

ACHIEVING RESEARCH EXCELLENCE IN SCHOOLS

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In the existing curriculum and policy of the Department of Education, research is one of the important goals of the sector. Junior and senior high school students have core subjects that revolve around research such as practical research. Research plays a vital role in the self-development of learners and our nation building. As such, it is considerable that the sector and other stakeholders are collaborating to harness the power of research.

In the DepEd Order No. 39, Series of 2016, the department introduced its research agenda. It specified that the research agenda seeks to build on gains from existing pools of studies, generate new knowledge on less explored but equally important fields of basic education, focus the department's attention on relevant education issues, and maximize the available resources for research within and outside the department sector.

The World Economic Forum (WEF) has suggested certain ways to promote better research culture in communities and educational institutions. These ways are in nature collaborative and inclusive; thus, making the culture of research achievable and attainable.

First, educators can facilitate open discussions to help foster a more collaborative environment by giving learners a chance to share experiences of their successes and failures. This small step can make a big difference because this can build respect and trust within the researchers-students by talking openly and giving support.

Second, the school can encourage students and teachers to establish support systems. Support systems can boost morale and enhance a positive research environment where stress and time pressures can be limited. Support systems like this can also push students to connect with other researchers to other resources available at their institutions such as assistance programmes, forms for deadline extensions, career services and mental health services.

Third, team leaders should lead by example in promoting an excellent research culture. Department and team leaders should be at the forefront of promoting a positive research culture. In high schools, this is the task of the teachers and research advisers. Creating a positive research environment can be done through taking part in research training, encouraging forums or discussions to address difficult questions in an honest and open way, and by defining standards and work ethic boundaries.

Lastly, schools and offices of the department should embrace research culture at an institutional level. The department should highlight the importance of research culture and engage all staff. Other schools conduct a special week for research to encourage staff and students to participate in research-related activities.

These steps are crucial in the education department's goal of achieving quality education. The gains that the sector can receive in its research policy and mechanism will affect not only the lives of the students but the general welfare of Filipinos. Thus, it is the task of DepEd to promote evidence-based decision and policy-making at various levels of the department. It should be emphasized that research culture is pivotal to research excellence and that only by excellence can the department achieve quality education. More importantly, the perpetuation of the research culture guarantees that the country has students who are critical, creative thinkers and problem solvers.

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