

TRANSITIONING TO THE “NEW NORMAL” IN EDUCATION

by:
John Christian I. Natanauan

Let's take a quick look back at the past few years of school to see what we've seen and done. S.Y. 2019-2020 is a normal year, but President Rodrigo Duterte declared a state of public health emergency on March 8 in response to the first cases of local transmission (Proclamation No. 922) and stopped teaching in Metro Manila. This declaration abides by the Law on Reporting Communicable Diseases (Republic Act [RA] No. 1) and the State's policy to protect and promote the right to health (Article II, Section 15). 11332), which states that the President of the Philippines must declare a state of public health emergency in the event of a national or international epidemic that poses a threat to national security and allows the President to mobilize agencies and resources to deal with the threat. A partial lockdown of Metro Manila was announced on March 15 and continued through April 14, preventing travel from and to Manila. The country's strictest form of lockdown, enhanced community quarantine (ECQ), was implemented on March 16 across the entire Luzon group of islands, resulting in a total lockdown. Over the next few months, the government would impose a variety of quarantines, and the Inter-Agency Task Force on Emerging Infectious Diseases (IATF) would alter its list of activities that are allowed and not allowed outside of homes. In a state of panic, people rush into supermarkets out of fear. It is strictly forbidden for students, particularly young children, to participate in outdoor activities in addition to attending school.

In the weeks leading up to the official start of classes in public schools all over the country, in the years 2020 and 2021, a number of organizations continue to support and oppose an academic freeze. The country's suspension of formal education as a result of the COVID-19 epidemic is referred to as an "academic freeze." The so-called academic freezers are urging the government and the Department of Education (DepEd) to cancel

the School Year (SY) 2020-2021 in both public and private schools due to the difficulties students and parents have navigating distance learning. The secretary of education, Leonor Briones, rejected an academic freeze, stating yet again that further delaying the opening of schools would be extremely detrimental to children. She also mentioned that Filipino students will "be left behind" if classes are canceled this year. The "persistent matter" on academic freeze was also dismissed by DepEd Undersecretary Nepomuceno Malaluan because it supports the direction of the agency for learning continuity. According to DepEd, the call for an academic freeze is a "populist position that is not popular." As of September 17, basic education enrollment in both public and private schools reached 24.49 million, or 88.19 percent of the total for the 2019–2020 school year, as reported by the Department of Education. 22.33 million students attend public schools, while 2.10 million attend private ones. Furthermore, as the quarantine restrictions and protocols remain in effect. As a result, learning is modular and online. where the instructor instructs the students in front of their computers or laptops while the students actively listen to and learn from the material on their own devices.

Teachers in this situation play a very vital role, they are the provider and facilitators of learning inside the classroom. They give extra time and effort just to make this 45 minutes of ample time into meaningful learning for the students. They use all the necessary equipment and facilities available and provide what is lacking at their own cost. Teachers sacrifice their time, effort, and money for the students. As well as the students, are more than willing to perform in school and they are very eager to learn. Some are still shy since they are not exposed to this kind of learning in modular and blended learning. Some are saying that they learn more when they listen attentively in face-to-face setups. Others are cheerfully doing their classroom activities and their peer-to-peer teaching with their classmates.

In addition to the hybrid learning system, blended learning will be implemented in the years 2021 and 2022. Later, as the protocols became less stringent, limited face-to-

face instruction was implemented, requiring students to attend school on a specific day and time while still using modules as a method of instruction. They can listen to their teacher once more in a classroom that is very strict, well-organized, and takes great care of their health. Additionally, in the current school year (2022–2023), face-to-face classes will be offered in varying degrees. As of August 22, there were 28,035,042 students nationwide enrolled in this school year, according to DepEd. Sara Z. Duterte, Vice President and Education Secretary, declared in her speech at the 2022 National School Opening Day Program at Dinalupihan Elementary School in Bataan that the beginning of in-person classes was a "victory" for the students. Today, we recognize that basic education prevailed. She added that Filipino youth's return to in-person education today is a significant milestone. In schools that have started with setup in the classroom, face masks must be worn at all times, temperatures must be checked, and proper sanitation must be followed. One of the facilities that schools provide in accordance with health and safety regulations is handwashing stations in order to guarantee a safe return to classes during the coronavirus pandemic. The fact that the students are finally returning to school and will be able to learn from their teachers in the classroom is a great source of optimism. However, a lack of teachers, classrooms, and other facilities as a result of the rising enrollment rate makes it extremely difficult for some schools to accommodate all of their students. Because of this, educational establishments have decided to shift classes so that there will be two shifts per day in order to make use of all of the facilities and teachers that are available. extending the usual learning time per subject area to one hour and forty-five minutes. making small concessions in order to meet the requirements of the students. But is it sufficient? Is it favorable? Does this solution still yield satisfactory outcomes? Are the educators able to complete their lessons in just 45 minutes? Or do the students gain knowledge? These are the unanswered questions that are lingering in our minds.

Since the students are trying to catch up on their last two years of face-to-face classes, it is also beneficial for them to take 45 minutes of classes and have a shifting

schedule. They are attempting to instill in us the belief that learning is similar to what we are accustomed to. Students are still trying to get ready and willing to participate in learning again. Therefore, we can eventually create the learning environment we are accustomed to by taking it slow and taking each step one at a time. Additionally, the Philippines' educational system will once again be at its best.

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