

LEADING BLENDED AND FLEXIBLE LEARNING IN PHILIPPINE SCHOOLS: A PRACTICAL AND SCHOLARLY GUIDE FOR PRINCIPALS

by:

Leovigildo E. Domingo Jr., EdD
School Principal II, Kanawan Integrated School

Blended and flexible learning have become key elements of Philippine education, especially after the COVID-19 pandemic reshaped how schools deliver instruction. Although face-to-face classes have returned, the Department of Education (DepEd) recognizes that blended learning continues to provide meaningful opportunities for learner access, inclusivity, and continuity of learning. For school principals, leading this approach requires strong instructional leadership, strategic planning, and the ability to balance innovation with equity.

Blended learning combines traditional face-to-face instruction with online, modular, or other flexible learning modalities. According to recent research in Philippine schools, blended approaches help accommodate diverse learners, reduce absenteeism, and support students who face transportation difficulties or require individualized pacing (Bernardo, 2021). Principals play a central role in ensuring that these approaches remain aligned with curriculum standards and DepEd policies.

The first responsibility of school leaders is to understand the regulatory framework fully. DepEd Order No. 010, s. The 2024 guidelines provide updated information on implementing blended and distance learning, outlining expectations for learning hours, assessments, and documentation. Principals must ensure that teachers design lessons that are clear, engaging, and aligned with the Most Essential Learning Competencies (MELCs). Learning tasks—whether digital or printed—should be

accessible, appropriately scaffolded, and manageable for students working independently at home.

Teacher capacity-building is critical. Studies indicate that many teachers need continuous professional development in digital pedagogy, assessment for learning, and content creation for asynchronous environments (UNESCO, 2020). Principals can support teachers by organizing workshops, facilitating peer mentoring, and providing time for collaborative lesson planning. Training need not always depend on advanced technology; even low-bandwidth tools such as SMS updates, messenger groups, or printed learning packets can sustain effective instruction.

Equity remains a major consideration. Principals should conduct periodic learner access surveys to identify what resources students can realistically use. Learners with limited connectivity may rely more on printed modules or community learning hubs. To address disparities, principals can establish device-lending programs, collaborate with barangays for study spaces, or seek partnerships with NGOs for digital support. Resource mapping helps ensure that no learner becomes disadvantaged due to economic constraints.

Assessment practices must adapt to blended learning as well. Instead of relying solely on quizzes or worksheets, teachers should use portfolios, performance tasks, and reflective journals that measure understanding and creativity. Regular feedback—through brief consultations, text messages, or home visits—helps students stay on track. Principals must help teachers design assessment systems that are fair, flexible, and aligned with DepEd standards.

Community engagement is equally important. Parents need guidance on how blended learning works, what their roles are, and how the school monitors learner progress. Regular parent orientations and simple communication channels strengthen accountability and support at home.

In summary, principals who lead blended and flexible learning with clarity, empathy, and strategic planning help broaden educational access and improve learner engagement. When properly implemented, blended learning fosters independence, creativity, and resilience among Filipino students.

References:

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