CREATING A LEARNING COMMUNITY IN A VIRTUAL SOCIETY

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The new normal set up of the society has brought enormous changes in the landscapes of humanity and education is not spared from that. The effects of the COVID 19 pandemic has spread all over the country in all aspects of life. Before the pandemic started, students and teachers go to schools, and class starts and ends for the whole day. This changed throughout because people are no longer allowed to congregate and get together in huge numbers. This also conforms with the regular classroom set up. Since physical reporting is not allowed, the next best option is through virtual discussions.

Teachers and students were given prior information that in pursuing education in the new normal set up, physical distancing must be observed as one of the health safety protocols imposed by the Inter-Agency Task Force (IATF). This then shifts the classes from classroom to computer and internet based lessons. As basis for comparison, the traditional classroom set up, where in students come together to study, builds a stronger bond. The connection among the students and the teacher is established instantaneously because of the physical presence of all. The concept that people are there and can interact to each other without barriers or hindrances is one of the best ways in building rapport and constituting an atmosphere conducive to learning. This will be put to the test when applying alternative delivery mode of learning, specifically, virtual classes.

Since students no longer see each other on a personal scale, they may have the tendency to be distant from one another. Closeness can be established readily if people see, observe and interact to one another for long periods of time and in a physical setting. These aspects are not available in virtual learning. Students are isolated in this scenario,
that instead of enjoying one another’s company in a classroom, they are alone in their room facing the screen of the monitor. The element of socialization, warm body interactions and instant reactions are no longer present as compared to the traditional ways of classes.

Despite the situation, it is still possible that student create a community out of the virtual society. The teachers would have to be strategic in this case. One good idea of establishing the virtual community that would approximate the real physical school community is if the teacher is able to reach out to each student and show them that even if they are far from each other, the feeling of trust, concern and happiness will not diminish.

Traditional classroom activities can be transformed to virtual conforming to the situation of the students and strategies well suited on a different learning avenue must be discovered by the teachers themselves. Lectures that take time must be adjusted to suit to the virtual classroom. In addition, the teacher may opt to observe how the students behave in the social media domains. By seeing how students react, manage responses and contribute to conversations will be a great factor in planning how to execute the virtual classroom. The teacher may take the time to view the social media profiles of the students and see how they behave from there. Then the teacher may try to adopt and adapt these observations in the online class.

The community that has been established through traditional means in the old school style may still thrive in the virtual community. All it takes is some patience, passion and ingenuity.
References:

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