

ACADEMIC FATIGUE

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Due to the pandemic that the world is experiencing today, and the form of adaptation that the Education system took, the line that kept the balance between work/school and home/rest became blurred.

If you were active in social media in the past months, especially in the last quarter of 2021, you surely have seen the numerous posts and memes about students from a certain University in Baguio city pleading the school administration for an academic break after one student allegedly commit suicide due to stress and pressure of the overly hectic workload given to the students of the said University.

It is a tragic case that can be prevented through proper intervention of not only the school, but the family and friends of the victim. There hot-lines and professionals that can help with these kind of cases. However, given that the heavy workload of assignments and activities are the alleged root of the mental health issues and breakdown of the victim, the University is responsible to at the very least, look in to the matter at hand.

It was the Christmas break then and students should have been in break if not for the complicated adjustments due to the pandemic. Large and known Universities in the Philippines chose to conduct online classes through different online platforms. Students are tasked to join online classes and given assignments activities while offline.

Although the shift from face-to-face classes and online education was the best option in order to continue education without the risk of contracting and spreading the Corona virus, it is also very new for students. It being conducted at home also removes

the line between home and school. For students, it can be very difficult to manage their lives between school and home, especially since there was no physical difference between the two. Time and schedule also became irrelevant. Unlike in normal face to face classes, where you will come to class at 7 or 8 am and then go home at the end of the day, at home during online education, it is work hour all the time.

It can be attributed to students' lack of time management, but professors also contribute with the problem by setting unrealistic time frame and deadlines. Having students submit their work by twelve-midnight only encourage them to have an all-nighter. Giving unrealistic time frame for activities just because it is online, also promotes negative relationship with work which cause anxiety and repulsion. The negative relationship with work can lead to accumulation which adds further to anxiety. It is a vicious cycle that is intractable to break out from.

Academic break in layman's term is vacation. A time off of work or school wherein deadlines and target submissions are frozen.

An academic break can help students refocus and readjust their mental and physical health. Studies abroad shown that academic breaks help in numerous aspects of students' well-being. It can promote focus and higher information retention. By letting the brain rest and absorb the topics and courses, it functions much effectively. It can also reduce stress due to pending deadlines and accumulating activities. Constant concern can lead to chronic stress, and students are more likely to experience higher levels of stress, which can have physical and mental consequences. As a result, regular pauses can help to relax and minimize stress.

Slumber and relaxation have been demonstrated to boost your immune system's performance. It also lowers the chance of heart disease by decreasing inflammation. As a result, make the most of holidays when you'll have more energy to exercise and catch up on sleep.

An academic break is mandatory for keeping a healthy mind and body. And usually, Pinoy students have access to this rights, however due to the covid-19 pandemic, school calendars are now delayed and the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) as well as the Department of Education (DepEd) are torn between giving the students the deserved rest or catch up to the time wasted due to lock downs.

Surely, the intentions which led to the denial of nationwide academic break for students comes from a place of wanting the best for students academically. However, there is just so much students can handle. Academic excellence means nothing for the dead. There is a balance between academics and life that need to put in consideration especially in a trying time like the Covid-19 pandemic. The world is stressed, tiered, and anxious, even grown-ups are not faring well in the severity of the crisis we are all going through, what more are teenagers and young adults that are struggling in finding themselves and their purpose?

They need time to put things together and adjust, they need time to find their footing, they need time to keep their mind and body afloat. Overwhelming them with academics only create mental health issues that they will be dealing for the rest of their lives.

It is the Institution, as well as the Government's duty to allow them to grow and thrive. Because at the end of the day, the goal should be to produce productive and established citizens, not high-functioning yet mentally exhausted people that struggles to even survive daily, let alone make any substantial difference in the society.

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