BLENDED LEARNING APPROACH IN THE TIME OF THE PANDEMIC

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2020, has been a huge challenge for everyone. The world, most especially the Philippines is not really ready to face a pandemic. Our health care system took an enormous blow due to the lack of general facility to handle the influx of patients that needed special medical attention. Many medical professionals gave their lives in order to save others in the midst of the horrible peak of the pandemic.

The education system wasn’t any better. Our schools are not equipped for such a situation. The schools were forced to shut down as the whole country underwent into an Enhance Community Quarantine (ECQ). For several months, there was a debate going around as to how the education system was going to handle the situation. For months, it became a grueling topic in the social media, especially as the month of June approached. Then, one of the options that were laid out was to undergo an academic freeze wherein students of all grade levels, of public and private should not be required to take the academic year of 2020-2021. This means that the academic year will be void and will not reflect to any record or transcript. Another, is the mass promotion or the passing of all students to the next grade level of their studies without actually having to go through the school year.

It was such a topic back then; people were debating and arguing online. Finally in August of last year the Department of Education decided that it would take neither of the route presented and would go towards the blended learning course.
Blended learning is the in between system of the traditional face to face education system which we normally use and the online learning method. It is a transition phase wherein the students are given modules and activities to answer physically and have online classes as well. Blended learning system is based on several education approach combining the traditional personal lectures, online learning and modular approach. It is a blend of teaching and learning approaches.

The DepEd chooses to focus predominantly on the modular approach wherein teachers will have to prepare modules and activity books for students, and then have guardians pick the materials up and return them afterwards. The online part of the method mostly is for communication purposes rather than actual online classes.

It is different in the Higher Education sector, though, given that some of the Universities and Colleges in the country which are already practicing blended learning approach long before the pandemic. It is an easier transition as compared to High School, Senior High, Elementary and Pre-school. The barrier between the method and the execution is still erect and can be very hard to remove. Not all households have internet service providers and devices that can be used for actual online learning. Some parents strive hard to provide education for their children but with how the pandemic has affected many companies and businesses, it is tough.

Indeed, the blended learning approach is the most logical approach that can protect both the teachers and the students against the virus. Hopefully, things will start to get better. We can all go back to normal soon. But even then, we should carry the things that we all learned from this pandemic.

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