

## THE STATE OF A PANDEMIC-STRICKEN EDUCATION

by:

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Worldwide, the COVID-19 pandemic has brought about hitherto unprecedented economic, social, and political difficulties. It has produced an educational crisis – 87% of the world's student population was impacted by lockdowns and quarantines, and 1.52 billion students were absent from classes and other educational facilities (Global Education Coalition, 2022). Due to the COVID-19's suddenness, ambiguity, and volatility, the educational system was forced to act quickly to adapt to the evolving nature of learning. Academic institutions must respond as soon as possible to the massive disruption caused by COVID-19 to the educational system.

In order to implement proactive and responsive actions, higher education institutions are being asked to develop a resilient learning system using data that is based on needs. COVID-19's implications in higher education institutions necessitate a range of viewpoints from all parties involved. The administration, which supports the teaching-learning processes, the faculty or teachers, who fulfill various academic roles, the students, who are the center of the system, the parents and guardians, who share responsibility for learning continuity, the community, and the external partners, who contribute to the completion of the educational requirements of the students, must all be consulted.

In the educational system, resilience is the capacity to endure difficulties of all kinds, including trauma, tragedies, and crises, and to emerge stronger, wiser, and more professionally effective (Dayagbil et al., 2021). The educational system ought to get prepared to develop policies for moving forward and dealing with the post-crisis new normal. Higher education must address teaching and learning continuity during and

after the pandemic if it is to be resilient. However, this abrupt change has created issues, particularly for students without access to technology. The pandemic caused people to adopt online learning, which expanded the divide between those who had connectivity and those who do not. Due to access and internet availability, it has been difficult for teachers and students to maintain academic interest.

Due to network issues, flexible learning emerged as a viable alternative for online education, particularly in higher education institutions in the Philippines. Giving students options in their learning's pace, location, and mode is at the heart of flexible learning, which can be supported by effective pedagogical methods. The learners are given the choice of how they will continue their studies, where and when they can do so, and how they will meet the requirements and present proof of their learning results. Now, after more than two years, the Philippine government mandated the re-opening of schools for the return of the normal modality of learning. However, the resumption of face-to-face classes gave birth to palpable difficulties.

The change of pace in learning during the height of the pandemic greatly affected the learning style and learning habits of students. What used to be days or week of a project's duration, performance tasks are now done within a short time period. The shortening of attention span, combined with little class hours, have made teaching and learning in school challenging. Above all, since curriculums change per grade level, and each student are assumed to be proficient in their previous lessons, teachers notice an apparent decline in the academic performance of students.

For history or social sciences teachers, the challenge to teach comes from the students' belittlement on these subjects. Rather than memorization, the actual understanding of its concepts and lessons got lost along the way of finishing modules or passing requirements, instead of the actual learning process. As the world returns to ease, the obvious challenges of the education crisis befell the public – reality shows where students cannot answer basic questions, the rising percentage of false information, and

even the ascension of obvious low comprehension and understanding on various historical chronicles or social issues. Today, it is in the hands of the teachers who wield both education and technology to resolve this depreciating phenomenon.

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