

## IRONY OF THE MELCS

by:

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When the Covid 19 pandemic hits the country back in the first quarter of 2020, a lot of school if not all, were not able to hold their end of school years rites, in fact, the Department of Education through its DM 42, s2020 or also known as Guidelines for the Remainder of School Year 2019-2020 in Light of Covid-19 Measures provided guidelines on what has to be done for those schools that were not yet able to closed the last quarter of the school year due to the sudden imposition of community lockdowns nationwide.

Few months after, in preparation for the School Year 2020 – 2021, the DepEd released its DO 12, s2020 or also known as the Basic Education – Learning Continuity Plan which became the basis of the Region 3 Memorandum Number 272 s2020 or also referred to as Localized Policy Guidelines in the Implementation of Learning Delivery Modalities Course 2 (LDM2) Under Basic Education Learning Continuity Plan (BE-LCP). In the said memoranda, the Department of Education devised learning competencies appropriate for the pandemic crisis which became known as the Most Essential Learning Competencies or MELCs. By the term itself, these it implies that the regular learning competencies were filtered and compacted to exclude those that are non – essentials and have those essentials be included in the standards intended to meet the limitations of the Modular Distance Learning. The goal of the measure was to at least provide the affected learners with the necessary learning they need despite the educational constraints brought about by the pandemic. In the like manner, teachers will not be burdened by the rigid preparations since the MELCs were designed for flexibility, besides, the primary modality among the public-school students especially in Bataan was Modular in either print of digitized modules.

As designed, MELCs are supposed to augment the limitations of the Modular Distance Learning, however, that was not entirely the case among all learners. Yes, there were learners who were academically good and did not have that much concern under the MDL, yet sadly, there were quite a number of learners, who were unable to cope with the modality. In fact, in my own experience, I had some students who literally failed in some subjects and to allow them to at least pass, they were provided with teacher - made simplified activities just to help them pass their failed subjects. Well and good if the students truly deserve to pass due to extraordinary circumstances. I did have students who fell under this category such as those who were financially struggling and had to work to help not only themselves but their families, those who were emotionally suffering due family problems, and those that had to take care of their younger siblings since their parents had to work for a living. I honestly did not regret passing these students even if in truth, they never really achieved the standards set in the MELCs because I believe that the learnings, they were already experiencing in life goes far beyond the tenets of the MELCs. Call it academic irony or academic mediocrity, I'd rather call it life education founded in care and compassion. They may have failed the MELCs but they have surpassed and passed the challenges of life.

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