

Basic Education Learning Continuity Plan Implementation and School Head Responses in the Division of Masbate

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ABSTRACT

This qualitative-descriptive study examined the implementation of the Basic Education Learning Continuity Plan (BE-LCP) and the responses of school heads to disruption-related challenges in the Schools Division of Masbate, with the findings used to develop an enhancement plan supporting the transition to the Learning Service Continuity Plan (LSCP). Twenty public schools representing elementary, secondary, and integrated school types across the three congressional districts of Masbate were purposively selected. Data were gathered from four stakeholder groups—school heads, teachers, learners, and parents/community partners—through in-depth interviews, focus group discussions, structured reflection, and documentary analysis of school BE-LCP documents. Directed content analysis was guided by the BE-LCP policy framework and the five domains of the Philippine Professional Standards for

School Heads (PPSSH), with inductive coding used for emerging themes. Data-source triangulation, reflexive journaling, expert validation, and pilot testing supported trustworthiness. Thirteen themes emerged across the research questions. All twenty schools were still using pandemic-era BE-LCPs undergoing revision in response to DepEd Order No. 022, s. 2024. Printed Modular Distance Learning remained the dominant continuity modality, while recurring challenges involved abrupt class suspensions, unavailable pre-positioned learning materials, poor connectivity, limited multimedia resources, weak home-based learning support, and incomplete learner outputs. School heads responded through proactive materials preparation, contextualized learning activity sheets, catch-up instruction, communication networks, and resource mobilization. Stakeholders consistently recognized resource management, communication, and trust-building as strengths, while instructional coaching, monitoring and evaluation, and learning-recovery leadership remained growth areas. A five-focus Enhancement Plan was developed covering crisis management and LSCP development, instructional continuity and materials preparedness, monitoring and feedback systems, stakeholder partnerships, and learning-recovery and assessment leadership.

Keywords: *BE-LCP, learning continuity, school heads, educational resilience, PPSSH, crisis leadership*

INTRODUCTION

Educational continuity during crises is a central equity concern because disasters and emergencies can interrupt access to instruction, widen learning gaps, and weaken the protective role of schools. This concern is particularly relevant in the Philippines, where recurrent typhoons, flooding, earthquakes, and other hazards repeatedly disrupt school operations. International frameworks affirm that the right to education must be protected during emergencies and that continuity planning must extend from immediate response to recovery and institutional preparedness (Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies [INEE], 2010).

The COVID-19 pandemic accelerated the institutionalization of learning continuity. DepEd Order No. 012, s. 2020 established the Basic Education Learning Continuity Plan as the national framework for sustaining basic education through flexible delivery modalities. Subsequent experience showed, however, that continuity

plans had to address not only public-health emergencies but also recurring localized disruptions. DepEd Order No. 022, s. 2024 therefore introduced the Learning Service Continuity Plan and required its integration into school improvement planning, signaling a shift from reactive continuity measures toward proactive resilience-building (Department of Education, 2020a, 2024).

School heads occupy a pivotal role in translating continuity policy into school-level practice. Beyond administrative coordination, they mobilize resources, supervise alternative delivery modalities, communicate with stakeholders, support teacher adaptation, monitor implementation, and organize learning recovery. The Philippine Professional Standards for School Heads provides a national framework for these responsibilities through the domains of Leading Strategically, Managing School Operations and Resources, Focusing on Teaching and Learning, Developing Self and Others, and Building Connections (Department of Education, 2020b).

Despite a growing literature on pandemic-era schooling, evidence remains limited on how continuity plans function in highly disaster-exposed, geographically dispersed, and resource-constrained divisions after the acute pandemic period. Masbate presents such a context because its schools are distributed across mainland and island communities and regularly experience calamity-related disruptions. This study therefore described how the BE-LCP was implemented in selected schools, identified the challenges school heads encountered, examined how school heads responded and adapted their practices, and translated stakeholder-informed findings into an enhancement plan for the ongoing transition to the LSCP.

Literature Review

Education in Emergencies and Learning Continuity

Education in emergencies is grounded in the principle that crises should not extinguish the right to learn. The INEE Minimum Standards frame emergency education around access, safe learning environments, teaching and learning, education personnel, policy, and coordination (INEE, 2010). SEAMEO INNOTECH (2021) likewise emphasizes that continuity planning must address both emergency response and longer-term recovery.

Educational disruption has consequences that extend beyond the period of school closure. Donnelly and Patrinos (2021) documented learning loss associated with COVID-19 disruptions, while UNESCO (2022) emphasized the need for deliberate recovery strategies. In disaster-prone contexts, schools also face recurrent rather than one-time interruptions, making continuity planning a recurring governance function rather than an exceptional emergency procedure.

The Schools Division of Masbate therefore requires continuity mechanisms that can be repeatedly activated, adapted, and reviewed. The source study situates BE-LCP implementation within this broader education-in-emergencies perspective, emphasizing that preparedness, resources, communication, and recovery must operate as an integrated system.

From BE-LCP to the Learning Service Continuity Plan

The BE-LCP institutionalized multiple flexible learning modalities during the pandemic and gave schools a framework for maintaining instruction despite face-to-face suspension. Research on early implementation identified substantial difficulties involving teacher workload, learner access, ICT capacity, home support, and local adaptation (Capacio et al., 2021; Landa et al., 2021; Narag & Macabago, 2021). These challenges exposed the limits of continuity planning when policy design was not matched by adequate enabling conditions.

Localization has been identified as an important implementation factor. Reyes et al. (2023) reported stronger learner engagement and parental participation in schools that adapted continuity arrangements to local conditions. This is especially relevant to Masbate, where island geography, transport constraints, connectivity gaps, school size, and community capacity differ substantially across sites.

DepEd Order No. 022, s. 2024 expanded this policy trajectory by introducing the LSCP and requiring its integration with the School Improvement Plan. The policy transition creates an opportunity to institutionalize

continuity planning as an ongoing cycle of preparedness, activation, monitoring, reflection, and improvement rather than a document activated only during extraordinary events.

Alternative Delivery Modalities, Resources, and Home-Based Learning

Printed Modular Distance Learning became one of the most widely used alternatives during periods when in-person classes were suspended. Its accessibility in low-connectivity environments made it practical, yet studies also documented persistent limitations involving delayed distribution, insufficient materials, workload pressures, and weak feedback cycles (Castroverde & Acala, 2022; Landa et al., 2021). These limitations are intensified when learning resources are prepared only after disruptions occur.

Connectivity and technology remain significant equity issues. Narag and Macabago (2021) identified ICT constraints and teacher readiness as important barriers to continuity, while Dhawan (2020) highlighted the opportunities and limitations of online learning during crisis conditions. In geographically dispersed divisions, reliance on online modalities can reproduce inequalities when devices, data access, electricity, and network coverage are uneven.

Home-based learning also depends heavily on family capacity. Olivar and Naparan (2023) showed that parental involvement affects learning in remote modalities, while Goodall (2021) cautions against deficit interpretations that place responsibility solely on families. Effective continuity planning must therefore recognize the material and educational constraints faced by parents and design support mechanisms accordingly.

School Leadership, PPSSH, and Instructional Leadership

School leaders shape how continuity plans are enacted because they coordinate organizational response and maintain a focus on teaching and learning during disruption. Hallinger and Heck (1998) and Leithwood et al. (2020) emphasize that school leadership influences instructional conditions, teacher capacity, organizational culture, and student outcomes. During crises, these functions include not only maintaining operations but also preserving instructional coherence.

The PPSSH provides a locally relevant lens for examining these responsibilities. The five domains encompass strategic leadership, school operations and resources, teaching and learning, professional development, and stakeholder connections (Department of Education, 2020b). Macasaet and Polancos (2022) found that school operations/resource management and building connections were particularly important during pandemic-era implementation.

Leadership during crises also benefits from distributed responsibility. Harris and Jones (2020) and Spillane (2006) describe leadership as a practice shared across formal and informal actors rather than residing solely in the principal. Continuity planning therefore becomes stronger when school heads mobilize teachers, DRRM and ADM focal persons, parents, local government, and community partners around shared roles.

Educational Resilience, Stakeholder Partnerships, and Learning Recovery

Educational resilience refers to the capacity of schools to absorb disruption, adapt their structures and practices, and continue supporting learning. Henderson and Milstein (2003) associate resilience with protective processes, supportive relationships, clear expectations, and adaptive institutional capacity. Reimers and Schleicher (2020) similarly emphasized flexibility, leadership, and coordinated support in educational responses to the pandemic.

Stakeholder partnerships strengthen this capacity by expanding the human and material resources available to schools. Epstein (2018) frames school-family-community partnerships as a core component of educational improvement, while Sumalinog and Delen (2022) emphasize leadership, partnerships, and contingency planning in disaster-prone settings. Trust and communication are therefore not peripheral; they are practical components of continuity.

Learning recovery completes the continuity cycle. Gottfried and Dee (2022) argue that recovery should be data-informed and responsive to both academic and broader learner needs. School heads therefore require

competence not only in activating alternative modalities but also in assessing learning gaps, organizing catch-up and remedial interventions, and using evidence to improve future continuity plans.

Theoretical and Conceptual Integration

The study was anchored on four policy and theoretical lenses: the BE-LCP/LSCP policy framework, the Philippine Professional Standards for School Heads, Educational Resilience Theory, and Instructional Leadership Theory. Together, these lenses explain continuity as both an organizational system and a leadership responsibility: schools must prepare institutional mechanisms for disruption, while school heads must mobilize resources, maintain instructional focus, develop people, and sustain stakeholder relationships.

The conceptual framework followed an Input-Process-Output model. Inputs consisted of BE-LCP implementation, disruption-related challenges, and school-head responses; the process comprised qualitative-descriptive inquiry, purposive sampling, interviews, FGDs, document review, directed content analysis, triangulation, and ethical safeguards; and the output was an enhancement plan for BE-LCP/LSCP implementation. The original source figure is retained in Figure 1.

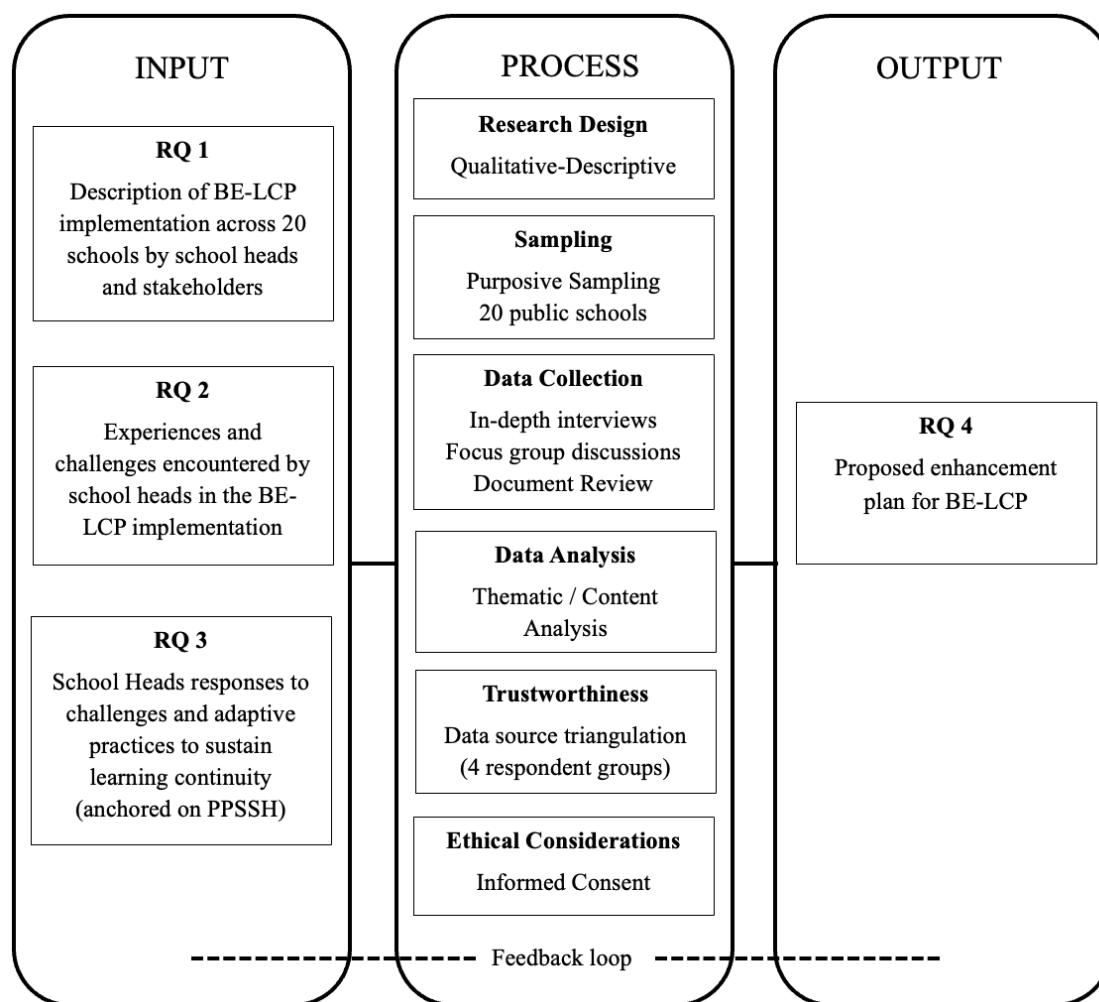


Figure 1. *Conceptual Framework of the Study*

METHODS

Research Design

The study employed a qualitative-descriptive design to provide a comprehensive, low-inference description of BE-LCP implementation, disruption-related challenges, and school-head responses in their natural context. Qualitative description was selected because the research questions sought direct accounts of what schools were doing, what problems they encountered, and how leaders responded rather than theory generation or phenomenological interpretation (Sandelowski, 2000; Doyle et al., 2020).

Multiple qualitative data sources were used to capture stakeholder perspectives and institutional evidence. Directed content analysis allowed the BE-LCP policy framework and PPSSH domains to provide initial coding categories while retaining openness to themes emerging inductively from the data (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005).

Research Locale

The study was conducted in the Schools Division of Masbate, which comprises schools across Mainland Masbate, Ticao Island, and Burias Island and is organized into three congressional districts. The division includes elementary, secondary, and integrated schools and is frequently affected by typhoons, flooding, and other calamities that interrupt face-to-face classes.

Participants and Sampling Technique

Purposive sampling was used to select 20 public schools representing all three congressional districts, all major school types, island and mainland contexts, and varied school sizes. The sample included 6 school heads from the 1st Congressional District, 7 from the 2nd, and 7 from the 3rd, for a total of 20 school-head interview participants.

At each research site, teacher representatives, learner representatives, and parents/community partners also participated. Learners were drawn from Grade 6 in elementary schools and Grades 10, 11, and 12 in secondary and integrated schools. The source manuscript did not report a single consolidated numerical total for these three stakeholder groups; therefore, no additional participant count was introduced in this article.

Research Instrument

Data-gathering instruments included a semi-structured interview guide for school heads, separate focus-group discussion guides for teachers, learners, and parents/community partners, and a structured document-review guide for school BE-LCP documents. Questions addressed implementation, challenges, leadership responses, stakeholder experiences, and support needs relevant to the enhancement plan.

Five validators with expertise in educational research, qualitative methodology, school administration, and BE-LCP implementation reviewed the instruments for alignment, openness, linguistic clarity, ethical appropriateness, and feasibility. The revised instruments were pilot-tested in three non-participating schools in SDO Masbate, leading to minor improvements in question sequencing and wording.

Data Gathering Procedure

Twenty school heads participated in individual in-depth interviews lasting approximately 45 to 60 minutes. Separate focus group discussions with teachers, learners, and parents/community partners were conducted at each research site and lasted approximately 60 to 90 minutes. All sessions were conducted with consent and recorded for accurate transcription.

Documentary analysis was conducted on each school's BE-LCP for School Year 2024–2025 or its updated 2025–2026 version. Data collection occurred during the first quarter of School Year 2025–2026 after approval from the Schools Division Superintendent. School visits were scheduled through official communication, and required documents and participant groups were identified in advance.

Data Analysis

Directed content analysis proceeded through five iterative stages: verbatim transcription and accuracy checking; holistic reading of transcripts and document notes; deductive and inductive coding; organization of codes into themes aligned with the research questions; and production of thick descriptive accounts grounded in participant data.

Data from school heads, teachers, learners, and parents/community partners were systematically compared to identify convergence and divergence. Documentary evidence was used to cross-check participant accounts. The BE-LCP policy framework and PPSSH domains supplied the a priori structure, while emergent themes were retained when they extended the initial framework.

Trustworthiness and Researcher Reflexivity

Trustworthiness was strengthened through data-source triangulation, comparison of four stakeholder groups, documentary review, expert validation, pilot testing, and peer debriefing with the research adviser. Rich contextual description was used to support transferability, while a documented coding process and analytic decisions supported dependability.

The researcher was a school principal within the Schools Division of Masbate, creating both contextual familiarity and potential insider bias. To manage this position, the researcher maintained a reflexive journal, documented emerging assumptions, used neutral questioning, and repeatedly checked interpretations against transcripts and stakeholder accounts.

Ethical Consideration

The study observed respect for persons, beneficence, and justice. Adult participants received informed-consent forms explaining the study's purpose, voluntary nature, confidentiality protections, and right to withdraw without consequence. Learner participants provided assent, with parental consent obtained before participation.

Participants were assured that responses would not affect employment or performance evaluation. Identifying information was protected during reporting, and geographic and school-type representation across the three congressional districts was used to support equitable inclusion.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

BE-LCP Implementation Across the Twenty Schools

Four themes described how the BE-LCP was implemented. First, all twenty schools were operating with pandemic-era BE-LCPs that were being revised in response to current division directives and DepEd Order No. 022, s. 2024. The original plans had largely followed division templates and had been developed through school planning teams, but awareness of plan content remained concentrated among focal persons rather than the wider school community.

Second, printed Modular Distance Learning functioned as the cornerstone continuity modality. Digital or online mechanisms were used selectively where connectivity and devices permitted, but printed self-learning materials and learning activity sheets remained the most universally feasible option. Third, support systems for teachers and learners included printing materials, orientation on distance-learning modalities, internet or multimedia support in better-resourced schools, and learner follow-up. Fourth, PTA meetings were the primary communication platform, giving continuity communication broad reach but limited participatory depth.

Table 1. *Themes on BE-LCP Implementation*

Theme	Core Finding
Pandemic-Era Document in Transition	All 20 schools were revising pandemic-era BE-LCPs toward current LSCP requirements.
Modular Distance Learning as Cornerstone Modality	Printed MDL remained the dominant continuity mechanism; digital options were resource-dependent.

School-Level Support Systems	Schools provided printing, modality orientations, learner support, and resource assistance, with uneven capacity across sites.
PTA Meetings as Primary Communication Platform	Communication was regular and accessible but primarily informational rather than deeply participatory.

These findings are consistent with studies showing that continuity implementation is shaped by local resource conditions and that rural schools depend heavily on adaptable, low-connectivity modalities (Landa et al., 2021; Narag & Macabago, 2021). The transition to the LSCP provides an opportunity to move beyond template compliance toward contextualized, annually reviewed preparedness.

Challenges Encountered During Disruptions

Three themes captured the main implementation challenges. Unpreparedness created by abrupt class suspensions was the most immediate operational problem because schools often lacked pre-positioned learning materials ready for distribution. Teachers had to print, reproduce, and organize materials after suspension announcements, delaying delivery and increasing workload.

Connectivity and resource inadequacy formed the second theme. Schools differed substantially in internet access, multimedia equipment, printing capacity, and availability of materials. The third theme, vulnerability of home-based learning, reflected limited parental time, varying educational backgrounds, difficulty supervising independent study, and incomplete learner outputs. These challenges interacted: weak connectivity increased reliance on printed modules, while limited home support reduced the effectiveness of independent modular learning.

Table 2. *Themes on Challenges in BE-LCP Implementation*

Theme	Implication for Learning Continuity
Unpreparedness from Abrupt Class Suspensions	Without pre-positioned materials, continuity begins reactively and delivery is delayed.
Connectivity and Resource Inadequacy	Limited devices, internet, printing, and multimedia resources constrain modality choice and quality.
Vulnerability of Home-Based Learning	Insufficient home support and incomplete outputs weaken learning continuity beyond material distribution.

School Head Responses and Adaptive Practices

Six themes described how school heads responded to these constraints. The first, Preparedness, Contextualization, and Catch-Up as Core Response Strategies, included proactive materials preparation, locally contextualized Learning Activity Sheets, and post-disruption catch-up lessons. These practices show school-level resourcefulness but also reveal that preparedness remained uneven and often dependent on the initiative of individual schools.

The second theme showed that instructional leadership was strong in ensuring modality activation but less developed in coaching teachers on assessment, feedback, and learning recovery. Communication was consistent in reach but limited in depth, indicating that stakeholders generally knew what to do during disruptions but were not always meaningfully involved in continuity planning. Resource management emerged as the most consistently recognized leadership strength, while monitoring and evaluation was the clearest growth area. Finally, stakeholder trust and partnerships provided an important relational foundation for continuity response.

Table 3. *Themes on School Head Responses*

Theme	Interpretive Summary
Preparedness, Contextualization, and Catch-Up	School heads prepared materials, contextualized LAS, and organized catch-up learning.
Instructional Leadership	Strong in activating ADM; developing in coaching, assessment, feedback, and recovery leadership.
Communication	Consistent and accessible, but largely one-way or informational.

Resource Management	Most consistently recognized strength, especially in mobilizing available school and community resources.
Monitoring and Evaluation	Most clearly identified growth area; evidence use and feedback systems remained limited.
Stakeholder Trust and Partnership	Existing trust supported collective action and provided a base for deeper co-responsibility.

The response pattern reflects the PPSSH domains and supports prior findings that crisis leadership depends on operational coordination, communication, instructional focus, and stakeholder relationships (Macasaet & Polancos, 2022; Harris & Jones, 2020). The principal leadership gap was not willingness to act but the institutionalization of coaching, evaluation, and recovery systems.

Integrated Interpretation Through the PPSSH and Resilience Lens

Across stakeholder accounts, school heads were seen as strongest in Managing School Operations and Resources and Building Connections. These strengths allowed schools to mobilize printing support, coordinate distribution, maintain communication, and engage local partners during disruptions. Such practices are consistent with educational resilience, in which adaptive capacity is built through leadership, relationships, and resource mobilization (Henderson & Milstein, 2003; Sumalinog & Delen, 2022).

Growth areas were concentrated in Focusing on Teaching and Learning and in data-informed monitoring. Stakeholders wanted stronger technical guidance on assessment under alternative delivery modalities, learner-output monitoring, instructional coaching, and structured learning recovery. The results therefore distinguish operational continuity from instructional continuity: schools can successfully distribute materials and communicate roles while still requiring stronger systems to determine whether learning is actually occurring.

Proposed Enhancement Plan for BE-LCP/LSCP Implementation

The enhancement plan emerged directly from the convergent findings and from school heads' stated support needs. Five focus areas were identified: Crisis Management and LSCP Development; Instructional Continuity and Materials Preparedness; Monitoring, Evaluation, and Feedback Systems; Stakeholder Partnerships and Community Engagement; and Learning Recovery and Assessment Leadership.

Table 4. Five-Focus Enhancement Plan

Focus Area	Primary Purpose	Illustrative Actions
Crisis Management and LSCP Development	Move from reactive compliance to context-sensitive continuity planning.	Crisis leadership workshops; LSCP crafting; abrupt-suspension simulation exercises.
Instructional Continuity and Materials Preparedness	Ensure learning materials are ready before disruptions occur.	LAC writeshops; contextualized SLM/LAS development; school materials readiness banks.
Monitoring, Evaluation, and Feedback Systems	Strengthen evidence-based improvement and implementation review.	M&E tool training; monitoring templates; reflective conferences; action-research orientation.
Stakeholder Partnerships and Community Engagement	Deepen participation and shared responsibility.	ADM role orientation; community workshops; MOA crafting with barangays and partners.
Learning Recovery and Assessment Leadership	Strengthen school heads' technical leadership after disruption.	Remedial program design; ADM assessment training; recovery planning and school-based inquiry.

The plan is aligned with the PPSSH and the LSCP transition and is designed as a systemic rather than training-only response. It addresses both capacity and enabling conditions by combining leadership development with materials preparation, monitoring systems, formalized partnerships, and learning-recovery structures. This

approach is consistent with the view that resilient schools institutionalize preparedness and improvement rather than depending on improvised response (Reimers & Schleicher, 2020; Gottfried & Dee, 2022).

CONCLUSION

The implementation of the BE-LCP in the Schools Division of Masbate reflects a system in transition. All twenty participating schools had continuity plans rooted in the pandemic period and were moving toward updated LSCP requirements. Printed Modular Distance Learning remained the most dependable modality because it could function in low-connectivity contexts, but its effectiveness was constrained by the absence of pre-positioned materials, uneven resources, and the fragility of unsupported home-based learning.

School heads demonstrated substantial adaptive capacity. They prepared and contextualized materials, activated alternative delivery modalities, mobilized scarce resources, maintained communication, organized catch-up interventions, and cultivated stakeholder trust. These responses enabled schools to continue operating during disruption. However, continuity leadership remained stronger operationally than instructionally: deeper coaching, assessment leadership, monitoring and evaluation, and evidence-informed learning recovery were the clearest areas requiring development.

The study therefore concludes that effective learning continuity requires more than a compliant plan or a functioning distribution system. It requires preparedness before disruption, instructional leadership during alternative delivery, reliable monitoring of learner progress, inclusive stakeholder participation, and organized recovery after classes resume. The proposed five-focus enhancement plan provides a contextually grounded pathway for strengthening these capacities as Masbate schools transition from the BE-LCP to the LSCP.

Recommendation

1. School heads should complete context-specific LSCPs integrated with their School Improvement Plans and should regularly rehearse abrupt class-suspension procedures through scenario-based simulations.
2. Schools should establish pre-positioned materials readiness banks containing contextualized Self-Learning Modules and Learning Activity Sheets for priority grade levels and learning areas.
3. The Schools Division Office should strengthen school heads' instructional-leadership capacity in alternative-delivery assessment, coaching, learner-output monitoring, remedial program design, and data-informed learning recovery.
4. School-based monitoring and evaluation systems should include simple continuity indicators, regular reflection conferences, documented feedback loops, and action-research or school-inquiry mechanisms.
5. Stakeholder participation should move beyond information dissemination by involving parents, teachers, learners, barangay officials, and community partners in continuity planning, role definition, resource mobilization, and review.
6. Teacher professional learning should include LAC-based contextualization of continuity materials, assessment under ADM, differentiated support for learners, and strategies for maintaining engagement during home-based learning.
7. Division leaders should provide targeted resource and technical assistance to schools facing severe connectivity, printing, multimedia, or geographic constraints so that continuity options are not determined solely by local resource advantage.
8. Future research should assess the implementation of the LSCP after full institutionalization and evaluate the effectiveness of the proposed enhancement plan across different school types and geographic contexts.

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