

Virtual Hands: Improving Student Partnership And Camaraderie In The Blended Distance Learning

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Abstract: Submission of outputs was determined by the majority of the students to be tough especially in this time of pandemic. The purpose of this study is to enhance the senior high school students' output submissions and collaboration through Virtual Hands. The study utilized qualitative research design. The participants of the study are 30 Grade 11 and 5 Grade 12 students. They are selected through purposive sampling. An online survey was created. For data analysis, weighted mean and T-test were used. Of the 35 respondents, 100% revealed that the implementation of Virtual Hands was effective in student's output submission. It further revealed that students got higher grades in the fourth quarter compared to the previous quarters. The interview data revealed that partnership, camaraderie and feeling of belongingness has brought positive effects on students' learning participation as they work together for a similar objective. Results showed that students' perceptions of online collaborative activity were significant. Results also showed that the learning progress of the students increase as reflected in their report card. This action research proposed a program called Virtual Hands in Banaba West Integrated School and other senior high school students in promoting Student partnership, collaboration and output submission in blended distance learning.

Keywords: *blended distance learning, collaboration, output, Virtual Hands*

1. Introduction

The COVID-19 epidemic has prompted new methods of learning. Educational institutions all around the world are turning to online learning platforms to help them continue the process of educating pupils. The new normal is a reformed view of education, with online learning at its heart. The Basic Education Learning Continuity Plan (BE-LCP) was highlighted in DepEd Order No. 12 series 2020 in response to the pandemic's basic education issues. The integration of SLMs with the alternative learning delivery modalities (modular, television-based, radio-based instruction, blended, and online) will help DepEd ensure that all learners have access to quality basic education for SY 2020-2021 with face-to-face classes still prohibited due to the public health situation.

Under blended learning, students are taught using various means including using online, television, radio, and printed materials. DepEd made use of the scheme for this school year after the temporarily banned face-to-face classes due to the novel coronavirus disease (Covid-19) pandemic. Opportunities to create course experience that are personal, relevant and engaging are importance of blended learning (Wesson et.al., 2015). Furthermore, Rovai and Jordan (2004) cited that it develops stronger sense of community among students than either traditional or fully online courses.

Distant education, often known as distance learning, refers to the education of pupils who are not always physically present at school. Traditionally, correspondence courses were used, in which the student connected with the institution by mail. It now includes online schooling. Distance learning, for the most part, increases flexibility for both learners and teachers, but it also necessitates a greater level of discipline and preparation to properly complete the outputs and activities per topic. Driven by changes already happening at this pandemic, blended learning provides the school with a variety of ways to address student needs, differentiate instruction, and provide teachers with data for

instructional decision-making.

Being in the company of their peers may teach students a lot. However, there are little physical contact between students and teachers in an online class. This frequently leads to a sense of isolation among the students. In this setup, students feel alone and this gap is exacerbated when online classes are created with just individual work in mind.

It's no surprise that collaborative grouping is so rare in online learning programs. After all, the difficulties of in-person groups appear to be exacerbated in virtual settings. Less accountability for group members and less monitoring from teachers are common.

Collaboration brings about the spread of effective teaching practices and improved learning outcomes (Berry et.al., 2009). This implies that students need to work with another person or group in order to achieve or do something. Collaboration brings learners to shared experience, with the goal of knowledge building. According to Everett and Drapeau (2001), collaborative learning is defined as "shared work in which a range of knowledge and experience is leveraged to achieve excellence via the collision of multiple ideas and the formation and consolidation of a learners' community."

Banaba West Integrated School was the only Public Secondary School in Batangas City to implement Blended Distance Learning, wherein classes were divided into synchronous and asynchronous. During synchronous sessions, students must be online and participate in the online discussions and activities that the teacher has planned. Asynchronous tasks were assigned to students to complete and submit in their Google Classroom or any other platform that was available to them. The teacher reviewed the outputs and submission on a weekly basis.

With regards to the submission of outputs, it was determined that the majority of the students found it tough. According to senior high school BWIS teachers, just a few students attend synchronous sessions, and submission of learning outputs is negligible.

This action research paper has been designed taking into account the benefits it could give not only the SHS students in BWIS but also the SHS students all over the division. The purpose of this action research paper is to determine the level of output submission of senior high school students prior to the implementation of virtual HANDS and third-grade achievement, as well as how virtual HANDS online collaboration in blended distance learning will be used among senior high school students. This also compare the level of performance of senior high school students before and after the implementation of virtual HANDS and fourth grading achievement. This intervention proposed can be a valuable tool to teachers when trying to improve the learners' output submission through collaboration.

Statement of the Problem

This study aims to enhance the senior high school students' output submissions through Virtual HANDS. This study focuses on the determining senior high school students' output submissions before the implementation of Virtual HANDS, use of Virtual HANDS in blended distance learning, comparison of students before and after the implementation of Virtual HANDS and the proposed activities to further improve output submissions among senior high school students.

Specifically, this sought answers to the following questions:

1. What is the level of senior high school students' output submissions before the implementation of Virtual HANDS in blended distance learning in terms of third grading submissions in Google Classroom and other platforms?
2. How does the utilization of virtual HANDS increase senior high school students' submission/compliance of outputs in blended distance learning?
3. How does the senior high school students' output submissions/compliance compare before and after the implementation of Virtual HANDS in blended distance learning in terms of their fourth grading submissions in Google Classroom and other platforms?
4. What online collaborative plan of activities may be proposed to increase collaboration and output submission among senior high school students in the blended distance learning?

Methods

The study utilized quantitative research design which is descriptive in nature. The participants/ respondents of the study are 121 Grade 11 students and 46 Grade 12 students who are enrolled in the blended distance learning in Banaba West Integrated School. The researcher chose students who are doing admirably and adjusting well to this new normal way of learning, especially because they have submitted all their learning tasks/outputs through Google Classroom to

assist their classmates who have difficulty in submitting and complying submissions in different subjects.

An online interview, observation, and online monitoring of submission of outputs are conducted to identify the how Virtual HANDS in blended distance learning has been utilized among senior high school students. For data analysis, frequency was used to monitor the submission of output of students to compare before and after the implementation of virtual HANDS in blended distance learning. Ethical consideration and constant consultation with the parents shall be observed in the conduct of the research process.

Results and Discussion

1. Senior high school students' output submissions/compliance during third grading in Google Classroom and other platforms before the implementation of Virtual HANDS in blended distance learning.

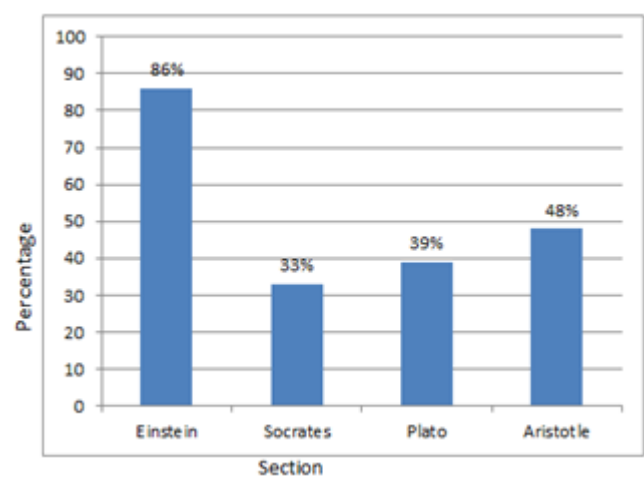


Figure 1: Third grading output submission

This graph depicts students' output submissions/compliance in Google Classroom and other platforms prior to the adoption of Virtual HANDS in blended distance learning. In G11-Einstein, 18 out of 21 students submitted their outputs, resulting in an 86 percent compliance rate and is Very satisfactory. This area has the most number of submissions since it is composed of students who are performing admirably and adjusting well to this new way of learning, particularly when it comes to completing their learning tasks/outputs via Google Classroom. G12-Aristotle comes in second with 22 out of 46 students or 48 percent compliance and has Satisfactory level. G11-Plato has 20 out of 51 students or 39% submissions/compliance and has Satisfactory level. G11-Socrates, on the other hand, had the fewest submissions with 16 out of 49 students, or 33 percent and with Satisfactory level.

2. Impact of Virtual HANDS to senior high school students' submission of outputs in blended distance learning

Through various methods such as virtual coaching through google meet, chat and video calls using messenger, children without submissions were helped. In Google meet, students collaborate with video and audio and present via a screen with their partner. This helped their classmates follow the instructions in doing the tasks. If their classmate wasn't able

to afford to connect through google meet, chat, and video call through messenger is used. Since this is the most accessible online platform, most students used this in utilizing Virtual Hands. The following are the impact of Virtual HANDS to senior high school students' submission of outputs in blended distance learning”

- a. **It improves student collaboration** by encouraging them to work collaboratively with others, particularly when completing learning activities or creating outputs. They were able to complete the work collaboratively by using several online platforms.
- b. **It promotes student-to-student rapport.** Since they see each other most of the time, they become close and create the way for open communication and genuine partnerships.
- c. **It promotes collaborative learning.** Students of varying abilities engage in a range of learning activities to increase their knowledge of a subject. Students develop good relationships, create personal goals, make decisions, demonstrate empathy, and appreciate their emotions via collaborative work.
- d. **It boosts student output submission and compliance** in all subject areas. Hence, this increases partnership and camaraderie among students in blended distance learning.

3. Comparison of senior high school students' output submissions compare before and after the implementation of Virtual HANDS in blended distance learning in terms of their fourth grading submissions in Google Classroom and other platforms

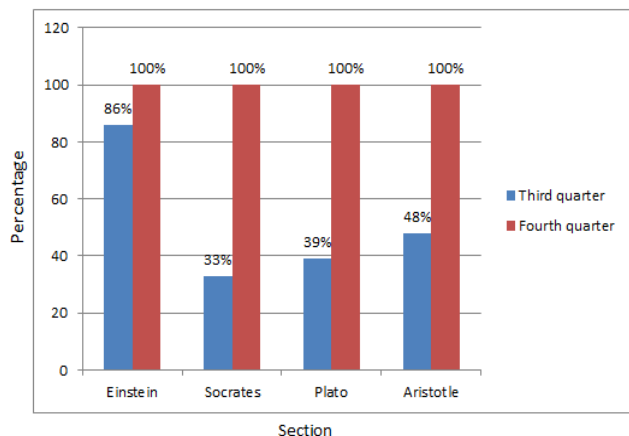


Figure 2: Comparison of output submission

This graph shows the comparison of senior high school students' output submissions before and after the implementation of Virtual HANDS in blended distance learning. It is very evident that students' submission and compliance increased to 100%. They were able to work together and finish the task with their partners. This was really beneficial to both teachers and students. Teachers were less likely to be reminded of non-submissions. Increased submissions result in a greater passing rate on students' report cards.

4. Online collaborative plan of activities may be proposed to increase collaboration and output submission among senior high school students in the blended distance learning

Activities Conducted	Persons Involved	Time Frame
Planning and Consultation: Teacher consulted subject teachers about the level of output submission of the students. Then, she sought approval of the school head regarding the need for the Virtual Hand to assist and collaborate students with their partner.	SHS TEACHERS SCHOOL HEAD	March 2021
Scheduling The teacher creates a schedule of partnership including the time and their partner regardless of sections (Grade 11).	SHS TEACHERS Students	April 2021
Partnership Virtual Hand is done every Friday with their student-partners. They may use any platforms available and accessible to both of them. The duration depends on the number of incomplete tasks that needs to be accomplished. Partners are required to document as proof of the said activity.	Students	May –July 2021
Monitoring The student-coach has filled a monitoring form in Google Sheets. They completed data such as their partner's name, the tasks/activities they finished, the day and time they started, and the date they turned in the output in Google Classroom or on any platform.	Teacher Students	June –July 2021

Conclusions

Based on the results of the study, the following conclusions were drawn:

1. Senior high school students' output submissions/compliance during third grading in Google Classroom and other platforms before the implementation of Virtual HANDS in blended distance learning was in a Satisfactory level in HUMSS students and Very Satisfactory level in STEM students.
2. Virtual HANDS increase student collaboration, promote rapport between the students, encourage cooperative learning and increase student's output submission and compliance in all subjects.
3. Senior high school students' output submissions increase to an Outstanding level after the implementation of Virtual HANDS in blended distance learning in terms of their fourth grading submissions in Google Classroom and other platforms.
4. Online collaborative plan of activities which include planning, scheduling, partnership activities and monitoring is proposed to increase collaboration and output submission among senior high school students in the blended distance learning.

Recommendations

1. Virtual Hands shall be utilized by other grade level to increase student output submission in Google Classroom and other platforms especially in blended distance learning modality.

2. Virtual Hands is recommended to encourage students' partnership and camaraderie even virtual.

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Author Profile



Razel M. Ferrer received her MAED in Science Education from Batangas State University in 2002. She has always envisioned a path towards innovation and success. A Doctor of Philosophy student and an extremely capable and dedicated teacher. She won numerous awards not only in her division but also on an

international scale. She made significant contributions to the development of DEPED modules for senior high school students. She is also a member of a reputable international organization, a capable coach to her students and colleagues, and a community leader who serves her church. She made significant contributions to Division goals as an outstanding learning material developer. She is an active participant in division science activities. Furthermore, the nominee is a researcher and innovator who is constantly looking for ways to improve the teaching and learning process. As a result, she has increased student performance by 95% on average and promoted 100% collaboration among students, parents, and teachers. Meanwhile, she made significant contributions to the improvement of school services and the achievement of International Organization for Standardization (ISO) Certification as the school's Quality Management Representative, SBM member, Science Coordinator, and Laboratory Coordinator.