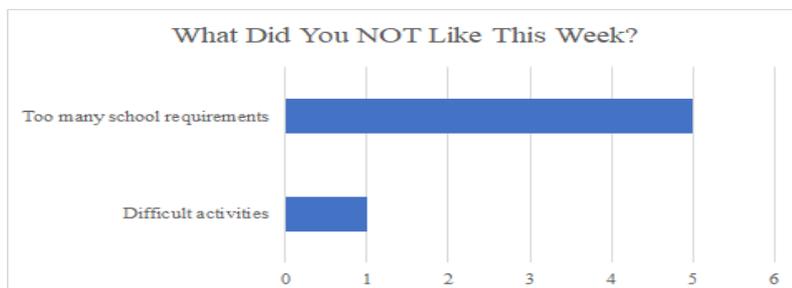
(Another thing we liked this week was how we as groupmates had a great teamwork to smoothly accomplish this week's group task." - Group 1)

*"..natuto kaming magkaisa at magtulungan kahit na magkakalayo kami nang dahil sa mga pangkatang gawain. At iyon ang pinakanagustuhan namin." - Group 4*

("...we learned how to unite and cooperate despite the distance because of the activity. That is what we appreciated the most." - Group 4)

On the other hand, exhaustion from the numerous school requirements was the glaring theme from the students' answers to experiences they did not like. Figure 9 below summarizes the students' sentiments.

**Figure 9:** Common themes on experiences that the students disliked



Below are some of the answers:

*"Ang mga bagay naman na hindi namin nagustuhan ay ang pagbibigay ng madaming gawain sa iba't ibang asignatura." - Group 1*

("What we didn't like is having too much work in different subjects." - Group 1)

*"Ang hindi ko naman nagustuhan ay ang sobrang pagod na naranasan ko o namin dahil sa sobrang daming gawin at halos sabay-sabay na binibigay na gawain ng bawat asignatura." - Group 2*

("What I didn't like was the exhaustion we experienced because of the many activities in different subjects that were given all at the same time." - Group 2)

*"Maraming gawain ang ipinagawa sa amin ngayong linggong ito. May mga gawain na nahirapan kaming tapusin ngunit may iba rin naman na madali naming natapos. Pero kahit na marami ang mga ito ay nasiyahan pa rin kami." - Group 4*

("We had to do a lot of things this week. There were activities that we had a hard time doing, but there are some we found easy to accomplish. Nonetheless, we enjoyed despite the heavy workload." - Group 4)

### **Improving the Approach**

At the end of the intervention, the students were able to write and share their stories, express their opinions, work with their group to create a poem and summarize the important concepts learned. Participation was high in the asynchronous activities, and there were specific mentions of enjoying the activities, especially the opinion-sharing and poetry relay. It was also mentioned that they appreciate the reduced module work. These comments give the researchers an overall impression of a positive learning experience during the intervention.

Despite these quick wins, the researchers acknowledge that this whole setup is new and that there are still opportunities for improvement in future interventions. Below are some of the researchers' reflections and suggested points for improvement:

#### **1) Less is more in lesson planning**

The researchers observed that the schedule was tight and that there was too much to cover in a short period of time. As mentioned previously, there were three modules during the intervention week, so despite not reducing the coverage, the researchers thought of largely decreasing the module tasks and just focusing on activities that can help develop the target knowledge and skills. However, the resource teacher added two additional tasks during the week: 1) create a video output for their poetry relay, and since it was almost mother's day weekend, 2) create an individual video poem to honor their mothers. The intent was good, but the additional activities may have contributed to the fatigue that the students were expressing in their reflection activity. It was specifically mentioned in the answers, however, that this experience is not particular to the Filipino subject only, but also to their different subjects.

It is highly suggested that learning experiences are planned in a “backwards” approach, as explained by Cherner (2020) in the literature review. This will allow the teachers to really focus on the learning outcomes first (what the students need to know and should be able to do) before planning the experiences to achieve these outcomes.

Blackburn (2015), who is an author of several books about rigor in the classroom, explains that there are 7 common myths about rigor that teachers should be aware of:

Myth 1: Lots of Homework Is a Sign of Rigor

Myth 2: Rigor Means Doing More

Myth 3: Rigor Is Not for Everyone

Myth 4: Providing Support Means Lessening Rigor

Myth 5: Resources Equal Rigor

Myth 6: Standards Alone Take Care of Rigor

Myth 7: Rigor Is Just One More Thing to Do

As Blackburn explains, not all homework is equally useful, and doing more homework in terms of quantity can lead to burnout and discouragement. Contrary to common beliefs, everyone is capable of rigorous work and success as long as teachers provide the right support, scaffolding, teaching strategies, and motivation. Resources should not be a problem too, because there are many ways to challenge students’ thinking without the use of expensive technology, programs, or textbooks. It is just a matter of increasing the expectations from students and creating opportunities for exercising higher order thinking skills. Our educational institutions can set high standards, but how it is implemented is as important as the curriculum.

In sum, less is more when it comes to lesson planning, especially now, when we are facing an unusual situation in education history. But whether we are teaching in a remote environment or not, identifying and focusing on the most important knowledge, skills, and attitudes should be the priority of all educators when designing learning experiences. This is something that the researchers and the resource teacher can surely take away from this experience.

## 2) **Importance of instructions and clear expectations**

In face-to-face instruction, it is easy to provide instructions for tasks, and there are a lot of opportunities to clarify understanding or ask questions about the next steps. During the class observation, instructions for all tasks were given in one go during the synchronous class (attended by 12/46 students). Screen shots were sent to the class’ FB GC, but the rubrics and instructions could have been repeated or reposted in the FB group posts for clarity and reference before the students answered the activities. Disconnect can happen when the instructions and expectations are not easily accessed. For instance, the discussion forum was not a complete success because students were only “reacting” to the posts, but were not replying or responding with their take on their classmates’ statements.

### 3) **Importance of feedback and formative assessment**

Another recommendation that the researchers have is continuous teacher feedback in online activities. It was observed that there was little feedback from the teacher to reinforce, praise, guide, or correct the student entries in the Facebook group. Since this is also the first time that the teacher is implementing these types of activities, the researchers could have explained that he is free to interact, comment, or provide individual and group feedback as he sees fit.

Assessing students' learning and providing feedback are simpler in the physical classroom setup because these are part of regular classroom conversations and dynamics. In the world's current situation, however, Liberman, et al (2020) sees the development of alternative approaches to delivering the critical feedback function of learning assessment as necessary. According to the authors, "while all types of assessment of student learning are important, the need for formative assessment right now is particularly critical because learning needs to take place outside of the physical classroom, and teachers and parents-turned-teachers need to understand whether students are absorbing the content that is delivered to them in formats that differ from business-as-usual". In addition, the authors highlight that formative assessment 1) can be administered in synchronous and asynchronous forms, 2) can happen during school closures even in low-resource and low-connectivity contexts, and 3) irrespective of how formative assessment is communicated, it needs to be valid, timely, constructive, and specific to the learning needs of the child.

In this action research, we can agree that continuous feedback and alternative ways to administer formative assessment are possible. The Facebook group platform actually offers a lot of potential for providing feedback and checking for students' learning through questions, discussion forums, writing tasks, and individual and group activities. By looking at the entries and written output (learning artifacts), it becomes easier to identify the areas that were clearly understood and applied, as well as the areas that will need more support from the teacher. In this research, it was discovered that the students understood the literary features and can write logically, but may need remedial support in terms of grammar rules and mechanics.

### 4) **Listening and responding to emotional cues**

Aside from creating a personal and introspective experience, reflective activities allow teachers to understand how students view their world and how they feel about their learning. In this research, for instance, the students expressed how fatigued they currently are with school, and in their stories, a lot of them talked about their modules and requirements. Another observation is that topics such as hope for the future, motivation to succeed, positivity, and resilience were common. Uplifting each other and keeping it light and positive during this difficult time appears to be important to the students. This information can be used to come up with teacher or school approaches to respond to these emotions,

such as using students' common interests in activity planning, implementing academic ease, taking breaks, teacher-training, or counselling for both students and teachers on how to deal with physical, emotional, or mental health issues.

## **Conclusion**

In her article on “Best Practices for Implementing Remote Learning during a Pandemic”, Morgan (2020) outlines some of the important things to keep in mind during this time. These best practices include: ensuring equity, communicating expectations clearly, providing student-centered learning, using free high-quality resources, and responding to the emotional toll. Yang (2020) also listed similar practices such as being empathetic, focusing on asynchronous learning, giving specific instructions, setting clear expectations, identifying lesson objectives, seeking student feedback, and thinking “less is more”.

This action research helped the researchers understand the circumstances of our public high school students and see the effect and/or importance of these best practices firsthand. The activities enabled new experiences and ways of demonstrating their knowledge and skills, and the students received them positively. Similar to Payne’s (2019) experience in using more learner-centered approaches, the students appreciated the new and refreshing activities, as well as the more “hand-on” approach.

This platform also provided an alternative for feedback delivery and assessment for teachers. The researchers believe that even with limited resources, teachers in any level or subject can apply constructivist and collaborative methods in their remote teaching and make learning more meaningful and engaging for their students.

## **Recommendations**

Based on the observation of the researchers, there are certain ways by which the teacher can improve the quality of teaching in remote learning. In this regard, the researchers would like to recommend ways by which these will be possible.

### **Increase Asynchronous Activities**

Since it was seen that asynchronous participation was better than attendance in synchronous classes, it is advisable to increase asynchronous activities if this would strengthen their class participation. The teacher may shorten synchronous classes but increase the depth of the asynchronous activities. He may assign the class with readings and when they meet, he must test their understanding of the reading assignment. He may also post academic readings in their FB Group and require students to comment their views on these readings. Their comments can serve as their class participation which will be graded according to the quality of their output.

With the state of internet connection, availability of gadgets, and other non-school responsibilities of public school students, it would not be easy and fair to make attendance in synchronous classes obligatory. It is recommended that teachers invest more time in developing asynchronous, but collaborative activities that allow students to work or answer at their own time. As Khotima (2020) explained in the literature, when students learn asynchronously, they have more flexibility and time to understand messages, because the sender does not expect an immediate response.

As seen in this action research, this is doable, but to ensure equity and that no one is left behind, online activities should always consider that most students are only using mobile phones and may have data limitations.

### **Assign Lesser Activities But Increase Rigor**

During the observation, it was seen that the students were filled with modular task requirements. Since there were a number of topics that have been covered in a short period of time, the teacher could just create one activity (regardless whether individual or group) that would synthesize all their learnings for the said modules. In this way, the teacher might also be able to lessen the number of activities allotted for each module. At the same time, he will also be able to integrate their learnings for the said topics. In grading this, the teacher must see the important components of each module topic present in the output.

### **Plan for more complex constructivist activities**

The intervention was used in Grade 10 Filipino, and the activities were mostly modifications of what was in the module. If teachers would be creating their own modules or lessons, it is highly recommended that they target the development of higher order thinking skills and problem-solving strategies by giving the students relevant, real-life problems to solve.\*\*\*

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