

READING AND NUMERACY GROUNDWORK

By:

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The foundation of every student's learning is one of the most crucial parts of their educational journey. These early developments are vital in understanding more complex lessons as they continue learning more concepts along the way. With these challenges at hand, the pandemic has made it extra as many restrictions and limitations were imposed abruptly.

Unprecedented levels of education disruption of over 90% of the student population all over the world were caused by the Corona Virus Disease. The consequences of the imposed lockdown protocols will greatly magnify the existing literacy obstacles and exponentially increase the inequity among learners who are deprived of support when it comes to reading and numeracy and to those who are well-supported. Despite the efforts of the education sector to breach the gap, statistics show that some 500 million children cannot cope with the prerequisites of distance learning according to Chamberlain, 2020. These are often the poorest and the most marginalized, of whom their parents are illiterate and unable to guide them in the basics of reading and numeracy.

The Department of Education reiterated and strengthened the "Every Child a Reader Program" (ECARP) and encouraged schools to respond to Hamon: Bawat Bata Bumabasa (3Bs Initiative). Regardless of the grade level, every learner should be a reader. It may sound easy but with the pandemic happening, this objective seems too difficult to be attained in the Philippines. However, this further inflamed the passion of teachers to reach those students who truly need their guidance during these trying times, and the need to respond to this challenge is of utmost importance.

Consequently, numeracy is another foundational skill that is critical in a child's learning. Addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division may sound "basic", but the acquisition of such can either further develop or denigrate the complexities of the succeeding lessons. Teachers were constantly reminded to identify the current level of their students in order to address and identify the root causes. Parents were also encouraged to help their struggling children and to inform their teacher once identified. What they know right now blossoms into what they can do right now which will eventually be the next logical step for learning.

As a response to these pressing issues, teachers go beyond the usual pen-and-paper, especially with the threat of the virus at hand. Materials are being continuously developed to gear learners with adequate foundational skills that fortify the progression of successful learners. These learning materials are not too hard, nor too easy, they are just 'right'. Moreover, phone calls and video conferences are being done, given that the student and the parents are able, to monitor the development of the students.

These may be trying times, but as long as there are learners who strive and teachers thrive continuously despite the difficulties of distance learning, the groundwork for reading and numeracy will be strong.

References:

<https://www.savethechildren.net/blog/keeping-literacy-alive-during-covid-19>