

## THE PANDEMIC'S EDUCATIONAL CHALLENGES

*by:*

**Raymond Black**

*Teacher II, Magsaysay National High School*

The coronavirus disease serves as one of the most life-threatening illnesses since time immemorial. It also became one of the greatest threats to education. During its discovery in 2019-2020, schools were forced to close in order to avoid the spread of the disease. These closures affected learning which resulted in the increasing of the learning gaps in education in the Philippines.

Even before the pandemic, there have been existing learning gaps. There are a number of Filipino students who do not satisfy the standard level of achievement in their respective grade levels.

Long-standing teacher and classroom shortages in the Philippines have resulted in subpar instruction for the great majority of underprivileged children who rely on the public system because they cannot afford private schools. Gutierrez (2022) underlined that schools are currently faced with the enormous issue of educating a large number of pupils who have fallen even further behind after losing more than two years of in-person instruction. While the Philippines provided online education throughout the epidemic, many students lacked access to computers and internet connections, and overworked parents frequently found it challenging to monitor their children's distance learning.

In the report of Caesar and Seril (2022) of the Manila Standard, several third-grade pupils hardly knew how to read or write. Teachers faced the significant challenge of raising the reading levels of the students when most schools reopened on August 22, 2022. The Philippines had the longest pandemic-related school closures among the 122 countries studied, surpassing the 70-week mark since the pandemic started in 2020, according to a

joint report by the United Nations Children's Fund, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, and the World Bank published in March. The World Bank cautioned that the prolonged school closures will exacerbate the learning gap and lead to decreased productivity and profits by the time the pupils enter the workforce because the Philippines is dependent on exporting highly qualified employees to other nations.

The challenge for DepEd now is to create programs that will close the learning gaps created by the pandemic. This can be done if there will be collaboration among the officials, the teachers, the students, the parents, and other stakeholders.

#### *References:*

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