

TEACHING WITH THE FOUR MS

by:

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The COVID-19 pandemic has affected not only our global health concerns, but most apparently how our country's businesses, countries' economies, and whole lives run. According to the United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres, we are now experiencing a generational catastrophe, capable of wasting human potential to decades of progress.

Data gathered by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) seem to agree to this notion, laying weight on how the pandemic has extended the disruption up to our systems of learning and education. At the peak of the pandemic, in more than 190 nations, nearly 1.6 billion students were affected by the school closures. Doing the math, this is 94 percent of the world's student population! And because several of these countries have no announcement of any reopening yet, there has been a substantiation of the urgency to "ensure the continuity of learning for all in the face of this unprecedented crisis, in particular the most vulnerable," as remarked by UNESCO Director-General Audrey Azoulay.

Therefore, like many including the Philippines, the approaches to, the systems of, and the overall mechanisms on our educational frameworks, have begun to be modified by many nations. Though uncertain, mainly caused by the pandemic restrictions i.e., the New Normal, this dilemma could nonetheless be seen through a brighter set of lenses: this is a challenge as well on creativity.

In a 2020 Manila Times article, former executive vice president and chief development officer of the Development Bank of the Philippines Benel D. Laguna

suggested that in a new, online setup, teaching should be encouraging engagement even more. Teachers, thus, are faced with the challenge to make this happen, by recrafting the instructional design into being these four M's: Meaningful, Memorable, Motivational, and, in the long run, Measurable. He credited Dr. Michael Allen for describing these four elements that will help build a more effective comprehensive instructional design, in the face of declining time management status among our students.

Meaning. In all his activities, a man chases meaning. An activity without meaning is, obviously, meaningless. No one would do it, much less be interested in the thought of it. Moreover, attention, and thus focus, is dependent to an object's meaning and how much or less is that meaning brought to the fore. One way to invoke this is to enumerate examples and situations of how a topic relates to the life of an audience, which in this case is our dear students. Their generation being observed and known for having lesser attention span, relatability is what teachers can use to spur meaning. That of which will naturally induce the next M.

Memorable. Learning unretained is worthless. Alongside less attention span is low retention rate. We must therefore appeal to our students' memories, by making them memorable. Enjoyable, entertaining, and brilliant. One would only remember a memory of something impactful and insightful. And upon these memories will the students be motivated to follow their own curiosities.

Motivation will drive students not only to be interested in the topic, but to engage to it themselves. This is a great feat to achieve, for by then, it would already be them who will be creating the first of the M's named meaning. They will search for meaning and meanings on their own. And with all these strategies producing long-term results, we can finally bring them to the table as data – and finally, assessable for our future's possible further recrafting.

Measurable. Having the potential to be specimen to some tomorrow's researches. Being future's data of its past, upon which it will build its different, but better, modus operandi that will tackle bigger debacles, forging education to rise much stronger than when it was struck down. Or even proving to any future crisis that education was never defeated at all, and when it asks for proof, mankind will pull out bundles of data – of the strategies we have creatively developed.

In this COVID-19 pandemic, as much as we dislike the changes we needed to implement, we can never go back in time. It is then only reasonable that we move forward. And these four M's would greatly help us in managing our misfortunes. Maybe next time we might just find ourselves kicking a crisis in its balls, which in itself has been a huge monster for us to conquer, but then to finally be described as just another M: manageable.

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