

NEW NORMAL MODE OF LEARNING

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Two years after the emergence of the COVID-19 pandemic, we have been forced to adopt a 'new normal': work-from-home settings, parents home-schooling their children in a new blended learning environment, lockdown and quarantine, and the mandatory donning of face masks and face shields in public. But the department never stops supporting and continuing the teaching and learning process. The Department of Education (DepEd) has developed a Basic Education Learning Continuity Plan (BE-LCP) for the school year 2020–2021 in response to the difficulties presented by the ongoing effects of the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic. This plan was mandated by DepEd Order No. 012, s. 2020.

The BE-LCP is in line with the Constitution of 1987, specifically Section 1, Article XIV, which requires the government to ensure that all citizens have access to a high-quality education regardless of their socioeconomic status. The BE-LCP seeks to protect the health and safety of students, faculty, and staff during the COVID-19 pandemic while also locating means by which instruction can proceed. The BE-LCP, in particular, was crafted with a legislative framework that is adaptive to the "new normal," bearing in mind the obligation imposed by the constitution to ensure that all people have access to high-quality education at all times.

Accordingly, schools may choose to implement any number of the following learning delivery modalities, taking into account factors including the state of healthcare in the area, the school's budget, and the students' backgrounds and interests.

Directly. "Face-to-face" means that the teacher and students are in the same room at the same time, which allows for possibilities for student participation, teacher feedback, and

students' emotional and social growth. It is important to note that this approach can only be used in very low-risk locations where there is no history of infection, external connections can be easily monitored, and both teachers and students live near the school.

Online classes. It's a way of teaching and being taught where the instructor and the students are physically separated by time and space. There are three distinct varieties of this mode of instruction delivery: modular distance learning, online distance learning, and tv/radio-based education. This works best for self-directed students or students who have periodic adult supervision.

Blended learning. Blended learning is a method of teaching wherein one or more Modular Distance Learning, Online Distance Learning, and Television/Radio-Based Instruction are used in conjunction with traditional classroom-based instruction. With the use of blended learning, schools will be able to reduce the amount of time students spend in classrooms, increase the amount of time students spend alone, and reduce the number of people who are not at home at any one moment.

Homeschooling. Basic education is the focus of this approach, which seeks to give students support from trained parents, guardians, or tutors in a home setting. Since there are still various concerns in its implementation, such as the supervision of licensed teachers and alignments with the standard curriculum, this mode will be the subject of a later DepEd issuance.

However, there will be always an obstacle in every plan.

Firstly, learners who are unable to learn independently or who do not have periodic help from their parents or guardians will present a barrier when implementing any of the different forms of distance learning or blended learning. Mass development of the necessary teaching and learning materials, as well as the backing of media institutions like TV and radio stations, will be essential to the success of the implementation.

Also, DepEd will need significant new funding to realize the BE-LCP's goals. The participation of local governments, CSOs, and other interested parties is crucial at this stage.

Another is it's likely that pupils' overall growth will suffer. Students will have fewer chances to engage with their professors and peers under the BE-LCP. Students who have difficulty adapting to change may find that this has a detrimental effect on their ability to learn. This is why families and the DepEd need to work together to provide support.

Indeed, the classroom dynamic will shift significantly during the COVID-19 pandemic. Nonetheless, the DepEd is hopeful that the BE-LCP could be the key to providing quality basic education that is accessible and responsive in the new normal, despite the varying socioeconomic situations of families that affect the provision of learning support in the home, and the unique needs of different learners. With this, we need to be responsive towards the new normal setup because it is the new mode of learning.

References:

DepEd Order No. 012, s. 2020 "Adoption of the Basic Education Learning Continuity Plan for School Year 2020-2021 in the Light of the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency"
Basic Education Learning Continuity Plan in the time of COVID-19 (BE-LCP)