

## THE FOUNDATIONAL SKILLS: LITERACY AND NUMERACY TODAY

*by:*

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Literacy and numeracy are fundamental pillars of a nation's educational system, shaping the future prospects of its citizens and the overall development of the country. In 2023, the Philippines, like many nations, faces the critical challenge of assessing and improving the literacy and numeracy levels of its students.

Literacy has always been a priority in the Philippines, with numerous initiatives aimed at enhancing reading and writing skills. Today, literacy rates continue to improve, thanks to government programs and NGO efforts. According to the Functional Literacy, Education and Mass Media Survey (FLEMMS), the literacy rate among Filipino students aged 10 to 24 stands at 94.5%, showcasing significant progress since previous years.

One contributing factor to this improvement is the increased access to quality education. The K to 12 program, implemented in 2013, has expanded educational opportunities, promoting early literacy and ensuring a more comprehensive curriculum. Moreover, the integration of technology into education has enhanced the accessibility of learning materials, benefiting both urban and rural areas.

On the other hand, numeracy, the ability to understand and work with numbers, is equally vital as literacy in today's technologically driven world. Presently, Filipino students are showing promising signs of numeracy improvement, as indicated by standardized test scores. According to the Department of Education, there has been a gradual increase in the numeracy proficiency of elementary and high school students over the past few years.

The government has focused on curriculum enhancements, teacher training, and the provision of resources to support numeracy skills. Innovative approaches, such as problem-based learning and interactive mathematics apps, are helping students grasp mathematical concepts effectively.

Despite these positive trends, challenges persist. Regional disparities in literacy and numeracy rates remain a concern, with some areas still struggling to provide adequate education. Additionally, socioeconomic factors can hinder educational progress for marginalized communities.

To address these challenges, there is a need for continued investment in education infrastructure, teacher training, and inclusive policies. By prioritizing early childhood education and addressing the root causes of educational inequality, the Philippines can further improve the literacy and numeracy skills of its students.

The literacy and numeracy rates among Filipino students have shown improvement, reflecting the commitment of the government and various stakeholders to provide quality education. The Philippines has made significant strides in enhancing both reading and mathematical skills, which are crucial for personal development and national progress.

While there is still work to be done, the statistical data suggests that the country is moving in the right direction. By addressing regional disparities and ensuring that education remains accessible to all, the Philippines can continue to nurture a generation of students equipped with the literacy and numeracy skills needed to thrive in the 21st century.

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