

EMPTY CHAIRS

by:

Rhodora R. Parreñas

Teacher II, Samal National High School – Annex

It has been more than two years, as of the writing of this article, since the start of the Covid 19 pandemic when the normal in-person classes all over the country were put on hold but instead, modular distance learning, specifically the creation and utilization of Self - Learning Modules either in digital format or in print format were implemented as a response to the call of the Department of Education to continue still the formal education under the DO 12, s2020 or also known as the Basic Education - Learning Continuity Plan. By that time, there were series of total lockdowns implemented by the National Inter - Agency Task Force for Covid 19 prevention and the result was the Empty Chairs in the school classrooms.

By the time when the restrictions were slowly relaxed and we, teachers were already allowed to report to school on a limited basis, I truly felt saddened seeing my classroom which was used to be filled with playful students, those who ran around the four corners of the room, the teasing of one student to another, the singing of those some, and the enthusiastic conversations and sharing during class activities. All of these were gone. What was left were those empty chairs who were once silent witnesses to those playful times of my students. Yet, as our beloved Department said, "Education must go on!", and that Learning must go beyond the boundaries of the classroom, it has to be extended in all places so long as there are children who are in need of our care as their teachers and mentors. Yes, the chairs could be empty at this time, but this is only temporary as things will surely go back to normal, the way they are used to be or even better. So, instead of sighing deep and feeling regretful of the past two years, I told myself, why not clean up the empty chairs and the entire classroom and bringing everything back

to life in anticipation of the coming school year when this time, I hope, these chairs will be much ready to witness more children to come sit, play, and learn with them.

References:

Department of Education (2020). The Basic Education Learning Continuity Plan in Time of Covid 19. Retrieved from https://www.deped.gov.ph/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/DepEd_LCP_July3.pdf