

# Active Engagement of Stakeholders During the Pandemic: Basis for Creating Flexible Learning Environment for Students

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**Abstract:-** Stakeholder engagement is an ongoing commitment to students' self-learning, especially during these trying times. Consequently, they are considered partners who are attentive to learners' welfare and academic performance in and out of school. With this, the present paper is hitched on the aim of determining stakeholders' engagement to students' self-learning during the pandemic with the end view of proposing a creative learning environment for the latter.

The descriptive research design was used to ascertain the participations of stakeholders to students' self-learning during the transition from teacher-learning responsibilities to student-learning responsibilities. A researcher-constructed questionnaire was used and distributed to concerned respondents to gather the needed data.

Students have only exercised occasionally or sometimes their goal setting and self-reinforcement as compared to their self-monitoring and self-instruction, which were done often as manifestations of their self-learning activities. On the other hand, respondents cited that there were activities that they have done to help the learners' transit from the teacher-learning to student-learning responsibilities, though there were problems experienced during this shift.

This study is however limited to the assessments done by respondents on the engagement of stakeholders in helping learners cope with the shift. This then may require further assessments and validation for improved outputs.

This study then aimed to contribute to the Continuity Plan of the Department for the success of the shift from the old mode of learning delivery to the 'new normal' learning delivery.

**Keywords:-** *Self-Learning; Stakeholders' Engagement; Community Partnership.*

## I. INTRODUCTION

Education is one of the most important factors as it includes all the experiences of the learners through which knowledge is acquired, the intellect enlightened, and the will strengthened to choose and do the good. According to the National Policy on Education (2004), education fosters the worth of the learners, trains their character, and stimulates their development. Undeniably, through education, learners are appropriately prepared and suitably equipped for living in the community. More so, education is considered as the process by which the community seeks to open its life to all learners within it, enabling them to take part in it, attempting to pass on to them its culture, and making available to them the standard by which they will live.

However, as the COVID-19 pandemic ravages the world, the educational needs of the learners were put at risk. As this crisis started at the latter part of the last Academic Year of 2019-2020 and continued to the present time, the learners' right to education is threatened as the educational institutions across the globe were but forced to suspend campus learning in order to curb the spread of the virus. This has forced the teaching community to think of new avenues and alternate strategies to engage the learners. In the local front, this also had put a question to the capacity of the Department of Education (DepEd) on how it will address the academic needs of the learners as doubts and uncertainties have escalated in almost all sectors of society, especially among the Filipino families.

Frankly speaking, any crisis in a nation will always have its impact on education in some way or another, and the young learners are always considered the vulnerable members of society who are always at the mercy of others. On this regard, the Department has put every member of the academic community on its toes looking and planning for alternative ways in which the learners will not be left behind, not even a single individual as the nation fights against the virus. With the 'new normal,' DepEd's School Improvement Planning has come into fore to institute child-learner-centered improvement to be able to manage school processes, relationships with key stakeholders and continually implement the K to 12 Basic Education Program, with the learners at its end goal.

As the nation has continually battled with the virus, keeping everyone in check and almost all in ‘house arrest,’ what with the lockdown, the learners were kept in their homes 24/7 with their families, depending on them in almost all aspects of their lives, including their learning. On this, pursuant to Republic Act No. 9155 also known as Governance of Basic Education Act of 2001, with its aim of strengthening the School-Based Management (SBM), DepEd had further devolved the governance of education to schools, empowering school teams and personnel, expanding community participation and involvement, thus making the delivery of education services to the learners more responsive, efficient, and effective. With this in place even before the pandemic, the transition from teacher-learning responsibilities to student-learning responsibilities can be said to have been implemented, not perfectly though, but still able to deliver the basic right to education to the learners. Armed with the different projects and programs such as the Continuous Improvement Program (CIP), Learning Action Cells (LACs), DepEd had been able to tap not only the academic personnel, both teaching and non-teaching but also the key stakeholders outside the academic community. Their involvement speaks volume on the kind of learning the students will have during this pandemic.

Admittedly, the participation and involvement of the key stakeholders such as the parents and or guardians of the learners are very much warranted. With the new mode of delivering lessons and learning largely depends on the students and their families, and the assurance that the continuity of teaching-learning and assessment process are ensured. This is the time where ‘flexible learning’ is given a new face, where a learner-centered approach is offered to students with rich learning choices. And on this particular time, modules are supplied and given to students where learning takes place in the place where they are residing. Under the distance learning, students are given the modular distance learning (MDL) and acquisition of knowledge and skills lies on the hands of the students and their parents or guardians.

Following this outbreak, learning interventions and solutions were rolled out to ensure that education is still served to the learners, pioneered by both private and public stakeholders in the education sector to support the continuation of learning and prevent a learning slide. As such, parents were faced with the new challenge of being both parents and teachers at the same time. This individualized instructions which allows learners to use self-learning modules (SLMs) in print or digital format/electronic copy gives them the leeway of learning at their own pace. However, this is done without the supervision of their respective subject teacher for each subject, but rather under the supervision of their own parents, regardless of the academic status of the latter. On this scheme, learners now have in their hands and that of their parents the responsibility over their learning. Learner’s materials, textbooks, activity sheets, study guides, and other study materials are the only materials that learners and their parents only have to depend on for their self-learning. On the other hand, teachers take the responsibility of monitoring

the progress of the learners. Nonetheless, learners can still seek the assistance of their teachers thru e-mail, telephone, text message/instant messaging, or other means of communication possible. On the other hand, the bulk of the supervision lies on parents or guardians being key stakeholders at this time, serving as para-teachers.

On this regard, the researcher who is an active member of the academe, being one of the school heads in the Division of Batangas City, would like to contribute to the thrust of the DepEd on ensuring that quality education is still delivered to the learners, tapping on the active participation of the stakeholders, especially during this critical time. With this, collaborating with the stakeholders, this paper aims to create a flexible learning environment for students in their homes while face-to-face is still not possible during this time of the pandemic. Again, the results could provide specific active participation of the stakeholders, specifically the parents who will serve as the para-teachers of their own children. Striking a strong partnership with the key stakeholders not only ensure that clear linkage will be built but the transition from teacher-learning responsibilities to student-learning responsibilities will be done smoothly. Though apprehension is inevitable for this phase, it is hoped that through this study, a flexible learning will still implement a learner-centered approach to learning, with the children, young and adults at the receiving end.

## II. BRIEF REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Even before children were sent to school, parents have acted out to be their first teacher from the moment they were born. It cannot be denied that even as children mature into adults, the traditional role of parents involves teaching, guiding, and raising children to become strong standing members of their communities. As they begin formal schooling, most parents allow the school to take on a major part of their formal education. Where formal education is concerned, parents are more of providers, ensuring that children have the needed provision and support to access education and learning. However, when the pandemic started, parents are now taking on a more support-oriented role by supporting their children’s education as they take on assignments and home projects. According to Hoover-Dempsey et al. (2005), the factors that influence a parents’ ability to actively contribute to a child’s education are influenced by four constructs: the parental role construction which is shaped by the beliefs, perception and experiences of the parent; the invitation of parents by the teachers and schools to be active participants in the education of their children; the socio-economic status of the parent which influences the skill, knowledge, energy and time availability of the parent; and the self-efficacy and confidence derived by the parent from being an active participant.

Research has shown that parental involvement in their child’s education improves their educational achievements from early childhood; it causes them to stay longer in school and encourages an overall positive development in the child (Mapp and Handerson, 2002). Research suggests that

communication is critical for internal and external stakeholder engagement (Jackson, 2010), and that effective communication strategies should consider both channels and sources of communication. Researchers explored the degree of communication attention and the content of the communication for internal, external, and boundary stakeholder groups. It was found that internal stakeholders are communicated to more frequently and contacted earlier than both external and boundary stakeholders. Additionally, there seemed to be no significant difference between the stakeholder group and topics communicated, suggesting that the channel and timing of communication takes precedence over the topic of the message.

On the other hand, Ryan (2013) found out that parents have greater involvement in the elementary level while Hill (2009) cited that parents were more participative when the children were still young or in their primary years and slowly dwindled when the children reached the secondary level. It was observable that parents' participation remarkably declined at some point. At this level, greater independence was given to the student resulting to a lesser parent involvement almost in all aspects of student life at school. Meanwhile, according to the Theory of Psychosocial Development of Erickson (cited by McLeod, 2013), if children are encouraged and reinforced for their initiative, they begin to feel industrious and confident in their ability to achieve goals. If this initiative is not encouraged, if it is restricted by parents or teacher, then the child begins to feel inferior, doubting his own abilities and therefore may not reach his or her potential. The involvement of the parent becomes a crucial factor to the success of the child, the very reason that greater involvement is expected during this stage. On the other hand, as the child ages, their psychosocial development changes especially when they reach adolescence.

During this stage which is referred as Identity versus Role Confusion, (Erikson as cited by McLeod, 2013), the children begin to become more independent. The individual wants to belong to a society and fit in. Pressuring them into an identity can result in rebellion in the form of establishing a negative identity and, in addition to this, feeling of unhappiness. To achieve this, parents slowly decreases but do not totally withdraw their involvement so that their children would feel that they are endowed with the right to choose for themselves the activities, organizations, and even the kind of peer they want to belong. Thus, parent's involvement become lesser to provide avenue for their children to discover possibilities and begin to form their own identity based on the outcome of their explorations.

However, parents are important in providing environmental, social and economic factors, which have powerful effects on pupils' academic lives. It has been documented that parents' readiness to contact teachers about their children's improvement is possibly the first step to becoming involved in education (Ciriaka, 2003). When schools, families, and community groups work together to support learning, children tend to do better in school, stay in school longer, and like school more. According to Dietel

(2004), parental involvement over the past decade, indicates that regardless of family income or background, students with involved parents are more likely to earn higher grades and test scores, enrolled in higher-level programs, be promoted, pass their classes, earn credits, attend school regularly, have better social skills, show improved behavior, adapt well to school and graduate to postsecondary education. Research has consistently indicated that parental involvement is integral to high student academic achievement.

A parent's involvement in their child's education is the single most important predictor of student academic success. Henderson and Mapp (2002) concluded that parents have a major influence on their children's achievement in school and through life. When parents are involved in their child's education, students of all backgrounds and income levels are found to perform better in academic work and extracurricular activities. Meanwhile, Olmstead (2013) classified parent involvement into reactive and proactive involvement. Reactive involvement means parents attend to school programs that are organized by the school such as parents' meetings, family gatherings, or volunteering whereas proactive involvement is the participation of parents in assisting their children, completing homework, discussing school activities, and following the children's improvement. In conclusion, parents need to be aware of their roles and responsibilities in educating their children. The desire to engage in any activity related to their children's education both at home and in school involvement should be owned by each parent.

As it is, with the onslaught of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19), children are affected by physical distancing, quarantines and nationwide school closures. Following this outbreak, schools were closed and remote teaching and learning began for almost all learners, young and old. Virtual learning interventions and solutions were rolled out, pioneered by both private and public stakeholders in the education sector to support the continuation of learning and prevent a learning slide. On this, parents were faced with the new challenge of being both parents and teachers at the same time. According to Ceka & Murati (2016) and Emerson et al. (2012), as children begin formal schooling, most parents allow the school to take on a major part of their formal education. Where formal education is concerned, parents are more of providers. Ensuring that children have the needed provision and support to access education and learning, except in cases where parents have taken the full responsibility of home-schooling their children.

School closures and remote learning have propelled children's ability to learn independently to the forefront of every busy and stressed out parent's wish list. This ability, often described by education experts as "student agency," has long held a privileged place in a range of reform movements aspiring to help students develop the breadth of skills needed for a fast-changing world. When young people are actively engaged in what they are learning, they develop a stronger mastery of content and become more creative and critical thinkers. For one thing, learning how to learn is fast

becoming an essential skill for any young person—regardless of socioeconomic background—who will need to enter the world of work and navigate multiple shifting jobs over the course of his or her life.

But the ability to learn independently, as many parents around the globe found out amid pandemic-schooling, is not necessarily a skill that every child brings to his or her schoolwork nor one that every school purposefully cultivates. For starters, schools need to give students the space to practice self-directed learning, which is difficult if every minute of the school day is scheduled and directed by adults. Children are learning all the time, as any expert in child development cites, but they may not be learning what the adults and educators in their lives want them to learn. The trick is for schools to find teaching and learning approaches that channel students' natural capacity, using innovative teaching and learning approaches that make lessons relevant to students' lives, afford them the ability to apply classroom content to the real world, and iterate and experiment with others.

Similarly, Emilie (2011), involving other members in the community and organizations to work together and promote environmental learning and environmental management practices in schools is vital to improve school programs, creating a conducive learning environment in the school and providing support to teachers for school activities, amongst others. As further pointed out by Epstein (2012), when parents, teachers, students, and others view one another as partners in education, a caring community forms around students and begins its work. It is through this partnership that stakeholders (teachers, students, parents, and organizations) learn from each other and engage through practices in relation to the school programs. Stakeholders are learning from each other through a process of social participation as referred to the concept of communities of practice.

On the other hand, as discussed by Lansford (2020), parents who are more involved in their children's education have children who do better in school, even in regular times. Accordingly, children whose parents are more involved in their education have better grades, higher standardized test scores, and are less likely to get in trouble for their behavior at school. Now, during the COVID-19 pandemic, parents' involvement is even more important, yet it is also more challenging as parents are more directly responsible for aspects of their children's online education that were formerly handled at school. As further discussed, researchers who study parents' involvement in education define involvement in a variety of ways, ranging from conveying to children the importance of education (such as by talking with them about what they're learning in school) to helping with homework to communicating with teachers to volunteering in the classroom.

The types of parent involvement that are most beneficial to children depend on the age of the child and any special needs the child may have. For example, children with learning disabilities may benefit more from parents' help with homework than children without disabilities, for whom parents' help with homework may be intrusive and interfere with tasks the child is able to accomplish alone. Parents should be carefully attuned to scaffolding the child's learning in a way that provides support when needed but gives children as much autonomy as possible so they will gain confidence in their own abilities. On this account, there are so many crucial equity questions in distance learning, but the importance of parent involvement in academic outcomes have never been in question. Yet, there are still so many issues about how and to what extent parents of all racial demographics and income levels are meaningfully included in school decision-making or asked to support their children's academic success.

Current research reveals that there are many different activities that connect families and schools. Often these activities are quite different from each other, yet they are lumped together as "parent involvement" or "school-family connections." Some researchers emphasize activities that take place at the school in their definition of parent involvement, such as parental attendance at school events and participation in parent-teacher organizations (PTOs). Others include activities that take place in the home that support student achievement, such as parental homework help and discussions about school issues between parents and children. Still others include abstract concepts as well as actual involvement behaviors in their definition, such as parent aspirations for a child's education.

According to Epstein and Van Voorhis (2001), homework help including school-developed homework that encourages parent-child interaction as well as more general strategies that schools and families use to support effective homework is a specific type of family connections with school. Also included is school-developed training for parents in strategies, tools, and resources to support learning in specific school subjects. Likewise, supportive home environment, including the supervision and structure that parents give children outside of school to support their education, such as limiting television viewing time and providing structured time for homework and learning (Shumow, 2001). Home-school communication and interactions, including direct parent-teacher contacts and relationships as well as more general communication between school and home regarding school events and school policies was also considered together with parent participation in activities at school, such as parent-teacher organizations (PTOs), meetings, school advisory or site-based decision-making teams, and volunteering in classrooms or with class activities.

Involvement of these kinds also include: home practices that support literacy development, such as parents reading with children or providing books and writing materials; parent tutoring on specific subjects as part of school-sponsored programs; parent support for the child, including emotional and academic support, and the expression of parent aspirations and expectations regarding a child's current school performance as well as future college or career success; parent-directed activities that connect students to out-of-school opportunities for learning and development, such as museum and library visits, private tutoring, and other enrichment opportunities; parent-child discussions and interactions about school-related issues and activities, including parental advice and guidance on academic decisions and course placements; parents serving as role models for why school is important and sharing their own experiences that reinforce the value of education; parent involvement in school reform efforts, including advocating for change, using standards and test scores as tools for holding schools accountable for student achievement, participating in the development of improvement plans, and taking part in opportunities created by reforms, such as governance councils (Desimone, Finn-Stevenson, & Henrich, 2000).

### III. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This study aimed to determine stakeholders' engagement to students' self-learning during the pandemic with the aim of proposing a creative learning environment. Specifically, this seeks answers to the following:

- How may the respondents assess students' self-learning relative to:
  - goal setting;
  - self-monitoring;
  - self-instruction; and
  - self-reinforcement?
- What engagement activities do stakeholders create to motivate students for self-learning?
- What problems are experienced during the shift from teacher learning responsibilities to students learning responsibilities?
- From the gathered results, what creative learning environment may be designed to promote active learning among students during the academic ease?

### IV. METHODS

This research used the descriptive survey research design to gather information about the key stakeholders' engagement to students' self-learning during the pandemic with the aim of proposing a creative learning environment for the learners. As explained by Fraenkel (2010), descriptive method is a process of gathering, analyzing, classifying, and tabulating data about a prevailing phenomenon, practices, beliefs, processes, trends, cause and effect relationship and then making adequate interpretation of the data collected with or without the aid of statistical method. This involves data gathering about existing conditions supported with descriptive analysis of gathered information from the said survey. Also, the design ensured to answer the questions raised since it followed a certain process of collecting and obtaining the necessary and accurate information needed in making this paper. Specifically, the information used in the study came from the perceptions and insights of the respondents through a researcher-conducted survey with the use of a designed questionnaire.

The questionnaire comprised of three parts where the Part I, the respondents have assessed the students' self-learning relative their goal setting, self-monitoring, self-instruction, and self-reinforcement. As to its Part II, stakeholders' engagement activities to motivate students self-learning was tackled while Part III looked covered the problems experienced during the shift from teacher-learning responsibilities to students' learning responsibilities. On the other hand, 20 respondents were purposively selected to describe their assessments on the stakeholders' active engagement to students' self-learning in the face of the pandemic. The survey was done online through google sheet.

### V. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

- *Respondents Assessment on Students' Self-learning*
  - **Goal setting.** Through its motivational and informational effects, learning and self-evaluation are influenced by the goal setting. When students set their goals, they are more likely to attend to instruction, expend effort, and persist. They are more conscious of what they should be doing to accomplish their set goals.

Indicators Students...	WM	VI
1. know where they must concentrate their efforts	2.36	S
2. know precisely what they want to achieve	2.86	O
3. create their “big picture” of what they want to do with their life/study	3.12	O
4. break big target into smaller ones to reach their lifetime goals	2.15	S
5. develop a sense of ownership in their education to keep them focused and motivated to move forward	2.25	S
6. set a short-term goal each week and plan strategies to achieve the goal	2.40	S
7. set short-term targets for additional learning	2.28	S
8. continue to find opportunities to learn and grow	2.44	S
9. utilize the SMART (specific, measurable, attainable, relevant and timely) educational goals	2.42	S
10. are aware of their learning process by doing a self-assessment of their own performance	2.26	S
11. set a long-term goal at the beginning of the semester	2.22	S
<b>COMPOSITE MEAN</b>	<b>2.43</b>	<b>S</b>

Legend: 2.50 - 3.24 Often (O) 1.75 - 2.49 Sometimes (S)

Table 1:- Respondents’ Assessment on Students’ Self-learning in Terms of Goal Setting

To note, results present that students often create their ‘big picture’ of what they want to do with their life/study; they know precisely what they want to achieve; and that they sometimes continue to find opportunities to learn and grow. These were all measured with 3.12, 2.86, and 2.44 weighted means, respectively. These results suggest then that the composite mean of 2.43 shows that respondents have sometimes set their goals which somehow have aided them in their self-learning. It can be inferred from these that students who have set their own learning goals tend to direct their own self-learning and tend to achieve more as compared to others who have not focused on any goals on their learning. This further show that these students are those kinds of learners who are not passive, rather they are

active participant in their own learning. These results substantiate what Erikson, as cited by McLeod (2013), that children begin to become more independent on a certain stage as referred in the Identity versus Role Confusion.

- **Self-monitoring.** Considered as a skill, self-monitoring is used basically by individuals to keep track of their actions and performance. On this regard, self-monitoring, in this particular study, was set to be the students check and balance on whether they were learning on their own in the present situation. Results on the manifestation of this self-learning check are shown in Table 2.

Indicators Students...	WM	VI
1. closely communicating with their instructor to obtain progress feedback	3.12	O
2. self-assess their own learning by judging their performance against the goal set in the previous week	2.22	S
3. examine past learning	3.04	O
4. write about their problems or learning strategies in a journal	2.00	S
5. update their journals with written self-assessment comments on their progress	2.24	S
6. assess their achievement using a symbol	2.88	O
7. comment on their achievements	3.18	O
8. reflect on their learning process in the previous week	2.46	S
9. assess their learning performance	3.08	O
10. write their comments or reflections	3.14	O
<b>COMPOSITE MEAN</b>	<b>2.74</b>	<b>O</b>

Legend: 2.50 - 3.24 Often (O) 1.75 - 2.49 Sometimes (S)

Table 2:- Respondents’ Assessment on Students’ Self-learning in Terms of Self-monitoring

As manifested in the table, results showed that majority of the respondents cited that they often comment on their achievements. This garnered the highest weighted mean of 3.18. This finding implies that students were aware of their task and what they must do in order to learn on their own, without the direct supervision of their subject teachers. It can be surmised that when students start to take notice of what they were doing in order to monitor their progress, they were already conscious of their responsibility to learn

by themselves. This result then substantiates what Loftin, Gibb, and Skiba (2005) had said, that self-monitoring is an effective tool that any student may adapt for behavior change towards self-learning.

Likewise, it can be seen that as a manifestation of the students’ self-learning, they often write their comments or reflections as they go on with their school tasks. This was given with high weighted mean of 3.14. Reflected as well in

the results that students often communicate with their teachers closely to obtain progress feedback, with high weighted mean of 3.12. It can be surmised from these findings, students were aware of their cognitive responsibility towards their learning, especially in the present situation. Accordingly, self-directed learning is the core construct that concerns all learners. This concept emphasizes on the external control and management of learners towards their learning tasks. More so, it can be inferred that this exercise of self-monitoring among learners is positively influenced by their idea of self-management that also manifests their direction towards self-learning.

On the other hand, finding show that when it comes to writing about their problems or learning strategies in a journal, students were weak on this area as they only

sometimes do this. This gathered the lowest weighted mean of 2.00. However, the composite mean of 2.74 reflects that overall, the learners were often seen to manifest their self-learning as they observe and practice self-monitoring in doing their school tasks in the new normal.

- **Self-instruction.** This is another strategy to which learners may speak of their self-learning. This strategy expresses of learners having self-talk or self-statements in which they learn to talk themselves through a task or activity. This is the process where they mentally rehearse the steps they are taking while doing their school work or tasks. Results on these are shown in Table 3.

Indicators Students...	WM	VI
1. self-tutor and self-monitor themselves	3.14	O
2. take charge of the learning activity	3.18	O
3. direct and appraise themselves as they go through the task step by step	3.12	O
4. perform the actions while speaking aloud the actions	2.88	O
5. break down learning into bits, which makes it easier for them to comprehend more effectively	3.00	O
6. take active part in the exercise of learning, rather than being passive	3.20	O
7. talk themselves through" a task or activity	2.48	S
8. mentally rehearses the procedural steps while engaged in a task	2.86	O
9. use of <i>self-induced</i> statements to direct or control behavior	2.58	O
10. explain how to engage and use a strategy	2.24	S
<b>COMPOSITE MEAN</b>	<b>2.87</b>	<b>O</b>

Table 3:- Respondents' Assessment on Students' Self-learning in Terms of Self-instruction

Looking closely, it can be noticed that all of the respondents have employed self-instruction as part of their self-learning. This can be assumed from the composite mean of 2.87 states that often, students have used this strategy to direct their behavior towards their learning by themselves. Moreover, it can be construed that the students have a direct control over their behavior that somehow puts them on the right of track of self-learning. This can further be said that this is an important factor to self-learning especially in the present situation where students are left on their own to deal with their own learning.

In same breadth, it can be seen that often, students have employed self-instruction as they were seen to take charge of the learning activity and they direct and appraise themselves as they go through the task step-by-step. These got the weighted means of 3.18 and 3.12, respectively. According to Graham et al. (as cited in Rock, 2012), self-instruction techniques involve the use of self-statements to

direct or self-regulate behavior. This can be taken to mean that respondents have resulted to verbalizing their thoughts in order to help them regulate their behavior towards their learning in the face of the pandemic. Self-talk or instructing themselves, students regulate their own behavior towards their self-learning.

- **Self-reinforcement.** In the construct of self-controlled behavior, self-reinforcement is known as a central mediating event. As a method employed by the students in the face of the pandemic towards their self-learning, this acts to strengthen the students' resolve to learn by themselves as the responsibility of learning has shifted from the hands of their teachers to theirs. Results on the respondents' assessments on students' self-learning on regard to the use of self-reinforcement are reflected in Table 4.

Indicators <i>Students...</i>	WM	VI
1. control their own behavior by rewarding themselves when a certain standard of performance has been attained or surpassed	2.33	S
2. administer the reward themselves	2.24	S
3. choose reinforcers and reward themselves when goals are achieved	2.12	S
4. reward themselves with bonus like being exempted from house chores at their chosen time of the day	2.02	S
5. use praise and/or tokens for on-task behavior/task engagement	2.14	S
6. reframe negative thoughts and tell themselves kind self-statements	2.88	O
7. shift their focus to what they can do and approach even stressful situations with more coping strategies	2.86	O
8. do positive self-talk to improve self-confidence and motivation while also reducing anxiety	2.88	O
9. use words of encouragement to overcome the challenge	2.56	O
<b>COMPOSITE MEAN</b>	<b>2.45</b>	<b>S</b>

Table 4:- Respondents' Assessment on Students' Self-learning in Terms of Self-reinforcement

It can be gleaned from the results that with the composite mean of 2.45, respondents have sometimes employed self-reinforcements as they develop their sense of responsibility towards their own learning in the new normal brought about by the pandemic which affected all sectors, not sparing the educational system. This was further supported by the highest weighted mean of 2.88 on both indicators stating that students often reframe negative thoughts and tell themselves kind self-statements and do positive self-talk to improve their self-confidence and motivation while also reducing anxiety.

Accordingly, self-reinforcement is a method to which students have involved self-conditioning that acts to strengthen their wish to learn and the process to which they can achieve this goal. On this, it can be said that these results have substantiated what Kassin (2003) had cited that a response followed by a reinforcer is strengthened and is therefore more likely to occur again. Hence, reinforcement is expressed to be an act following a response with a reinforcer and is one of the primary tools of operant conditioning. On this regard, it can be surmised that students have employed self-reinforcement in order for them

to transit easily from being to be guided directly by their teachers to remote supervision, which spells that foremost responsible towards their learning are themselves.

Likewise, it can be seen from the results that students have likewise shifted their focus to what they can do and approach even stressful situations with more coping strategies and also often use words of encouragement to overcome the challenge of having the weight of their learning on their hands. These gathered high weighted means of 2.86 and 2.56, respectively. From these results, it can be realized that students have directly involved themselves in the delivery of reinforcement.

#### ➤ Stakeholders' Engagement Activities to Motivate Students for Self-learning

Engaging the key stakeholders such as parents in this time of the pandemic, speaks volume to the learning success of the students. How they will motivate students to their self-learning reinforces the expectations of the process in the new educational set-up in the new normal. Results on this are shown in Table 5.

Indicators	WM	VI
1. Get involved in social events, fund-raising efforts, or traditional involvement in activities such as parent training, homework assistance, and general volunteering	2.40	D
2. Procure materials needed for at-home learning kits before supply chains shut down	2.88	A
3. Prioritise health and hygiene education and protecting wellbeing and foundational cognitive skills of learners	3.12	A
4. Ensure that learning continues in exact accordance with curricula as though the pandemic is not happening	3.04	A
5. Support teachers and schools taking themselves as teaching partners to help create equitable learning environments that foster inclusion, learners wellbeing, and distance learning methods	3.22	A
6. Carry out teaching activities	2.26	D
7. Work with education service providers to identify how to provide proof of continued engagement in structured learning to ensure that gains in learning are not lost	2.22	D
8. Identify relevant concerns about how learners might be disconnected from learning opportunities based on bias elevated by concerns around the pandemic	3.00	A
9. Develop contingency plans for various scenarios under the 'new normal' distance learning	3.18	A
10. Prepare their children academically for school and thereby help reduce the readiness gap between the 'old' normal to the 'new normal' teaching learning process.	3.14	A
11. Work collaboratively with teachers and other parents	3.16	A
<b>COMPOSITE MEAN</b>	<b>2.87</b>	<b>A</b>

Table 5:- Stakeholders' Engagement to Students' Self-learning



To note, the composite mean of 2.87 shows that respondents were in agreement that stakeholders hold a great deal of importance in the new learning process that involves the students. On this, it can be deduced that learning will not be the same again for students as the Philippine education system has adapted the new blended learning as public schools have resumed its classes nationwide last October 5, 2020. So as to not to compromise the education of the learners, DepEd had called on pertinent stakeholders such as the parents for their active participation to ensure that their children will still be able to learn despite of the unusual set-up.

Noting further, it can be seen that respondents have been called for their active participation being the support partner of teachers and schools in taking themselves as teaching partners to help create equitable learning environments that foster inclusion, learners' well-being and distance learning methods, with highest weighted mean of 3.22. This was followed closely with stakeholders

developing contingency plans for various scenarios under the 'new normal distance learning and with them working collaboratively with teachers and other parents. These two gathered the weighted means of 3.18 and 3.16, respectively. With these, it can be said then that education has not been put into a standstill; that instead, despite of it being quite hard on the part of the learners and their parents, learning responsibility was transferred primarily on their hands from those of the teachers. From these, it can be realized then that in these trying times, the cooperation and commitment of the stakeholders matter greatly.

➤ *Problems Experienced during the Shift from Teacher Learning Responsibilities to Students Learning Responsibilities*

Certainly, the shift of the learning responsibilities from teachers to learners have created problems that have affected the self-learning of the students. Results on this are shown in Table 6.

Indicators	WM	VI
1. Students become less engaged in the learning process	2.88	A
2. Created a uniquely stressful and demanding context for teachers' work and parents' roles	2.88	A
3. Substantial student learning loss and the likelihood of lack of access to technology and learning supports at home	3.20	A
4. Limited the degree to which students can engage in learning	3.28	SA
5. Struggled to balance their work responsibilities with their home lives during the pandemic and teaching the learners	3.34	SA
6. Students have less or lack the means to technology they need to access online resources and, consequently, are less likely to engage in remote learning activities regularly	3.28	SA
7. Have less instructional time	3.08	A
8. Creating flexible, adaptable assignments that students can complete in different environments and with varied levels of technology access proved to be tedious and tiresome	3.16	A
9. Determining the key skills and knowledge to be included in the learning materials	3.00	A
10. Adjusting instruction, providing support and feedback	3.18	A
<b>COMPOSITE MEAN</b>	<b>3.13</b>	<b>A</b>

Table 6:- Problems Experienced on Students' Self-learning

As can be seen, respondents were in agreement that there were certain problems that were experienced during the shift from teachers' learning responsibility to students self-learning responsibility. This was reflected by the overall composite mean of 3.13. This was further revealed in the highest weighted mean of 3.34 on that respondents have strongly agreed that there was a struggle in balancing their work responsibilities with their home lives during the pandemic and in teaching the learners. This was also felt when it limited the degree to which students can engage in learning, both which garnered a weighted mean of 3.28. Likewise, a strong agreement can also be seen from the respondents as they divulged that a substantial student learning loss and the likelihood of lack of access to technology and learning supports at home posed to be a problem to both, teachers and students. This got a high weighted mean of 3.20.

It can be assumed from these results then that remote learning can be as good or better to the individual learning of those students who chose it. However, the mental, emotional, and academic impacts of this shift will likely to be challenging as well to both teachers and students. With the concerns already felt, traditional-age students and teachers may struggle uniquely with the loss of face-to-face interaction. Moreover, it can be sensed from these findings that respondents felt to have a mismatch between the expectation and reality, which can really be both very hard to both parties.

Overall, it can be surmised from these findings that these challenges are likely to continue. Students will still be struggling to find spaces in their homes to work, what with the financial issues their families face every day, and having to face their own learning, which are now in their hands. To infer, it can be said that this new set up of learning in the

‘new normal’ may somehow affect students’ academic performance, especially those who needs a hands-on teaching. There can be a feeling of being overwhelmed by everything that is happening in their young lives. In the same manner, teachers have also shown to have experienced problems on their own as a result of this shift. They are most likely facing some of their own issues with the social isolation and performance. It can be assumed that they miss having the personal connection with their students as they love nurturing their students within their developmental period.

❖ *Flexible Learning Environment*

➤ *Proposed Flexible Learning Environment*

As COVID-19 continues spreading in many countries of world, how to keep learning in disruption has become a major challenge to every Filipino family and the Department of Education. On this regard, the Department and its academic community and the outside stakeholders need to come together to address the immediate educational needs of the learners during the shift from teaching learning responsibilities to student learning responsibilities during the academic ease.

Activity	Objective	Persons Involved	Expected Output
➤ WEBINAR series for parents and stakeholders on re-conceptualizing flexible pedagogy as a learner-centered educational strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ customize a given course to meet the needs of individual learners</li> <li>➤ help promote easy, engaged and effective learning</li> </ul>	➤ DepEd; Teachers; Parents; Learners	➤ teaching and learning can be flexible rather than fixed
➤ Create open learning by offering learning choices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ offer choices that cover class times, course content, instructional approach, learning resources and location, technology use, the requirements for entry/completion dates, and communication medium</li> <li>➤ to remove barriers that might prevent students from attending a given educational context</li> </ul>	➤ DepEd; Teachers; Parents; Learners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ learners are more self-determined and independent, while teachers became more as learning facilitators</li> <li>➤ learners are granted a variety of choices and take more responsibilities for their own learning.</li> </ul>
➤ Providing online training for parents on how to create a space that is emotionally safe and supportive	➤ To provide the warmth, empathy, and encouragement the child needs as they learn new things in a new setting (at home)	➤ DepEd; Teachers; Parents; Learners	➤ Learners will be emotionally safe which will help them tap into the parts of their brain that are responsible for learning.
➤ Post a list of learning tasks and upload related resources on the learning management system	➤ To allow students to determine the sections and the sequence of content according to their desire, pathways of learning, forms of course orientation, size and scope of the course through modulization of the content	➤ DepEd; Teachers; Parents; Learners	➤ Students are encouraged to select the topics based on their personal interests and strength
➤ OTL (Open Time for Learning)	➤ To offer an open time for learners to dictate their own pace of study, when to start and when to finish a course	➤ DepEd; Teachers; Parents; Learners	➤ Learners have flexible options to carry out their learning activities
➤ Offering Course Supermarket	➤ To provide students great flexibility in learning from home and help them develop self-management skills	➤ DepEd; Teachers; Parents; Learners	➤ Students can get help via help desks, face-to-face or online meetings with tutors, group help sessions and through video-based real-time chatting tools

Table 7

## VI. CONCLUSIONS

From the findings, the following conclusions were drawn:

- Students' self-learning in regards to goal-setting and self-reinforcement, these are only manifested on sometimes while when it comes to self-monitoring and self-instruction, they have often exercised these as part of their self-learning.
- Majority of the respondents said that they support teachers and schools by taking themselves as teaching partners to help create equitable learning environments that foster inclusion, learners' well-being and distance learning methods.
- Majority of the respondents cited that balancing their work responsibilities and teaching the learners is the foremost problem they have encountered during this shift from teacher learning responsibilities to students learning responsibilities.
- On the basis of these findings, a flexible learning environment is designed to promote active learning among students during the academic ease.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- The proposed flexible learning environment can be subjected for further review for enhancement prior to implementation. Part of this can be dealt with special and upgraded activities, which can be provided for parents and other stakeholders to recognize their engagement in the 'new normal.'
- The academic community and stakeholders' relationship can further be developed through activities that would create harmonious relationship towards building strong collaboration for the success of the implementation of the 'new normal' way of delivering the teaching learning process.
- Consultations within the community must be further enhanced to involve further the stakeholders in the development of learners as the shift of responsibility in learning is on their hands.
- Similar studies may be conducted to determine the stakeholder's engagement in the new normal.

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