

LEARNING AMIDST TAG-INIT

by:

Monaliza D. Perez

Master Teacher 1 Mabayo Elementary School

The dry season or 'tag-init' in the Philippines, usually starts in December and ends in May, with April and May being the hottest months. The school year of 2022-2023, which began last August 22, 2022, and is scheduled to end on July 7, 2023, is severely affected by the extreme heat during the dry season. With this, the Department of Education gave public and private school principals and administrators authority to cancel or suspend face-to-face classes and instead shift to module-based or distance learning amidst the sweltering summer heat.

In a study conducted by Associate Professor Joshua Goodman of Harvard Kennedy School in 2018, cumulative exposure to extreme heat negatively impacts students' cognitive skill development and academic achievements. They observed that students' academic performance scored lower when they had experienced a hotter school year than when they had experienced a cooler school year, suggesting that extreme heat is responsible for students' significant drop in test scores.

In the Philippines, temperatures may reach 37 °C, while the heat index may rise to as high as 48 °C. These extreme temperatures negatively affect learning, as well as the overall health and well-being of students. The intense heat can increase irritability and distractions and decrease cognitive performance, hindering learning efficiency. Moreover, when the classroom is too hot, students cannot focus in class, understand concepts, and retain information, which may lead to lower test scores and student performance.

The Department of Education must implement policies regarding improving learning environments, particularly in managing thermal comfort, to mitigate the adverse effects of extreme temperatures. Not only does it pose health risks to students and school staff, such as heat stroke, heat exhaustion, and dehydration, but it also affects national economic growth due to productivity and learning loss.

References:

When the heat is on, student learning suffers. Harvard Kennedy School. (2018, May 28).
<https://www.hks.harvard.edu/announcements/when-heat-student-learning-suffer>