

THE “NEW NORMAL” IN PHILIPPINE EDUCATION

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Going into three months of community quarantine since the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) hit the country, the things that used to be normal suddenly turned a total transformation. Simple interactions and regular transactions are now performed with restrictions and precautionary measures. Along with the economic activities, the education set-up in the Philippines was greatly affected by this global pandemic. Based on the data presented by the Department of Education, the COVID-19 crisis has affected 28 million students including public teachers. Alternative ways of learning methods such as online teaching have been introduced to combat the spread of the disease. While this method was seen as effective, issues such as access to technology and the internet, especially in far-flung areas, remain a challenge. Lack of digital technology gateways such as mobile phones and computers, and even internet access at home is not uncommon in public education set-up since these were not seen as vital needs pre-outbreak of the disease. As these issues were the reality for many students, the DepEd proposes a combination of various learning modalities such as the “Blending Learning approach” wherein students are allowed to learn at their own pace under guided modules. They also launched an online study platform called DepEd Commons, accessible to both private and public schools, to help students continue their lessons. It has also developed an Alternative Learning System or ALS platform in partnership with UNICEF called ICT4ALS, a portal of learning resources, activity sheets, and online tutorials for ALS teachers and students. The adoption of educational technology can be a permanent response to various unforeseen emergencies faced by our country. Hence, it is essential that educational institutions such as DepEd and the Commission of Higher Education (CHED) plan a clear and concise digital transformation strategy as well as resources to

reinforce online teaching and learning. While the DepEd carries the burden of these demands, it is high time for our government leaders to design an effective and inclusive quality education. This crisis as well as other emergencies which increasingly becoming our new norm may test our stability and resiliency but opened a number of opportunities and innovations to cater to these challenges.

References:

<https://www.paramountdirect.com/blogs/the-new-normal-education-in-the-philippines>