

INCLUSIVE LEARNING AMIDST THE PANDEMIC

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The Department of Education (DepEd) launched 2019 its banner movement tagged as “Sulong EduKalidad” program that aims to innovate the key reform areas in Philippine Education. This program is in reply to the precipitously changing learning situation. In this time of the pandemic, where existing challenges in basic education remain to be unsolved, the issue of inclusivity emerges. Inclusive Education is identified as real learning opportunities for groups who have been traditionally excluded - not only those children with disabilities but also those speakers of minority languages too. While the DepEd responded to this with the Special Education or SpEd program which provides a holistic approach to catering to the needs of students with disabilities, the current situation adds up to the dilemma of the affected learners. The suggested learning modalities pose new challenges for students with disabilities. For example, they are provided with less help and inadequately trained teachers; more time and resources such as internet access and specially designed learning materials are required for them to actively participate which makes learning more costly to their families; lastly, with the schools and classrooms shutting down, they lose access to various factors that are important to their development and learning. Suggestions and solutions should be addressed through the collective responsibility of the government, educators, and also parents to help reduce education inequality for students with disabilities, especially during a time of crisis like this pandemic. Facilitating and managing the process of students’ learning and socio-emotional development shall also be prioritized. The goal is to create a safe, inclusive learning environment that builds on students’ fundamental motivation and positive self-discipline. As our country slowly embraces the education system’s shift to blended learning, it is important that creative as well as inclusive

strategies for classroom management in an online learning environment are being secured.

References:

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