

## Lens of Language and Literature Programs in the New Norm Educational Setting amidst Pandemic

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### Abstract

The current COVID-19 epidemic, which began in China and has nearly infected every nation globally, is one of the most recent public health catastrophes of worldwide significance. The language and literature programs in public and private schools have become more flexible due to the new standard structure that the Philippines adopted due to the Covid-19 epidemic. This study utilized a basic qualitative design under a qualitative research approach. There were six (6) English teachers as participants. The participants answered open-ended questions about language and literature programs in one's school in the new normal of education through social media platforms, Facebook messenger. The data has yielded three (3) themes: learning competencies and guides of language and literature programs, approaches and programs to language acquisition and literature appreciation, and new learning methods towards language and literature programs. Hence, the language programs sharpen students' macro abilities, which they will use in real-life situations. Literature programs also seek to help students understand and appreciate literary appreciation and analysis. The utilization of diverse techniques, programs, and competencies will allow for more practical learning. It is essential to the teacher's job that we motivate students to master these abilities. We scaffold them to help them comprehend our goal, which is to prioritize education for students to see what is unseen in the actual world.

### Keywords:

*language and literature program, new normal, educational setting, pandemic*

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## **INTRODUCTION**

The current COVID-19 epidemic, which began in China and has nearly infected every nation globally, is one of the most recent public health catastrophes of worldwide significance. This illness is caused by a new coronavirus (SARS-CoV-2, formerly known as 2019-nCoV). It has garnered global attention due to increasing infections and how to eradicate the sickness and flatten the infection curve (Guo et al., 2020). According to Karalis (2020), what is worth studying after returning to normalcy are the implications for the day after, that is, what adjustments need to be made, the scope of the situation, and defining the basic dimensions of education and learning in formal education systems and organizations amid educational disruptions.

Because of the government's lockdown policy, we are all currently confined to our houses. However, learning should not come to a standstill. During the epidemic, many nations worldwide adopted various solutions to continue the schooling process, including the advent of distance learning. Google, T.V. broadcasts, instructions, resources, video lectures, and internet channels were launched as online learning platforms (UNESCO, 2020). The Department of Education highlighted that this does not necessarily imply that instructors and students would attend schools and learn in classrooms. It designed several modalities to guarantee that online learning is a viable option in this new learning environment (DepEd, 2020). Similarly, virtual classrooms would be the new standard at higher education institutions. The Commission on Higher Education recommended that online platforms and blended learning be strengthened, including but not limited to Google Classroom, Messenger, Zoom, Edmodo, Facebook, and YouTube (CHED, 2020).

The language and literature programs in public and private schools have become more flexible due to the new standard structure that the Philippines adopted as a result of the Covid-19 epidemic. To acclimatize to the unique instructional style, teacher training in online education, blended learning, and distant learning are also needed (Toquero, 2020) should strengthen teachers' pedagogical and technological abilities. This transition to the new normal, from the four walls of the classroom to the boundaries of virtual reality, necessitates an investigation of how effective online learning is in providing students with quality education and outcomes-based education (Basilaia & Kvavadze, 2020). This has been a significant transition from traditional knowledge to new normal teaching. Resilience and cooperation will help with this. According to Tria (2020), schools at all levels must address these issues and carefully review plans and processes for implementing the new normal. Collaboration is critical during these trying times. We should help shape post-COVID-19 education as we transition to the new normal.

Thus, this study explored one major research problem: what instructional programs are used in your respective institution in teaching language and literature subjects?

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

This part mainly focused on additional theoretical frameworks underpinning significant difficulties for English language and literature programs in this new norm structure in the Philippines. Thus, this part incorporates the many programs in the new academic system to continue providing quality education to students at all levels.

The integration and development of technology and a growing awareness of cultural diversity and globalization have transformed the conventional concept of learning into 21st-century learning (Borsheim, Merritt & Reed, 2008; So & Kang, 2014). This new

idea focuses on learners' capacity to acquire and/or retrieve information, organize and manage information, assess the relevance, quality, and usefulness of information, and create correct information using existing resources (Educational Testing Service, 2007). These are the abilities that modern learners must have to survive in today's increasingly globalized market (PPRC, 2010).

One of the program's focuses in the twenty-first-century environment is language, namely effective communication. We imply necessary abilities for success in today's culture when we say "effective communication." Teamwork and cooperation, interpersonal skills, personal accountability, social and civic duty, and interactive communication are examples.

As a result of the Covid-19 pestilence, the immersion of 21st-century teaching-learning processes paved the door for this new regular set-up of academia, distant learning. The public and private sectors collaborate well to provide the finest education possible in today's world. This school year has spanned the gap of new knowledge for students at all levels via cooperation and research.

Multiliteracy pedagogy is a new type of teaching concept that emerged as a result of 21st-century learning. This teaching concept requires instructors to give chances for their pupils to access, analyze, search, sort, gather, and interpret material from multiple multimedia and multimodal sources, resulting in multiliterate individuals. According to Anstey and Bull (2006), multiliterate persons refer to those who are "flexible and strategic and can understand and use literacy and literate practices with a range of texts and technologies; in socially responsible ways; in a socially, culturally, and linguistically diverse world; and to fully participate in life as an active and informed citizen" (Anstey & Bull, 2006, p. 55).

To produce multiliterate learners, it is essential to integrate 21st-century literacy subjects such as civic literacy, global awareness, financial literacy, health literacy, and environmental literacy (PPRC, 2010). From the colonization period to the globalization era, the Philippines has had a lengthy history of educational reforms to provide excellent and accessible education to Filipinos. The K to 12 English Curriculum, which created in response to students' low NAT performance across disciplines. It is based on the idea that language, thinking, and learning are interconnected, and that language is the cornerstone of all human relationships. Its main objective is to produce communicatively competent and multiliterate learners capable of competing in today's global economy (Department of Education, 2016).

Tomlinson's (1995) study, in which schools that facilitate differentiated instruction incorporate continual evaluation of preparedness level as part of the study. He then describes the features of differentiated classrooms, claiming that they create various groups of pupils in the learning environment. Learners in differentiated classrooms are encouraged to take responsibility for their learning through multiple activities. They have the chance to study new knowledge by observation and discovery as the instructor guides them toward the objective.

It is hoped that by formally incorporating a 21st-century learning framework into its K-12 program, according to SEAMEO INNOTECH (2012), educational outcomes will facilitate social mobility and produce lifelong learners who are socially responsible, problem solvers, critical thinkers, and effective communicators for "a progressive, just, and humane society" (SEAMEO INNOTECH, 2012, p. 12).

Bilingual Education Policy (BEP) of 1974 aimed to employ English as the medium of teaching in science and mathematics. The BEP was renewed in 1987, as stated in the Philippine Constitution of that year. This strategy is based on the notion that learners' multilingualism may be promoted by introducing multilingual education in the elementary grades and implementing a multilingual language education policy (Vez, 2009). (Dekker & Young, 2005; Hornberger, 2009).

Killen (2000), OBE can contribute to student achievement in learning since it motivates instructors to be adequately prepared. According to Ramoroka (2007), the characteristics of OBE lead teachers in ways that allow them to demonstrate control over the process and approach.

According to Lynch (2008), media can maximize the amount of participation in learning. That is, employing media in teaching and learning activities may greatly assist a teacher in implementing communicative and effective teaching and learning activities. According to Furnhan et al. (2005), students feel more involved and academically successful using media. It is thought that the usage of media in the classroom makes it easier for a teacher to transmit orders and information for learning to his students.

According to LovellTroy and Eickmann (1992), an instructor may emphasize the solution of exciting and relevant problems to better motivate students by understanding how the power of chemistry and the scientific method can affect their daily lives. This type, of course, may involve a variety of activities aimed to encourage the development of skills and attitudes, with less focus on knowledge gain. Depending on the context of the class, either technique is suitable.

Thus, these literature reviews argue the various pedagogies, approaches, and techniques in the context of language and literature programs in the Philippines and how they influence students' learning and mastering.

## **METHODOLOGY**

The fundamental qualitative design was used in this study as part of the qualitative research approach. According to Deveci and Onder (2013), the primary goal of a qualitative research is to get more evident representations of the observed events. Six (6) English teachers took part in this study. Participants were given open-ended interview questions via Facebook chat. In support, Ary et al. (2018) said that open-ended interviews are advantageous for obtaining more reliable verbal data from participants since their representations of specific occurrences would seem more natural and real. The four (4) participants have already finished their master's degrees in English, and the two (2) participants have completed their academic prerequisites in English. In addition, the participants have taught in both the private and public sectors of academia. According to the study goal, the researcher is particular that the issues were answered using their knowledge and experiences. The light was shone in the language and literature programs in the new standard educational system in the Philippines due to the Covid-19 pestilence.

## **FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

This part attempted to present more straightforward resolutions toward one major research problem proposed in this study: what instructional programs are used in your respective institution in teaching Language and Literature subjects? This basic qualitative study involved English teachers as the participants of this interview. This investigation presented three themes: (1) Learning Competencies and Guides of Language and

Literature Programs, (2) Approaches and Programs to Language Acquisition and Literature Appreciation, and (3) New Educational Methods of Learning towards Language and Literature Programs.

### **Finding 1: Learning Competencies and Guides of Language and Literature Programs**

The first theme reflects learning competencies and learning guides of language and literature programs in the local setting. The mentioned components talk about the traditional set-up and the online class set-up due to CoVid-10 pestilence.

According to Participant 1:

*"Public schools follow certain curriculum guidelines to achieve the learning competencies for each subject. In teaching English language and literature competencies, we contextualize and localize the materials in which students could easily grasp the idea and relate themselves to the content itself."*

The statement above stipulates that teachers are the implementer of what the current curriculum suggests focusing on language and literature with contextualization and location. This is reinforced by the K to 12 English Curriculum (also known as the Language Arts and Multiliteracies Curriculum or LAMC), which responded to students' low NAT performance across disciplines. It is based on the idea that language, thinking, and learning are interconnected, and that language is the cornerstone of all human relationships. Its main objective is to produce communicatively competent and multiliterate learners capable of competing in today's global economy (Department of Education, 2016).

According to Participant 1:

*"...once in a while, we try to apply differentiated instructions and activities to adapt to students' diversity and learning styles."*

The statement above reflects that teachers should utilize eclectic instructions to let the students hone both the use of language and literature. This corresponds to Tomlinson's (1995) study, in which schools that facilitate differentiated instruction incorporate continual evaluation of preparedness level as part of the course of study. He then describes the features of differentiated classrooms, claiming that they create various groups of pupils in the learning environment. Learners in differentiated classrooms are encouraged to take responsibility for their learning through multiple activities. They have the chance to study new learning by observation and discovery as the instructor guides them toward the objective.

As a result, the function of learning competencies, curricular guidelines, and eclectic diversified teaching will be able to assess one's mastery, particularly language skills acquisition, and literary appreciation. Furthermore, thorough study and application might be recommended to provide students with relevant and practical learning in understanding the application of language and literature.

## **Finding 2: Approaches and Programs to Language Acquisition and Literature Appreciation**

To successfully measure the output of the students, teachers apply approaches in teaching language and literature. Also, through the interrelation of the programs, the teacher will deliver pragmatic teaching to the students leading to productive output.

According to Participant 2:

*"Instructional programs that are used to incorporate the use of English language and literature can be the bilingual instructional and multilingual program which is used in classrooms esp in the Philippines where we have our native language, and the delivery is done through native language and the English language."*

The above statement discusses the use of bilingualism and multilingualism in the teaching of language and literature. Bilingualism focuses on the first and second languages that are learned. However, with multilingualism, one additional language is mentioned, including the mother tongue. These approaches can be used to relieve students' stress over acquiring the target language. Globalization has increased English's importance by requiring the Philippine government and businesses to use English as a trade language. As a result, the government implemented regulations to guarantee that Filipino students gain appropriate English competence. One of these was the Bilingual Education Policy (BEP) of 1974, which aimed to employ English to teach science and mathematics. The BEP was renewed in 1987, as stated in the Philippine Constitution of that year. This strategy is based on the notion that learners' multilingualism may be promoted by introducing multilingual education in the elementary grades and implementing a multilingual language education policy (Vez, 2009). (Dekker & Young, 2005; Hornberger, 2009).

According to Participant 3:

*"In our school, we utilized Outcomes-Based Education approach in teaching English language subjects. ....we design activities and or outputs where students can demonstrate the skills that they have gained from the course...."*

OBE, or Outcomes-Based Education, is a current program of the Department of Education. This program allows students to dig into more realistic output based on their knowledge of the topics. Furthermore, the effectiveness of OBE implementation is highly dependent on educators; hence, competitive awareness and knowledge of OBE are critical. According to Killen (2000), OBE can contribute to student achievement in learning since it motivates instructors to be adequately prepared. According to Ramoroka (2007), the characteristics of OBE lead teachers in ways that allow them to demonstrate control over the process and approach.

According to Participant 4:

*"Our institution utilized the communicative language teaching to strengthen the language competence of our students. The CLT is based on the concept that learning language successfully comes through communicating real meaning".*

The approach seeks to create interactive activities between a teacher and students through tools or media selected by the instructor. A teacher can conduct learning activities by utilizing various activities and materials that they have produced. Furthermore, one method of implementing communicative learning is through the use of media. According to Lynch (2008), media can maximize the amount of participation in education. That is, employing media in teaching and learning activities may greatly assist a teacher in implementing communicative and effective teaching and learning activities. According to Furnhan et al. (2005), students feel more involved and academically successful using media. It is thought that the usage of media in the classroom makes it easier for a teacher to transmit orders and information for learning to his students.

According to Participant 6:

*"The instructional programs that are used in our institution are "Learning Continuity Framework" by Dayagbil et al. (2020) and migration of Face-to-Face Instruction to Flexible Learning. As far as the teaching of English language and literature is concerned, these programs did not only emphasize a remote resolution for teaching and learning design but also focused on other areas such as embracing technology/ infrastructure upgrading, recalibrating the curriculum, and capacitating the faculty."*

The preceding statements are part of a robust language curriculum. This institution's new program is entirely based on what has already been done. This higher education institution is aware of the various disciplines outside of the teaching and learning process integrated into the language and literature program. Influential college professors must today be prepared to offer in-depth knowledge of their field and understand college students and how they study. Faculty are also required to develop abilities in a variety of teaching and assessment approaches. According to LovellTroy and Eickmann (1992), an instructor may emphasize the solution of exciting and relevant problems to better motivate students by understanding how the power of chemistry and the scientific method can affect their daily lives. This type, of course, may involve a variety of activities aimed to encourage the development of skills and attitudes, with less focus on knowledge gain. Depending on the context of the class, either technique is suitable.

Thus, the programs mentioned earlier and techniques may be an excellent tool for students to be well-equipped in language learning and literary text analysis. As a teacher, you may do action research to compare data further, and your practice will be a synthesis of theory and practice. As an outcome, more upgrades for our curriculum modifications as well as our students are being proposed.

### **Finding 3: New Educational Methods of Learning towards Language and Literature Programs**

This subject highlights the advent of innovative learning techniques that incorporate language and literary proficiency in each session. This allows for greater flexibility in learning outcomes for both the teacher and the students.

According to Participant 5:

*"...I make sure that teaching-learning process is in its optimum case In view of English literature teaching, several methods, and approaches used are Microlearning, OBE, Spaced Repetition, flipped classroom, Interactivity, gamification, leaderboards, peer Learning, Mobile Learning, and many more."*

The statements demonstrate that the instructor is adopting innovative teaching methods outside of the classroom or traditional setting. Another aspect of the Philippine set-up in language and literature learning programs would be the inclusion of online classes and even technology as new educational environments. Education experts have long been interested in the influence of learning settings on learning outcomes. For example, Ramsden and Entwistle (1981) experimentally found a connection between learning methods and perceived academic environment features. Haertela, Walberg, and Haertela (1981) discovered links between student evaluations of their courses' social-psychological settings and learning results. Web-based technologies have significantly altered the learning and teaching environment.

According to Participant 6:

*"As to how Flexible Learning Design was crafted, the off-classes were classified into wired and non-wired. The wired set-up consists of synchronous, asynchronous, and collaborative online learning whereas the non-wired involved correspondence, project-based, and modular learning."*

Because of the CoVid-19 pestilence, the statement is the reality of today's school year. The academic world has transitioned from traditional to bisynchronous (synchronous and asynchronous) online learning. There is related research that might support up the presence of online modality. Harrington (1999) contrasted classroom and online statistics education for master's-level social work students and concluded that students who had previously been academically excellent could do just as well with a distance learning method as students in a typical classroom course. Also, Thirunarayanan and Perez-Prad (2001) discovered that, while the online group performed marginally better than the campus group on the class post-test, the difference in performance was not statistically significant. Smith (2001) also contrasted teaching in an MBA marketing planning course, describing the variations required in the two contexts to attain the identical learning objectives. Furthermore, McLaren (2004) demonstrated that the final grade for students who successfully finished the course is independent of the style of instruction when comparing performance indicators of an undergraduate business statistics course.

According to participant 1:

*"Nowadays, those activities could not all be possibly realized since we adapt the Modular Distance Learning-Print (MDL-P) where ready-made Self Learning Materials (SLM) are provided by the division office trying to achieve the given Most Essential Learning Competencies (MELC)."*

The statement focuses on the students who preferred offline modality through modular distance learning-print. Another preparation made by the DepEd as part of the

BE-LCP is the formation of a learning resources and platforms committee to ensure that appropriate learning resources of high quality are made available to learners. That necessary technological platforms are engaged or made available in a timely and efficient manner. These learning resources include print, digital online and offline, television, and radio. Secretary Briones underlined in a news statement issued by the Department of Education that regions over the Philippines have been busy developing and creating Self-Learning Modules for education's new normal. These resources are available in printed form to make them more accessible to people living in rural regions with limited access to the internet (DepEd, 2020).

Hence, even if we face a significant threat to our health, CoVid-19, no student will be able to fall behind in their study. The Department of Education (DepEd) has used modular distance learning to reach out to less privileged students who cannot afford devices or internet access and students who live in areas where signals are not available. So, despite the current circumstances, there is still a strong possibility that learning will be one of how we will be able to confront the realities of the world.

## CONCLUSION

The language programs sharpen students' macro abilities, which they will use in real-life situations. Literature programs also seek to help students understand and appreciate literary appreciation and analysis. The utilization of diverse techniques, programs, and competencies will allow for more practical learning. It is essential to the teacher's job that we motivate students to master these abilities, that we scaffold them to help them comprehend our goal, which is to prioritize education for students to see what is unseen in the actual world.

## RECOMMENDATION

Based on the findings, the researcher suggests a strategic planning session for developing an English Language and Literature curriculum in the Philippines' new standard educational setup. This would greatly assist teachers in focusing on the fundamental abilities that students must develop in order to optimize the completeness of academic learning outcomes.

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## Appendix A Raw Data

Table 1. Raw Data of Full Transcripts of the Interview

Participant 1	<p>Public schools follow specific curriculum guides as to the achievement of the learning competencies for each subject. In teaching English language and literature competencies, we contextualize and localize the materials to quickly grasp the idea and relate themselves to the content itself. For the methods, once in a while, we try to apply differentiated instructions and activities to adapt to students' diversity and learning styles. Because sometimes, it would take much of the time always to give various activities in one setting. More so, with the use of technology and its educational applications, we can attain the learning competencies for the students. Lastly, the assessments are formative and summative. As for the constructive, we assess through their performances during participation and presentation of the materials. We have the culminating activities for the quarterly outputs that include speech choir, chamber theater, one-act play, and a full-length play.</p> <p>However, those were the usual things during face-to-face learning. Nowadays, those activities could not all be possibly realized since we adapt the Modular Distance Learning-Print (MDL-P) where ready-made Self Learning Materials (SLM) are provided by the division office trying to achieve the given Most Essential Learning Competencies (MELC).</p>
Participant 2	<p>Instructional programs that are used to incorporate the use of English language and literature can be the bilingual instructional and multilingual program which is used in classrooms esp in the Philippines where we have our native language. The delivery is done through native language and English language. The challenge here is that the teacher must be proficient in both. In other ways, in literature, this can also be used when creating original compositions (for example, in the SHS course subject - Creative Writing). Learners can use or incorporate two languages.</p>
Participant 3	<p>In our school, we utilized the Outcomes Based Education approach in teaching English language subjects. For instance, during assessments, instead of the usual paper and pencil tests, we design activities and or outputs where students can demonstrate the skills that they have gained from the course through product exhibitions and or simulated real-life activities such as theater production or writing and publishing poems/short stories.</p>
Participant 4	<p>Our institution utilized communicative language teaching to strengthen the language competence of our students. The CLT is based on the concept that learning a language successfully comes through communicating real meaning. So, when our learners are involved in real communication, they will use their natural language acquisition strategies, which will allow them to learn to use the language. Hence, communicative language speaking is good in enhancing the communicative ability of our students.</p>
Participant 5	<p>As a professional educator whose knowledge is beyond the profession, I make sure that the teaching-learning process is in its optimum case. In view</p>

of English literature teaching, several methods and approaches used are Microlearning, OBE, Spaced Repetition, flipped classroom, Interactivity, gamification, leaderboards, peer Learning, Mobile Learning, and many more. These instructional programs create exceptional planning methods to capture and succeed in the delivery of the learning objectives and goals.

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Participant 6

The instructional programs that are used in our institution are “Learning Continuity Framework” by Dayagbil et al. (2020) and migration of Face-to-Face Instruction to Flexible Learning. As far as the teaching of English language and literature is concerned, these programs did not only emphasize a remote resolution for teaching and learning design but also focused on other areas such as embracing technology/ infrastructure upgrading, recalibrating the curriculum, and capacitating the faculty. These are just a few of the university's initiatives to address the academic, socio-economic, health, and other challenges encountered per se amidst the threats of the Covid-19 pandemic.

The "Learning Continuity Framework" underwent four significant stages (situational analysis, process, output, and outcome) to arrive at a university-wide work that will instigate solutions to the needs and challenges that are pre-conceived, experienced, and post-anticipated—starting from institutional parameters that were analyzed based on the university's situation on teaching, learning, curriculum, assessment; student engagement; technology and infrastructure; research; extension, administration policy, and development and support. This set of situations were critically examined using the scenario building by Polczynski (2009), which involved: probable, best, and worst scenarios. More so, critical problems and challenges for each of the parameters can extract emerging themes in the new normal that provide a resilient, safe, flexible, and inclusive quality education.

As to how Flexible Learning Design was crafted, the off-classes were classified into wired and non-wired. The wired set-up consists of synchronous, asynchronous, and collaborative online learning, whereas the non-wired involved correspondence, project-based, and modular learning. Both categories are available to whichever is available to cater to the students' needs. This program is also expected to achieve a flexible, safe, inclusive, and quality-driven education. The English language and literature teaching fall under the first five aforementioned institutional parameters in the learning continuity framework. These are also observed in both wired and non-wired instruction. Aligning the protocols in this framework and flexible learning design provided an avenue for teachers to showcase trending instructional strategies in the new normal such as virtual lectures, creation of teacher-made instructional videos in English, providing of asynchronous activities through google classrooms or other educational platforms of their choice, and teacher-made modules. The delivery of the lessons and assessment procedures vary in the learners' learning category during the pandemic. Though there are ongoing and new challenges, these programs also continue to be enhanced and developed until the university's ultimate goal is achieved.

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