

DEPED ON ITS WAY TO A DIGITAL FRONTIER!

by:

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The Department of Education (DepEd) is gradually transitioning into the digital world thru the introduction of Microsoft Office 365 or MS O365, Microsoft Teams or MS Teams, and Microsoft OneDrive. These apps and platforms promise better, faster, and more accessible communication between and among teachers, students, and administration. Not to mention the continuous Learner Information System or LIS upgrades and migration to paperless and seamless reporting and sharing of school files and records within the agency. As well as the DepEd e-mail accounts distribution and management which make collaboration and human resource concerns a breeze.

But the good thing is, this advocacy and movement might just be the biggest part of our "new normal" in the Philippine Educational System, no thanks to the COVID-19 pandemic. This might just be the new normal in education where blended learning modalities shall be a standard practice despite the persistent internet connectivity and gadget-related issues, however.

These only go to show that Information and Communications Technology Integration or ICT Integration is not just about using a laptop and a projector or LED TV in our classrooms. It is so much more than that, more than what meets the eye. Hence, for this huge change in basic assumptions in the system to work, teachers again must step up, or upgrade so to speak in this digital era, with indispensable support from the agency thru facilities procurement and upskilling activities. The internet is not just limited to endlessly scrolling through social media accounts or streaming online videos, movies, series, and music; it can make our jobs so much easier, faster, and more efficient especially

when you are blessed with a reliable internet connection at home and in school. And though technology works the same way as communication does, it must be a give-and-take relationship – teachers should have the “technologies” to use the technology available the same way students can use them. Skills development comes next naturally as they practice using them continually.

Therefore, if you are one of the more fortunate teachers with reliable internet connectivity, why not use it to the fullest by learning these new apps our agency is introducing? Using a Learning Management System or LMS works wonders if we know how to use them properly. And yes, oftentimes, it may be overwhelming learning recent technologies and getting a hang of doing things differently, but it will all be worth it. The time and effort you put in and the hours you spent learning a new skill will come to fruition as students become more engaged because they can see and hear that you are starting to speak and use their language – the digital native’s language which is the technology itself. This is because our learners of this 21st century are more responsive to technologies that they are exposed to rather than practices they are trained to perform which started even when they are not yet born into this world.

Remember, we are just one click away from being a frustrated digital Neanderthal to becoming a digital tech-savvy teacher of the Twenty-First Century – the secret is to just start clicking away, and eventually, we will be clicking with it!

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