

# Lived Experiences of Nursing Students on Distance Learning in the New Normal Towards Development of Learning Policy

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## ABSTRACT

Academic performance is an essential component of the constellation of factors that determine student success. It also plays a vital role in education, primarily as a concrete tool for evaluating the learning process of a student. Psychologists and researchers have utilized a variety of personality, attitude, cognitive style, and ability assessments to determine how students differ in processing, retaining, and retrieving learning information. Academic success is dependent on a positive learning experience. To achieve their learning goals, students regularly engage in activities such as reading, taking notes, and leading study groups. It can be categorized as either effective or ineffective based on the extent to which it assists the students. Thus, study habits provide dedicated and uninterrupted time for the pursuit of knowledge [1]. This determines the academic success of a student.

Among the most important criteria for evaluating academic performance are study habits and attitudes. Good study habits are important in the lives of students [2]. They concluded that each student's success or failure is contingent on their study habits. Additionally, their success is contingent upon their skill, intelligence, and effort. There is a significant positive correlation between the students' good study habits, including homework completion, class participation, time management, concentration, and effort, and their academic performance [3].

Online instruction, correspondence courses, television, and the multimedia package format are all viable methods of education. Frequently, students enrolled in distance education programs face unforeseen increases in responsibilities and physiological, emotional, psychological, and social concerns.

Because they lack the support of an immediate peer group, an instructor, or experience with the technology used to supply distance learning materials, online learning students, particularly novices, may find it difficult to comprehend the requirements of university study. According to surveys, individuals who are doubtful of their learning capacity choose to memorize information to finish projects and pass tests now that distant learning and remote teaching have become the standard. Students often have poor academic achievement due to their inability to comprehend the topic.

Additionally, study habits add to the efficacy of this distant learning. To design a learning policy, the researchers propose determining the study habits of student nurses to reflect the lived experiences of PHINMA University of Pangasinan Nursing students in distant learning under the new norm. By doing so, we may develop a more effective plan, identify the students' study habits that influence their academic performance, and design activities that assist them to become more academically prepared.

**Keywords:** Distance Learning, Covid-19, Learning Policy, Challenges, Grieving

## INTRODUCTION

Academic performance is a crucial component of the constellation of factors that determine student success. It also plays an essential part in education, primarily as a concrete instrument for evaluating a student's learning process. Psychologists and researchers have used a variety of personality, attitudinal, cognitive style, and ability measurements to understand how students differ in processing, retaining, and retrieving learning information. Academic success relies on a positive learning environment. To attain their learning goals, students routinely participate in activities such as reading, taking notes, and leading study groups. It may be categorized as either effective or unsuccessful depending on the extent to which it assists the students. Thus, in the pursuit of knowledge, dedication, and time free from distraction is essential [1]. This influences the academic achievement of a students.

Among the most important factors for judging academic success are study habits and attitudes. They determined that each student's success or failure is contingent on their study habits. Additionally, their success is contingent upon their skill, intellect, and effort. There is a significant positive correlation between students' academic success to excellent study habits, including homework completion, class participation, time management, concentration, and effort [3].

In distance education, the educators and learners are physically apart from each other. Distance learning education for nursing students possess advantages and difficulties not only for students but also to educators. Distance E-Learning is defined as using computer technology to deliver training, including technology-supported learning either online, offline, or both. [4]. Online training, correspondence courses, television, and multimedia package formats are all viable methods of instruction. Frequently, students participating in remote education programs

face unforeseen increases in obligations and physiological, emotional, psychological, and social issues. Because they lack the support of an immediate peer group, an instructor, or familiarity with the technology used to provide distance learning materials, online learning students, especially beginners, may struggle to discern the needs of university study. With this new normal that distance learning or remote teaching is being performed, reports that people who are unsure about their learning capacities prefer to focus on memorizing data to complete projects and write exams. As a result of their lack of comprehension of the materials, students tend to have bad academic performance.

Moreover, study habits contribute to the effectiveness of this remote learning. Hence, the researchers are proposing to determine these study habits of student nurses specifically to describe the lived experiences of PHINMA University of Pangasinan nursing students in distance learning in the new normal towards developing a learning policy. By this, we may devise a better strategy, be aware of the study habits that affect their academic performance and create activities that encourage students to become more academically prepared.

### Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study is to describe the lived experiences of nursing students on distance learning in the new normal. It aims to develop a learning policy during this setup. We conducted a study that can benefit every student experiencing work at home during this time. This study can be used as a reference for students on how they will effectively study or learn at home and for those not attending physical classes and how to approach them properly. Furthermore, the result of the study will help determine problems and challenges encountered in distance learning and come up with recommendations and suggestions to address these problems and challenges.

**Conceptual Framework  
Input Process Output**

In this framework, the input-process-output approach was used to define information structure, the flow of data, and the study's outcome. This method demonstrated the study's relevance, which focused on the study habits of students enrolled in distance learning and their academic achievements. The research study was done at the University of Northern Philippines. The research procedure included data collection and data gathering through semi-guided questionnaires for participants to explain their study habits in distance learning. Giorgi's method was used as an analysis method to help analyze and evaluate the data that is gathered and to describe their experiences with distance learning.

The input process output is designed for programming and system analysis, but it can also be used in other fields to describe how input is transformed into output. For instance, online learning was used during the surge of Covid19 as a substitute for traditional face-to-face education. The input process output can be used to monitor the education system and processes through online and offline observation and documentation of students' competence and performance using this process [5].

1. Input – Acceptability of the process and impact of study habits among students, teacher experience, support of parents and academe to online learning, etc.
2. Process – Online education, software, distance learning, chat, email, and other technology-based learning strategies where learning materials are sent electronically.
3. Output – Effect on the competence of teachers and students etc. The output consists of the findings, themes, implications, and recommendations for future studies.

**Moore's Theory of Transactional Distance**

Although this theory was developed in 1997, it is very relative to online learning, where the relationship between learner/students and teachers is quantified based on the physical distance with technology. According to Moore, the more dialogue or communication takes place even online, the more it can increase learners' and teachers' relationships to reduce the issue of distance. For instance, if online materials, tools, communication, etc., are highly structured, the transaction is higher. Still, if the communication structure is low, it is expected to have a lower transaction or learning opportunity.

Another factor is the autonomy of the learner. For instance, using more communication technology and the excellent relationship between teachers and students online increase students' learning experience, study habits, and autonomy to have an excellent transactional relationship and learn more. In distance learning, the problem on distance can be addressed using complete integration of computers into learning [6]. The most essential variables of distant learning are as follows:

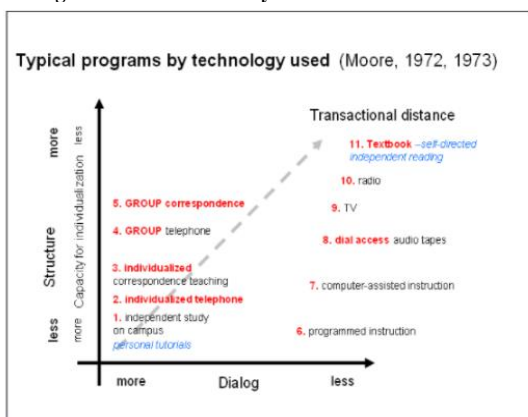
1. Dialogue or communication between students and teacher
2. Structured channels of communication such as the internet, computer-assisted instruction, easy-to-understand programs, software, and education program. There are also support structures such as TV, radio, textbook etc.
3. Students' autonomy for independent learning, option, and self-direction, etc., can improve their study habits to learn online and on their own.

Figure 1: Input Process Output

INPUT	PROCESS	OUTPUT
Study habits of students in distance learning and its effect on their academic achievement.	Qualitative Study – Descriptive Phenomenology Purposive sampling Semi-structured questionnaire Interview online Analysis method Georgi's method and open coding.	Themes, Implication Recommendation

The focus of qualitative research is the interpretation of people's views of occurrences. Under distant learning, a descriptive phenomenology is utilized to explore and explain students' study habits and academic achievement. Study habits relate to a student's way of studying, which may be structured, effective, or ineffective. It suggests that effective study habits lead to academic success, while ineffective study habits lead to academic failure. Good students are formed through the consistent and deliberate practice of good study habits, which have no substitute. Many students struggle in school not due to a lack of intelligence, but due to poor study habits. When given the opportunity, a student's propensity to learn methodically and efficiently is a study habit. There is a correlation between study habits and academic success that shows reading and note-taking habits, concentration habits, and exam preparation were significantly related to academic success [7]. As a result, the researchers employed descriptive phenomenology to comprehend their distance learning study habits. This study's findings provided information on students' study habits in distance education and their effects on academic performance.

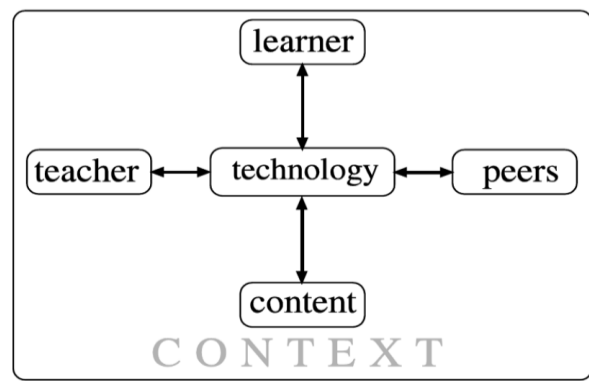
Figure 2: Moore's Theory of Transactional Distance



By looking at figure 2 above, it is easy to visualize that the more communication and interaction online between the teacher and

students such as allowing independent study, phone calls, correspondence, group calls or chat, teleconferencing, etc. the more they could reduce the issue of distance. Second, the more integrated structures they can use, the more opportunity to transact between students and teachers such as available programs, computer-assisted learning, books, television, radio, and other sources. Finally, the more autonomy students have the greater opportunity to improve their study habits.

Figure 3 Important Interaction in Distance learning



This is also related to Moore's Theory of Transactional Distance, where the four types of interaction can be found in online learning. First is the learner-content, another is the learner-teacher, learner-learner, and finally the learner interface, represented by the figure below [8].

1. The teacher must reach out to learners using technology to improve students' relationships and study habits.
2. Using technology, teachers can also reach out to their co-teachers, parents, academe, principal, etc.
3. Make sure that the selection of software and the content is user-friendly and easy to read and understand to improve students' study habits.
4. Ensure that the interface of the technology used is easy to learn to encourage the student to improve their learning habit.

### **Statement of the Problem**

This study aimed to describe students' learning experiences with the end in mind in developing a learning policy. Specifically, it sought to answer the following questions:

1. What are students' learning experiences in distance learning in the new normal?
2. What are the problems and challenges encountered by the participants in distance learning?
3. What recommendations and suggestions of the participants to address the problems and challenges?
4. What learning policy can be developed to enhance the students' learning experiences?

## **METHODOLOGY**

### ***Research Design***

In this research, the researchers utilized descriptive phenomenology and qualitative design to determine the lived experiences of nursing students on distance learning in the new normal of developing a learning policy. Descriptive phenomenology was used because it is a powerful way to understand subjective experience and to gain insights into people's actions and motivations, cutting through long-held assumptions and challenging conventional wisdom. It is also focused on studying the phenomena that have impacted an individual.

In addition, a phenomenology is an approach to research that seeks to describe the essence of a phenomenon by exploring it from the perspective of those who have experienced it. The goal of phenomenology is to describe the meaning of this experience—both in terms of “what” was experienced and “how” it was experienced [9]. While Qualitative Research is investigative research, in general, this method was used to understand people's perspectives, views, and perceptions. It offers visions of different problems and helps develop concepts or theories for potential quantitative research.

With analysis to look deeper into problems, the qualitative approach helps to discover new thoughts and individual views. This method uses various kinds of unstructured or semi-structured practices for data collection, such as group discussions, personal interviews, diary and journal exercises, and participation of others [10]. As a result, the researchers chose descriptive and qualitative, as we will describe the lived experiences of nursing students on distance learning in the new normal.

### **The Rationale for Research Approach**

Qualitative research focuses on the interpretation of the perceptions of people towards certain phenomena. Descriptive phenomenology was used to investigate and describe students' study habits and academic performance under distance learning. Study habits refer to a student's method of studying, which might be organized, efficient, or inefficient. It indicates that good study habits lead to academic accomplishment whereas ineffective study habits result in academic failure [11]. Good students are honed through consistent and purposeful practice of good study habits [12].

Many students struggle in school, not because they lack talent, but because they lack suitable study habits. A study habit is a student's proclivity to learn methodically and effectively when given the opportunity [13]. In addition, significant correlation between study habits and academic achievement. It was also discovered that reading and note-taking habits, concentration habits, and exam preparation significantly correlated with academic achievement [7]. As a result, we will use descriptive phenomenology to determine their lived experiences in distant learning. The results of this study provide information regarding students' problems and challenges encountered in distance learning and to propose a learning enhancement policy.

### **The Researchers**

The study focused on the Lived Experiences of Nursing Students on Distance Learning in the New Normal towards the Development of a Learning Policy. The researchers focused on this topic because the researchers also have distance learning. The researchers encountered difficulties and challenges throughout this distance learning, which has been seen in various features and scenarios. The instruments will gather information or relevant data that the researchers will utilize to interpret and to formulate recommendations. This research serves as a milestone for the researchers to improve our leadership, independence, and competency.

### **Selection of the Study Participants**

The researchers gathered information from 3rd year nursing students who are currently enrolled at PHINMA University of Pangasinan's main campus, this academic year 2021- 2022. Students from the level 3 CAHS Department were elected based on the researcher's judgment and by using the purposive sampling technique. Purposive Sampling was used to fit a systematic approach because the total population is large. A non-random strategy was advantageous in gathering high-quality information depending on their attributes.

### **Data Instrumentation and Organization of Data**

In this study, researchers conducted an interview utilizing an online platform such as Google Meet or Zoom Meet. In a semi-structured interview, the interviewer did not precisely adhere to a predefined set of questions. Instead of a straight question-and-response approach, the interviewer offered more open-ended questions, allowing for a debate with the interviewee. This may delve deeply into the participants' ideas, feelings, views, and experiences with distance learning. To increase the validity and reliability of the

data, the researchers collected data through an interview in audio recorded format with the participant's permission. Additionally, the data was transcribed using Giorgi's analytical approach. After an interview, all the data gathered, and the number of participants interviewed is classified and analyzed.

### **Sampling Method**

In this study, the researchers utilized purposive Sampling to select participants from Third year nursing students at PHINMA University of Pangasinan. The researchers collected information from individuals. There was no new information or data after the seventh participant. As a result, the collected data had achieved saturation. The researchers proceeded to collect data up to the tenth participant to check that the collected data had achieved the data saturation point. And qualitative research allows us to explore concepts, especially experiences in detail. Purposive sampling, also known as subjective sampling, is a non-probability sampling technique where the researchers rely on their discretion to choose variables for the sample population. It helps the researchers filter out irrelevant responses that do not fit into the context of the study.

### **Data Gathering/ Collection**

The researchers sought the approval of the Review and Ethics Committee of St. Paul University Philippines and permission from the Dean of the CAHS department to conduct the study. After the Dean of CAHS approved THE study, the researchers made a letter of consent for the participants to ensure that no coercion occurs, and to inform them of our motives in conducting an interview. The selected participants are Third-year nursing students enrolled at PHINMA University of Pangasinan. The interview will focus on their experiences as nursing students on distance learning in the new normal. Third-year nursing students are chosen because they have ample

experience in attending distance learning for almost two years. In choosing our participants, the researchers selected those Third-year nursing students whom they think will provide the best information needed. Researchers will use online video platforms like Zoom and Google Meet to interview to avoid going out and for the convenience of both the participants and the researchers.

Researchers used interview guides and descriptive phenomenology to collect the needed data and transcribed all the interviews in a verbatim manner. The verbatim transcripts of our interview will be analyzed using Giorgi's phenomenological method. Giorgi's analysis method aims to uncover the meaning of a phenomenon as experienced by a human by identifying essential themes. This includes:  
**Step 1-** Assume the phenomenological attitude. This simply means to conduct research means researchers seek answers to the problem they are digging in. The first step is to assume the factors related to the study we decided to come up with.

**Step 2-** Read the entire written account for a sense of the whole. When the research is in progress, the researchers need to read or search for any reliable sources that may help our study and support them initially.

**Step 3-** Delineate meaning units. After searching for dependable sources, the researchers can now apply comparison and contrast to see possible data we can use in the research directly.

**Step 4-** Transform the meaning units into psychologically sensitive statements of their lived meanings. The gathered data should come up with the participants' responses and the assumed data of the researchers accurately.

**Step 5-** Synthesize a general psychological structure of the experience-based data. The researchers will now analyze and interpret the data gathered through reliable resources and show the results to give conclusions.

### **Delimitation**

This study is only for all 3rd year nursing students currently enrolled at PHINMA University of Pangasinan and not from other year levels and schools.

### **Limitation**

The study is only limited to Third-year nursing students of PHINMA University of Pangasinan to carefully choose those who will be taking part in our interview. Rapport was established to ensure that the participants can express their feelings and experiences relevant to our study. The interview was conducted virtually or through online platforms like zoom or google meet to avoid personal contact due to the current pandemic. participant's availability was also considered before interviewing to assure that their studies would not be disrupted and to guarantee that they would have a strong connection.

### **Data Analysis**

The information gathered will be reviewed, appraised, and transcribed using Giorgi's data analysis technique. Giorgi's style of analysis seeks to reveal the meaning of a phenomenon as perceived by a person by identifying key themes or concepts. This approach helps in the classification of a structure into a detailed description and a broad description. With this technique, the researchers will be able to determine and characterize the significance of the phenomena through essential themes and grasp their learning experience in distance learning. The researchers will also classify the participants and organize them into groups depending on their topics. All the information that will be gathered remains anonymous and confidential to protect all the persons' privacy and build trust and rapport with study participants. By identifying key themes, we will incorporate the outcome into thoroughly explaining the topic.

### **Scope/ Ethical Consideration/ Delimitation and Limitation of the Study**

The purpose of this research is to describe the lived experiences of nursing students in distance learning in the new normal of the development of a learning policy. This research was conducted during the 2<sup>nd</sup> semester of A.Y. 2021-2022. Respondents will be chosen using purposive sampling. They will be the 3<sup>rd</sup> year nursing students currently enrolled in PHINMA University of Pangasinan main campus, Arellano Street, Dagupan City, A.Y 2021-2022.

**Trustworthiness** - Despite the widely defined term trustworthiness, the researchers may still be positive about it since it enables investigators to explain the virtues of qualitative terms outside the parameters generally used in other aspects of research. On the other hand, Oxford Learner's Dictionary defined trustworthiness as the quality of being good, honest, and sincere and that people can rely on it. As simple, it is dependable.

Trustworthiness is confidence in data, interpretation, and methods used to ensure the quality of the study. These definitive words from various reliable sources have come up with the idea for the researchers to be used to rely on their research because this is a way in which they can easily analyze, interpret, and show reliable data. The researchers in this study will use the five factors to establish trustworthiness, which are: 1) credibility 2) transferability 3) dependability 4) conformability 5) authenticity.

**Credibility** – By its simple definition, credibility refers to the extent to which a research account is believable and appropriate, with reference to the level of agreement between participants and the researcher. Credibility entails confidence in the truth of the study with its findings which are the most important criterion according to Pilot and Beck in their study in the year 2014. On the other

hand, credibility answers “how confident the qualitative researchers are in the truth of the study’s findings”. This also rages down with the question “how do you know that your findings are true and accurate?” Credibility conversely will help the researchers analyze whether their research study is to be confident about or needs improvement and vague. Hence, this will help them to seek the truth that can help them easily to show real effects on the academic performance of learners in distance education.

**Transferability** – In the research’s definitive words, the transferability of a research finding is the extent to which it can be applied in other contexts and studies. It is thus- equivalent to or a replacement for the term’s generalizability and external validity. How the qualitative researchers demonstrate that the research study findings apply to other contexts is called transferability. On the other hand, “other contexts” can be the same or similar in situations, populations, or phenomena. It can be used by the researchers to show that the study can be applied in other related studies also. This study’s result will include a detailed analysis of the variables to allow readers to assess the study’s applicability. The reader will also be provided with the respondent’s descriptive features so that they may analyze the findings and their applicability in their context.

**Dependability** – Every research study requires the characteristic of being reliable. Reliability is obtaining the same results when repeating the exercise. To emphasize this research because it is in qualitative form, dependability is a need. Dependability is the description of changes that occur during the span of the research period and understanding of how such changes affect the study. For instance, if a person wanted to replicate your study, they should have enough information from your



research report to do so and have similar findings as your study shows.

**Conformability** – In a research definitive form, conformability is the extent to which others corroborate with the research findings. In other words, the findings are based on the participants' responses and are not potentially biased. To establish conformability, the researchers need to recheck every finding, to highlight every step of data analysis that will be made to provide rationale. This will help the researchers see that the findings are accurate with the participant's responses. The researchers recorded the entire research process, including a detailed summary of the settings to provide enough evidence to the people, and hold all reported interviews and transcribed notes for an audit trail to provide clear evidence to people who will check our study. These will be made available to confirm the research outcome.

**Authenticity** – Authenticity in research definitive words implies that the conduct of evaluation of research is genuine and credible and the research is worthy and can contribute to the field. Data is an integral part of every study in which it needs to have authenticity, which means it is provable and has not been corrupted after its creation.

**Protection of Rights** – It is very important to know the key aspects of protecting individuals in participating in research making. This is to assure them regarding how their personal information will be protected. This may include the protection of privacy for the participants, which researchers should keep as confidential and/or allow participants to remain anonymous if they say so. Human rights law lays down rights (and sometimes duties) for individuals, and corresponding obligations – both positive and negative (that is, things to do and things not to do) to promote and protect human rights and

fundamental freedoms of individuals or groups.

Researchers must ensure that those taking part in research will not be in distress. We must protect them from physical and mental harm. This means we must not embarrass, frighten, offend, or harm participants. The following descriptions clarify the differences between these frequently misunderstood concepts and provide suggestions for how researchers might further protect study participants.

**Right to be Free from Physical and Psychological harm-** During the data collection process, qualitative research methods was used without judgment and in the most honest framework possible, without damaging, insulting, or demeaning any of the participants. The guide questions will be designed to suspend any prior assumptions that might influence the study's results. The methods that will be used in data gathering are with an assurance of getting information without implying physical harm or obligating them to participate.

**The Right to Disclosure** – Before the interview and data gathering, participants was provided guarantees regarding how and where their lecturers would be working. The study's findings will also be provided to the participants to verify and correct their responses.

**The Right to Justice** – The study's advantages and disadvantages was experienced by all the study's participants. Consistent and fair treatment was given to each participant. Researchers will make sure that the responses given by the participants will be used in the right manner and with full confidentiality.

**The Right to Self-incrimination** – The participants in the study was given a heads-up about the study objective, effects, and threats. Participants will be requested to partake in the

study of their personal choice, with the option to depart if they feel the interview is detrimental to them. The researcher will assure every participant in this study that the rights mentioned above will be respected and that everyone is free and entitled to their freedom and choice. They will keep an open mind and open to constructive criticisms regarding the research study.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

From the process analyses of the participants' verbalizations of their experiences on distant learning in the new normal, five themes have been identified: (1) challenges encountered in flexible learning including difficulties of students caused by new mode of learning and interference due to environmental effect; (2) inefficient internet connectivity including the occurrence of poor web connectivity and distractions on flexible learning; (3) indifference towards online learning including unsatisfactory performance and insufficient knowledge; (4) discerned solutions to learning difficulties including positive mindset and resolving technological challenges; and (5) motivation to embrace distance learning including personal inducement and reward-motivated behavior.

For safe nursing practice, nursing education was designed to provide essential skills and knowledge that train student nurses to provide physical care to patients and prepare them to collaborate with other professionals to hasten patient recovery. Nursing education help students in acquiring knowledge and proficiency to become competent nurses in the future. However, with the pandemic in the picture, Higher Education Institutions had to formulate a program that assists students in obtaining necessary competencies while ensuring their safety on the dreaded effects of Covid-19 on health. In addition, on the initial phases of this pandemic, governments worldwide imposed restrictions in travel and movement of people to control the spread of

the disease. Nevertheless, nursing education must continue to be able to augment the growing problem of nursing staff shortage amid the pandemic.

### ***Theme#1: Challenges Encountered in Flexible Learning***

In accordance with the restriction protocols to control the spread of the deadly virus, various online learning modalities were implemented to bridge the gap and continue the delivery of instruction. As a result, Higher Education Institutions have been pushed to try out e-learning because COVID-19 regulations prohibit traditional classroom-based learning. E-learning required both teachers and students to sit in front of their digital screens to participate in the teaching and learning process. Many participants reported difficulties related to distance learning, including technological challenges, psychological obstacles, financial hardships, unavailability of learning materials, and teaching strategies in the new normal. These issues, when not addressed properly, cause stress and anxiety to these students. Due to the novelty of this learning style for the participants, they perceive it as daunting and stressful.

#### ***Subtheme A: Difficulties of students caused by the new mode of Learning***

Participants believe that Covid-19 brought distress to them especially when it comes to learning since colleges and universities introduced the new mode of learning which has proven difficult and posed numerous challenges. In addition, anxiety arises when students are asked to perform tasks that are new to them, especially with the use of a learning modality like never before. Anxiety towards this new mode of learning makes learning difficult for the students. Students still prefer the traditional method of teaching inside the classroom. One participant narrated;

*P10: “The illness COVID-19 arrived in the country in March 2019. Work, study, and other activities have ceased since then. But specifically, how did I find learning the module? First and foremost, I’m scared since this is my first time studying at home, and I’m afraid I won’t be able to handle it. Second, both my parents and I had difficulty answering the activities since it’s my first time and I am only a first year in college that time”*

Learning amid the pandemic is a challenging task every student must overcome. Due to the huge stress that this pandemic imposes, students were situated under an enormous burden by balancing safety and learning. Students on online teaching and learning amid the pandemic have experienced moderate to higher stress [14]. Specifically, nursing students are living with stress and anxiety, which is attributed to insufficient knowledge, instructor, and peer support [15].

Learning becomes more complicated when students are not provided with appropriate learning materials. Distance learning made it difficult for students to access learning materials as these materials are only available in the university. Due to restrictions, students are confined to their homes to study. Students see the unavailability of learning materials as a barrier to their studies, limiting them from grasping the lessons easily. The students need to improvise to be able to cope up with their lessons.

Moreover, some students came from low-income families with limited resources do not have access to a laptop or desktop computer. They did not even have smartphones at the time. As a result, they had to rely on their parents’ or relatives’ smartphones to access the internet. One participant narrated;

*P2: “It is difficult for me because the resources we need in our duty are not always available*

*here in our home. And it is also difficult to study by ourselves without direct teaching and communication between our teachers”*

The role of nurse educators is undeniable in facilitating distance learning. It is believed that when mentors normalize the students’ experiences, provide emotional support to meet their needs, and provide a relaxed, safe, and supportive environment, this will reduce their stress [16]. In addition, several schools of nursing lack essential learning materials to deal with the challenges of teaching fully online and implementing virtual simulations and in cases where the resources are present, they still have some limitations [17].

The struggle with distance learning is also amplified when students feel helpless especially when they cannot understand the lessons. Unlike in classroom learning, students in distance learning are asked to become more independent by studying and understanding the lessons on their own. A participant exclaimed;

*P3: “For me, I would describe it as difficult. Because most of the time it pushes you to really focus and to learn some of the concept and topics on your own effort”*

Distance learning makes students more independent and responsible for their studies. It may be seen as unfavorable based on the response on the participants, the transition to distance learning prompted many students to enhance their resourcefulness and creativity. Students became self-directed, formed independent study groups, and practiced nursing skills on items available in their learning [18]. In addition, students reported their responsibility for their studies had increased as a positive effect of the transition from face-to-face learning to distance learning [19]. Participants verbalized their preference for face-to-face instructions over virtual learning. The advantage of having face-to-face

instructions is that nursing students interact, study, and work on group projects and share notes. Students also meet with a professor after class [18].

### ***Subtheme B: Interference due to Environmental Effect***

Due to the restrictions brought by the Covid-19 pandemic, classroom learning was initially prohibited to control and prevent the spread of the disease. The use of technology became the norm in facilitating teaching and learning. Using smartphones, tablets, and laptops became the tool that aided the students in learning their lessons at the corners of their homes.

Participants are living on the countryside. Thus, securing a stable internet connection is very challenging. This untoward experience dramatically affects the way they learn and enjoy distance learning. In addition, educators who experience technical difficulties during online discussions significantly affect the students' learning experience. Faculty members in Sri Lanka have had technical issues with e-learning since the beginning since they are unfamiliar with online teaching. Moreover, online learning is less effective due to a lack of facilities and infrastructure and a lack of technology education readiness. One participant discussed;

*P3: "As a student, I am always encountering weak connectivity, which has a negative impact on my academic efforts. It sometimes makes me mad since I live near the sea, and we all know how bad the internet connection is there. I always disconnect during a google meet and am unable to focus on the lesson that our teacher is discussing"*

The present-day method of instruction also depends on the stability of the internet connection. Participants believe that a fast and reliable internet connection is necessary for them to learn and be focused on their lessons

online. A lack of stable internet access can significantly affect students' academic performance as they cannot communicate with teachers or classmates, conduct independent research, or seek online homework assistance [20].

And because of the limitations of distance learning, participants could not fully understand the lessons being taught to them. As a result, they cannot fully maximize the learning experience compared to the traditional mode of learning. Participants believed that although distance learning is a welcome addition to the way they study, they still felt that lessons are still easier to understand if the method of instruction is face-to-face. A participant narrated;

*P4: "I really couldn't focus on learning, and I usually don't understand some of the topic or a concept if it wasn't explained properly since it is distance modality learning. I think I would be able to grasp the whole lesson if it was taught and explained thoroughly and if it's face to face"*

Participants in a specific study agreed that distance learning strategies might not be able to compete with face-to-face teaching in terms of achieving the intended learning outcomes. They believed that theoretical teaching is only a part of clinical training. At the same time, students still need to become physically present to perform a certain nursing procedure in front of their instructors to develop and master a particular nursing skill [21]. Students from all over the world will learn new skills that will lead to a lifetime of learning.

Furthermore, participants are faced with physical distractions during distance learning. Environmental factors such as noise play an essential role in effective learning. Distractions severely affect the participants' learning experience thus leaving an impression that distance learning is difficult and unenjoyable. A participant discussed;

*P8: “As a student nurse, online learning is hard, especially regarding the skills we need to learn. We struggle and cannot focus in finding patients and in doing our demonstration because of the noise outside and finding equipment and many more experiences that we overcome, but at the end of the day we always find a way to overcome difficulties.”*

Environmental factors that affect students’ academic performance must be identified to assist them in transitioning from face-to-face learning to distance learning. Students’ concentration is affected by noises from vehicles, animals, neighbors, family members, and devices. This also interferes communication to their teachers and classmates. Also, research shows that reduced memory, motivation, and reading ability have detrimental effects on children’s academic performance [22].

### **Theme#2: Inefficient Internet Connectivity**

A fast and reliable internet connection is required for online teaching and learning. As a result, transitioning from traditional face-to-face learning to online learning necessitated students and teachers to remain online. Participants verbalized difficulties in securing a stable internet connection. This issue greatly affected their experience on distance learning. In addition, adequate support from school administrators for teachers and students is critical to successful and effective online teaching and learning [23].

Moreover, poor internet access is the most significant barrier to online learning for faculty and students [24]. In a similar vein, challenges that could hinder faculty and students’ experience with flexible learning, based on a survey on the readiness of faculty and students at a certain university in the Philippines for online learning and a series of consultations and meetings among various internal stakeholders: limited access to a stable internet connection, lack of suitable gadget or device,

and inadequate learning. In addition, technological support and infrastructure availability significantly impact the effectiveness of online teaching-learning [25].

### **Subtheme A: Occurrence of Poor Web Connectivity**

Most participants expressed negativity about their current situation, especially in their area where poor internet connection occurred. The following accounts show difficulties among individuals. One participant narrated;

*P1: “We had our return demonstrations through google meet and had our discussions through Facebook live streaming, google meet, and zoom meeting and during those discussions and demonstrations, I experienced some problems when it comes to receiving timely feedback and sometimes not receiving clear audio from my teachers because of poor signal”*

Accessibility problems are often an issue that participants experience associated with distance learning. Slow internet connection has always been an issue regarding distance learning, and it affects how the students learn their lessons. A stable internet connection is vital in distance learning as it serves as a bloodline that connects instructors to their students. A stable internet connection allows students to access their lessons and homework and makes communication with their instructors and other students possible. Without a stable internet connection, learning will not take place. A slow internet connection makes the students lose their focus on their lessons and eventually may not be able to participate in class activities. A participant narrated;

*P2: “As a student, I always encounter weak connectivity, which hurts my academic efforts. It sometimes makes me mad since I live near the sea, and we all know how bad the internet*

*connection is there. I always disconnect during a google meet and am unable to focus on the lesson that our teacher is discussing”*

Though distance learning cannot replace face-to-face learning in providing instructions to students, it can augment the limitations that face-to-face learning cannot fully provide. However, participants still prefer face-to-face learning. They perceive it as the best method for learning as they can fully grasp their lessons as compared to distance learning due to issues related to internet connectivity. One participant verbalized;

*P3: “I really couldn’t focus on learning. I usually don’t understand some of the topics or concepts if it wasn’t explained properly since its distance modality learning and because of poor internet connection. I think I would be able to grasp the whole lesson if it was taught and explained thoroughly and if it’s face to face.”*

Distance learning has also affected how their professors teach the lessons for the participants. They perceived that the implementation of distance learning burdened them with numerous course requirements, and some even verbalized that their professors skipped teaching altogether. One participant admitted;

*P6: “For me there are a lot of experiences that I’ve encounter and some of it are the poor connection, not teaching instructors and overload activities”*

Based on this response from the participants, it can be interpreted that educators also play an important role in the delivery of lessons to their students and in facilitating distance learning in general. Professors also played a role in superficial learning through lack of professor’s supervision of the learning process and not performing developmental evaluation during

the semester to determine the level of learning; these factors deterred students from deep learning [26].

Glitches in technology made distance learning difficult for the participants. This issue affects the way they participate in learning activities. It causes distraction and negative experiences towards distance learning. One participant narrated;

*P9: “My most memorable experience was receiving a zero score when I lost my internet connection during one of my quizzes. My main issue is a poor internet connection, which has an impact on my demonstration because I am only using a cellphone and can’t always join the meeting”*

### ***Subtheme 2: Distractions on Flexible Learning***

Most participants are easily distracted in the area where they are learning. It can reduce the knowledge they can acquire in new learning mode. Distractions include noise, use of gadgets during online class activity, use of social media, and lack of adequate and appropriate learning materials. One participant explained;

*P2: “As a student, I am always encountering weak connectivity, which has a negative impact on my academic efforts. It sometimes makes me mad since I live near the sea, and we all know how bad the internet connection is there. I always disconnect during a google meet and am unable to focus on the lesson that our teacher is discussing”*

One factor that distracts the participants on distance learning is the absence of learning materials. Due to this, they must improvise and try to produce these learning materials for them to be able to participate in school activities. In addition, the core of nursing education is to learn with real patients in a clinical setting.

Therefore, students need to have related learning activities and facilitating hands-on learning with real patients with the use of distance learning is difficult to achieve. One participant narrated;

*P4: "Being a student nurse on distance learning became challenging, especially since we have RLE wherein we need specific materials, and we need on-ground experience to perform different assessment. It became challenging financially since there are materials, we need that are expensive. In addition, we also experience struggle in learning the lesson since we only have a specific time for a long discussion and cannot focus well on my studies because of the noise coming outside"*

In nursing, it is important to have clinical skills and knowledge to be able to perform nursing care safely and effectively. And to acquire the necessary clinical skills and knowledge, the value to clinical training must be recognized. Students were concerned about missing clinical practices and they thought that it would negatively affect the growth of their professional careers [27].

### **Theme#3: Indifference towards Online Learning**

In online learning, students and teachers were found to be less motivated [28], [29]. They feel fatigued and bored [28] because most of the online learning activities are only in the form of assignments [30] and teachers give excessive assignments such as reading assignments which results in students feeling stressed [28]. Also, long video presentations do not interest students in their online classes [30]. In addition, it is difficult to learn through online learning; thus, learning in this modality is found to be ineffective [29]. Indonesian students also stated that staying focused is difficult for them. They believe online lectures are less effective and that connecting with

lecturers and peers online is difficult [31]. Furthermore, many students stated that they would no longer use e-learning because it had caused them so much frustration [31].

### **Subtheme A: Unsatisfactory Performance**

The academic performance became worrisome to the participants as they learn through digital means. Their answers proved that they are experiencing difficulties in their performance as nursing students. Though distance learning developed students to become creative, resourceful, and independent, it also made them more anxious and stressed. This negative emotion towards distance learning affected the way they study. One participant verbalized;

*P1: "Distance learning gives me some positive actions like being independent and working under pressure. But most often, distance learning gives me these negative vibes like being lonely and stressed. And it affects me mentally, which I think is no longer good for my mental health. And I think that I have poor performance in doing the task given by our instructors."*

To some participants, distance learning becomes disadvantageous on their part as learners. They had a difficult time understanding their lessons and it made them question their knowledge and abilities. Another participant verbalized;

*P3: "My performance became poor. I couldn't recite and participate properly since I really can't grasp the whole lesson. Some of my grades are low or in other words, I couldn't meet the standard I set for myself, and it disappoints me"*

Poor academic performance concerns much of the participants. Poor academic performance is linked to school-related factors such as the availability and perceived quality of learning facilities such as the library, computers, laboratories as well as educational policies implemented by the university. Amid the

pandemic, students perceived distance learning as burdensome and they reported high levels of exhaustion. These factors may negatively impact their academic achievement [32].

### **Subtheme 2: Insufficient Knowledge**

Students admitted that while studying online, they can hardly learn for long periods; they are constantly sleepy and tired, but the lecturer continues to teach and complete their lesson regardless of whether the students listen. As a result, students cannot understand the lessons well after the discussion. Most of the participants experienced this kind of situation. Participants are concerned that distance learning might not be sufficient in terms of having enough knowledge for them to be able to work as full-pledge nurses in the future. One participant explained;

*P4: "Of course, as student nurses, we will soon encounter real-life patients; however, because of distance learning, we can only perform our knowledge about nursing to stuff toys."*

Due to the limitation of this specific mode of learning, participants feel that they are not having the best out of distance learning due to constraints in distance learning and the related learning experiences that they should be having compared to face-to-face learning. Moreover, the anxiety and fear about distance learning that the participants' feel is also aggravated by unfamiliarity in technology and financial hardship. Because the participants were not used to distance learning in the past, adjusting to the new method of learning in the new normal affect how they study and learn. Some of the participants verbalized;

*P5: "It is greatly affecting my performance in subjects because we can't properly execute the procedures because of inadequate paraphernalia and exposure to the clinical learning environment"*

*P6: "As the first batch that experienced this kind of situation, it is hard for us to cope since we are not all the same when it comes to technology, financial and mental capacity. It affects my studies since I need to consider all of this for me to continue my studies as a nursing student"*

The participants' experienced confusion as they receive little in the formation on how to do things during distance learning. The confusion they feel resounds to the wholeness of the distance learning experience as they traverse this schooling endeavor. Another participant narrated;

*P7: "These experiences affect my other subjects because I don't know what to do first and the information given by our instructors during online learning is not enough"*

There are certain limitations on distance learning that affects the students' academic performance. Due to lack of immediate feedback, teachers were unable to assess students' understanding during online lecturing. The students also reported limited attention span and resource intensive nature of online learning as a limitation [33]. These affect their comprehension of learning content and their engagement towards distance learning.

### **Theme#4: Discerned solution to learning difficulties**

Distance learning is indeed a novel method of instruction that causes stress and anxiety to students. As students receive learning instructions via online platforms like never before, participants became worrisome towards distance learning. However, participants saw a silver lining in this endeavor that makes them consider distance learning a method in which they can utilize to learn their lessons at the expense of their own homes.



### **Subtheme A: Positive mindset**

A mind that sees the good can go a long way. An optimistic attitude towards a seemingly problematic situation that students are currently facing can significantly impact their academic performance and how they perceive distance learning. Optimism can lessen stress, make students more creative and prevents them from being depressed and anxious. These participants verbalized;

*P1: "I just always think about why I started and try to come up with a plan to stay motivated by creating an organized schedule for my activities, quizzes, and exams and giving myself a rest to unwind and regain my energy again"*

*P3: "If the reason why I cannot focus is about family problems, I usually take my time to think and reflect or I talk to my friend about it just to relieve some mental baggage"*

*P4: "I have to destress myself through reading watsapp stories, watching Korean drama, and going to places where I can relax"*

Students with better self-regulated learning skills have better academic performance; some students might find it difficult to concentrate, while others might double their efforts to cope with the new environment [34]. Indeed, positive mindset toward distance learning can make one a better student. Positive mindset makes distance learning more enjoyable and an effective addition to teaching and learning. Most of the participants have verbalized that for them to deal with their problems related to distance learning, distractions must be lessened or removed altogether. Distraction from noise, use of gadgets, and social media greatly affect their experience in distant learning. Some participants verbalized;

*P2: "Sometimes, I try to deactivate my social media accounts and talk to my family members about my problems."*

*P3: "For getting easily distracted, I chose to use my laptop and I will let my phone as far as possible from me"*

*P7: "I lessen the use of social media. Also, I always take notes during synchronous meeting to help me recall from what has been taught during meetings and I always read it before I go to bed"*

Students must learn to become responsible in developing and organizing activities of daily living while balancing their academic responsibilities. Students must develop self-regulation, responsibility for and commit to their learning activities, and behaviors characterized by autonomy [35]. Therefore, students must be able to remove distractions that affect study habits, create a schedule that accommodates a balance between studying and fun, and motivates themselves to study harder despite difficulties.

### **Subtheme B: Resolving technological challenges**

Participants often complain about technical problems, including poor internet connection and issues on learning materials like smartphones, tablets, and laptops. These factors significantly affect the distance learning experience of students. Participants learned the concept of self-regulation; in this case, students react to learning difficulties and respond appropriately. Participants found some ways on how to solve these issues. Some participants narrated;

*P7: "For poor internet connection, I go somewhere that has good mobile data signal. I make sure that if we have synchronous meeting, I go to my aunt's house"*

*P8: "Before synchronous meeting, I make sure to charge my phone so that I will be able to participate to online activities"*

*P9: I often ask my aunt to let me connect to their Wi-Fi connection during online classes. In return, I help her do household chores”*

Technological difficulties are serious concerns that need to be addressed. There is a clear divide between students who have stable internet connections and those who do not. The advantage of distance learning is the delivery of lessons without being limited by distance, space, and time. However, for effective online learning to take place, the latest technology must be available to improve the learning process and interactions between teachers, students, and technicians [36]. Students’ learning needs must be met for them to continue their studies and become successful in their professional career path.

#### ***Theme#5: Motivation to embrace distance learning***

Despite all the difficulties and challenges posed by distance learning, all participants are focused on achieving their goals. The participants have a burning desire to become competent nurses someday. They are highly motivated to continue their studies to achieve their dreams in life.

#### ***Subtheme A: Personal inducement***

Participants verbalized their desire to help their family and they can do it if they will do well in their studies. Despite the challenges that distance learning gives, the participants’ willingness and desire to give their family a better future prevails. Several participants have narrated;

*P1: “My family motivates me to pursue and continue what I started. And every time I daydream about being a nurse someday gives me the motivation to study harder and improve myself more holistically”*

*P2: “My parents are my biggest motivation”*

*P3: “the thought of being able to work in the hospital where I can work with different people drives me to continue despite the mode of learning.*

*P7: “I am motivated by my parent’s hard work and money spent on my tuition fee. I want to give them a brighter future”*

*P8: “I dream of becoming a nurse someday. That’s why I study hard for me to be able to reach my dreams”*

Students need to have a sense of purpose in everything that they do. This purpose drives them to study harder and push themselves to the limits. Participants find themselves continuing the struggles of distance learning because of the motivation from their dreams and their families. It is supported in a study wherein it was discovered that a student's intrinsic motivation was a major factor in deciding whether they achieved a passing or failing grade [37].

#### ***Subtheme B: Reward-motivated behavior***

Some participants obtain their motivation through a reward system. They think being a nurse can be a steppingstone towards a better and more comfortable life. They see the end of the dark tunnel as a ray of hope to pursue distance learning despite challenges coming their way. Participants narrated;

*P4:” Our life has been difficult, that’s why I will do everything all it takes to finish my studies. I want to become a nurse and work overseas so that I will be able to experience the things that I haven’t experienced”*

*P5: “My aunt is a nurse, and I want to be with her. She has a comfortable life, she can visit different countries, and is able to buy expensive things.*

## CONCLUSION

As distance learning continues to develop in higher education, the results of this study give institutions and colleges relevant information to reflect on and modify their current practices. The study indicated that students' perceptions of performance, obstacles, satisfaction, and achievement differed between online and face-to-face modes. Students enrolled in online courses cite flexibility, accessibility, the ease of managing personal, professional, and academic life, and their desire to experience a new learning style as significant determinants of their choice. For face-to-face students, however, classroom contact with peers, teachers, and the course content was the primary deciding factor.

The lived experiences of nursing students who have experienced the distant learning method of studying COVID-19 may give insight into the challenges that nursing students confront in this sort of setting. Key informants in this research reported having trouble concentrating and managing with academic stress, processing their emotions, depending on others, having financial assistance, dealing with changes, and maintaining their religion.

## Recommendation

Following the study's findings, a few recommendations are made for the following sectors:

### *Nursing Education*

In the future, researchers may investigate the lived experiences of nursing students participating in distant learning programs at various universities. For universities that produce nursing graduates, it is necessary to modify a more flexible and suited to their learning style learning policy.

### *Nursing Research*

Given that this study was conducted with nursing students in an online class setting, future researchers may undertake a similar

study with nursing students who attended traditional face-to-face classes, as their challenges may differ from those of remote learning education. Future researchers may want to examine a larger sample size or a new location to validate the study, given that only 10 key informants participated in this study. More participants may facilitate a deeper comprehension of the topic being investigated.

### *Nursing Service*

Most of the study's primary informants reported having little experience with nursing skills. As a result, nursing service institutions should better prepare these nurses to hone their nursing skills. In the future, researchers may evaluate existing standards and policies for the correct training of distance-educated nursing students.

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## APPENDIX A

### PROPOSED LEARNING POLICY ON THE CONDUCTION OF LIMITED FACE-TO-FACE CLASSES

#### I. Rationale

The COVID-19 pandemic and the rising threat of another global pandemic have significantly impacted the educational system, since face-to-face courses have been suspended and Flexible Learning has been implemented at all elementary and secondary levels, and tertiary. This distribution style has multiplied innovative teaching methods for over two years, challenging instructors and students to keep up with extremely limited technological resources and skills. Despite the efforts of the national government, the Commission on Higher Education (CHED), and the related educational institutions, face-to-face classrooms remain the most effective method of instruction and learning.

To address the demand for quality education at the tertiary level, CHED is now permitting face-to-face classes provided that the maximum room capacity of 50 percent is observed; there is concurrence or support from the concerned LGU, and facilities to be used for the limited face-to-face classes are retrofitted.

To ensure the safety and welfare of students attending limited face-to-face classes on the University of Pangasinan campus, institutional guidelines aligned with CHED and DOH

Memorandum Circular No. 2021-004 on the subject, Guidelines on the Implementation of Limited Face-to-Face Classes for All Programs of Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in Areas Under Alert Levels System for COVID-19 Response, have been formulated.

#### II. Scope and Coverage

##### A. Teaching and Non-Teaching Personnel

Only fully vaccinated University teaching and non-teaching personnel will be permitted to enroll in the limited face-to-face programs. The work-from-home solutions are made available to vulnerable persons, such as teachers over sixty (60) years of age, with immunocompromised conditions and other comorbidities, and/or pregnant women.

##### B. Students

Only properly vaccinated College students will be permitted to enroll in limited face to face classes. However, fully vaccinated students with significant comorbidities themselves or living with individual/s with similar conditions may choose to continue with the flexible learning mode of delivery and take face-to-face classes in subsequent semesters or whenever possible, without prejudice to readmission and maximum residency, provided the concerned students submit a certification from the barangay.

##### C. Programs and Courses

All programs and courses across disciplines and year levels of the College shall be subjected to the limited face-to-face classes.

This approach has three (3) components:

- In-person Learning/ Face-to-Face (F2F) Classes - Students will attend in-person classes on the campus. F2F class will focus on strengthening and assessing the competencies learned by the students using the Flexible Learning Modules.
- Remote Coaching - Students will stay at home and will learn through their Flexible Learning Modules complemented with web-based or phone-based teacher and peer support.
- Independent Learning - Students will study on their own at home or in school. During this time they should be able to set goals, monitor and evaluate their own learning through the help of Flexible Learning Modules and other resources.

**GENERAL GUIDELINES**

**A. Implementation of Face-to-Face (F2F) Class for Flexible Learning:**

1. Implementation of F2F Class for Flexible Learning will follow two (2) setups depending on the COVID Alert Level classification where the locality of the school is located:

a) Flex 2-4

Schools under Alert Level 1,2 and 3 will follow Flex 2-4 Setup. Students must go to school for 2 consecutive days of face-to-face sessions followed by 4 days of learning at home.

During the 4 days at home, students will learn through their Flexible Learning Modules complemented with remote coaching and independent learning.

b) Flex 0-6

When localities of the school get reclassified to Alert level 4-5, the F2F class shall be automatically suspended. F2F Class hours will be converted to remote coaching.

2. In Summary:

COVID-19 Alert Level	Flexible Learning Setup
1	Flex 2-4
2	
3	
4	Flex 0-6 (F2F Suspended)
5	

3. Appendix 1 shows the number of hours for F2F Class, Remote Coaching and Independent Learning.

4. Appendix 3 shows the preventive suspension protocol for F2F classes.

**B. Class Size**

1. In both Flex 2-4 and Flex 0-6, the maximum class size is 25.
2. The standard setup for all regular lecture classes in FlexLearning is parallel of 2 sections with 25 students each. During Alert Level 1, these classes may be combined into 1 classroom.
3. Subjects with only 1 section will get half the teaching credit.

4. Special cases in terms of class size will follow the provisions on Faculty Loading in the Registrar’s Manual.

**C. Off-Campus Activities**

1. Off-campus activities for completing requirements (internship/practicum/fieldwork etc) are allowed and subject to the approval of the LGU where the school is located.
2. In-school meetings for these subjects shall follow Flex 2-4.
3. The guidelines for class size shall be followed in crediting the teaching hours for these subjects.

**D. Physical Education (PE) Classes**

1. All General Education Subjects (GEC) PE classes shall follow Flex 0-6 or full remote setup.
2. PE Classes of Bachelor of Science in Criminology shall use Flex 2-4 but will follow these additional guidelines:
  - a) F2F class will be allowed only during Alert Levels 1 and 2.
  - b) Close-quarter combat and sparring will not be permitted during Alert Level 2.
  - c) Proper rest intervals must be observed during F2F class to avoid breathing problems for students and teachers while wearing face masks.
  - d) PE classes are suggested to be scheduled as the last subject of the day if possible.

**E. Restrictions on Mobility.** While attending face-to-face classes on campus, the students' mobility shall be restricted.

1. Students must proceed directly to their designated rooms upon entering campus. If students come early and their rooms are not yet ready, they will be directed to study halls/cafeterias/community spaces where strict physical separation will be enforced. No student is permitted to loiter.
2. Faculty members are responsible for preparing the seating chart for students, which must be rigorously adhered to throughout the remainder of the semester.
3. To minimize human interaction, one-way foot traffic must be implemented in classrooms, halls, and stairwells. From the entrance gate to the chamber and within the room, there must

be markings showing directions and proper distances to follow.

#### **F. DOH Minimum Public Health Standards**

The College shall conduct a regular campaign on physical and mental health through a variety of methods, including the organization of seminars, the distribution of flyers, and the use of social media. This is to protect the physical and mental health of the students, instructors, and support staff.

1. All students, instructors, and non-teaching staff, including guests, must wear proper PPE, such as face masks. Wash areas/sanitation stations must be provided at all College entrances.
2. Physical separation must be firmly enforced on campus, whether in classrooms or in open areas. Students and college workers will be led in their movement by visual signals and floor markers.
3. Detection of COVID-19 cases, contact tracing, quarantine, and isolation protocols must be properly adhered to.
4. Classrooms must be cleaned and disinfected after the last on-campus class of the day, and all other student facilities must be disinfected before the end of the day.

#### **G. Minimum Physical Distance**

The physical distance between students attending limited face-to-face classes and teaching and non-teaching professionals shall be 1.5 meters. Marshals assigned to each building will ensure that this physical separation is always maintained.

#### **H. Conduct of Thesis Defense**

Thesis defenses and oral examinations must be done face-to-face under strict observance of minimal health regulations.

1. Attendance at the thesis defense is limited to the researchers, their research family, and the panel members. The audience is not permitted inside the room/area.
2. The location must be arranged so that there is a 1.5-meter distance between and among group members.
3. Throughout the course of the activity, all participants in the defense of the thesis must wear their face masks properly and firmly.

#### **I. Medical Insurance**

Students who enroll in the limited face-to-face classes must be registered with PhilHealth as a direct or indirect contributor (dependents of the direct contributor) or have comparable medical insurance covering COVID-19-related medical expenses. In addition to the vaccination card, a requirement for the limited face-to-face classes, students must also show documentation of their direct or indirect PhilHealth membership or medical insurance covering COVID-19.K

#### **J. Additional Health and Safety Measures**

1. *Personal Hygiene Kit.* Students, faculty, and staff must carry personal hygiene kits, including ethyl alcohol or hand sanitizer, cleansing wipes/tissue paper/toilet paper/hand towel, an additional face mask, and/or hand soap.
2. *Remain at Home When Feeling Unwell.* Students, instructors, and staff with COVID-19 symptoms must remain at home and notify their professors/supervisors of their problems. Personnel from the College Clinic will monitor their health status. If possible, the appropriate flexible learning mode should be provided to the afflicted student. Similarly, work-from-home arrangements may be permitted for affected academics and staff.
3. *One Entry, One Exit.* Students are limited to one entry and one exit per day, per school policy. Students shall be prohibited from leaving campus between classes. Each student is limited to one entrance and one exit each day.
4. *Screening at the Point of Entry.* A triage area shall be constructed at the entrance to evaluate students' and personnel's mask use, body temperature, and completion of the Health Declaration Form. Even after a five-minute pause, anybody with a temperature of 37.5 degrees or higher will not be let on campus.
5. *School dining area and cafeteria.* Students shall not be permitted to leave campus between classes to purchase food and beverages. Students must bring their food and dine at their assigned seats within their classrooms or designated on-campus dining locations. No food delivery shall be permitted.
6. *Break Time Period.* Students, instructors, and staff are only permitted to remain in the dining



area or canteen for a maximum of 15 minutes. At all times, WASH (water, sanitation, and hygiene) standards must be respected, and waste must be disposed of correctly.

7. *Library Services.* Students, instructors, and staff must wash or sterilize their hands before entering the library. The identities, time-ins, and time-outs of students, instructors, and staff shall be documented to facilitate contact tracing. Tables and chairs shall be labeled to indicate where students, instructors, and staff may or may not sit. Within the library, a physical distance of 1.5 meters must be rigorously observed. Students, instructors, and staff are permitted to enter and remain in the library for a maximum of two hours per day, and only once daily.

#### **K. Creation of University-based Isolation Room for persons with Covid-19 Symptoms**

When a faculty, student, and other University staff experience symptoms like Covid-19 while within the campus, the university administration shall immediately move the affected individual to an Isolation Room while waiting to be taken to a health center. The university shall establish an

isolation chamber that accommodates a single person that has adequate ventilation. The isolation room shall be provided with first aid kits, oxygen tanks with oxygen cannulas, and personal protection equipment. The isolation room must be connected to a comfortable room designated for the affected student, faculty, or staff and be accessible to the exit gate to promote ease of transport. Proper disinfection of the isolation room and proper disposal of used goods must be observed.

#### **L. Reporting**

Cases of students, instructors, and staff with Covid-19-related symptoms must be properly documented through written and photo documentation. The University must notify the Local Government Unit about the incident. To prevent the disease's further spread, contact tracing must be conducted subsequently.

These guidelines will be in effect starting SY 2022-2023 and if Flexible Learning is allowed and implemented. Any deviation from said guidelines will be subject to the approval of the concerned department.

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