

MAXIMIZING LEARNING: UNVEILING THE IMPACT OF DEPED'S CATCH-UP FRIDAYS

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On January 12, 2024, the Department of Education (DepEd) launched the Catch-up Fridays program to bridge the learning gaps that exist among pupils in basic education. This initiative aims to promote educational equity by dedicating every Friday of the school year to specific subjects such as reading, values education, peace education, health education, and homeroom guidance. This innovative approach allows students to focus on essential topics that may have been missed during regular class days, ensuring a more well-rounded education for all.

According to DepEd, the actions it is currently implementing will help pupils improve their academic performance, especially in the area of their low proficiency levels in reading based on national and international large-scale assessments. By incorporating creative and engaging teaching methods on these dedicated Fridays, DepEd is striving to narrow the learning gaps and provide equal opportunities for all students to excel academically.

Catch-Up Fridays play a crucial role in maximizing learning opportunities for both teachers and learners. The program intends to accelerate the achievement of education goals specified in the National Learning Recovery Program (NLRP) and support the basic education priorities in the MATATAG Agenda. Since the primary goal of Catch-up Fridays is to reinforce learning, the activities will not be graded and individual students' progress will be tracked through a reflection journal, where they will write about their reading experiences, among other things.

The program's advocates assert that it provides students with valuable opportunities to develop their reading comprehension, critical thinking, and self-expression. They commend the program for meeting children's diverse learning needs, especially those struggling with reading and other subjects. They appreciate the flexibility it allows for creative and innovative teaching approaches, as well as the opportunity to establish a good and supportive learning environment in the classroom.

For teachers, Catch-Up Fridays provide the time and resources needed to revisit topics, adapt teaching strategies, and provide additional support to struggling students. This ultimately leads to a more effective and personalized learning experience for each student.

Learners benefit from Catch-Up Fridays by having the opportunity to deepen their understanding of various subjects. This extra time allows them to ask questions, engage in discussions, and receive targeted assistance from their teachers, especially in reading. They may also express themselves through other forms of writing, such as stories, journals, personal essays, and other forms of creative expression that represent their unique learning experiences.

Overall, the impact of DepEd's Catch-Up Fridays is significant as it contributes to a more inclusive and holistic approach to education that prioritizes the individual needs of both teachers and learners.

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