DISTANCE LEARNING MODALITIES UNDER THE NEW NORMAL IN EDUCATION: ARE THE TEACHERS READY?

by:

Joan F. Tuazon
Teacher II, Pita Elementary School

No teacher is prepared in this Coronavirus pandemic. As the opening of classes raises safety and health issues, the DepEd has pushed boundaries to respond to such an unprecedented situation. It introduced the different Learning Delivery Modalities (LDMs) to ensure that an effective and quality teaching-learning process could happen under the new normal in education.

DepEd Secretary Briones has reiterated that education must continue and must not be disrupted. However, the learners are also considered as one of the most vulnerable or susceptible groups to COVID-19. They are most likely to acquire and pass on the deadly virus when outside of their residences; hence, they are ordered to stay at home. Such a need gives birth to the proposal of LDMs for the new normal in education as part of the distance learning initiative of the DepEd.

Distance Learning (DL) refers to a learning delivery modality where materials are given or made accessible to learners for self-directed study at home or in another available venue (DO 21, s. 2019). In here, independent or self-learning activities and materials that can be accessed either online, stored in any device), printed form, or viewing via TV or listening to radios) are provided to the learners do to at the comfort of their home or any learning space available. Teachers served as the primary overseer of the learning process, while parents or other family members or community stakeholders can be tapped as support-facilitator.
The four types of distance learning include Modular Distance Learning (MDL), Online Distance Learning (ODL), TV-based Instruction/Radio-based Instruction (TVBI/RBI), and Blended Learning (BL).

Modular Distance Learning. It is an individualized instruction utilizing self-learning modules (SLMs), either in print or digital format. Here, the teachers seek the guidance of trained parents or any family members or community stakeholders to facilitate SLMs to the learners at home.

Online Distance Learning. It is asynchronous (does not require real-time interaction) or synchronous (requires real-time interaction) instruction using technology and internet platforms, while learners and teachers are geographically remote from one another. This is where the Learning Management System (LMS) or related technologies such as DepEd Commons and Learning Resource (LR) Portal and other social media platforms can be used effectively.

TV-based Instruction/Radio-based Instruction. It is a form of instruction using either television or radio programs on various channels or stations to provide learning content among learners who do not have access to the Internet. It can also be combined with face-to-face (F2F) learning as well as other forms of DL, including MDL or ODL.

Blended Distance Learning. It is a form of instruction combining different types of distance learning. It can be through MDL and ODL, MDL and TVBI/RBI, ODL and TVBI/RBI, or ODL, TVBI/RBI and MDL.

However, the readiness of schools and teachers is still an issue. With the poor internet connection, technology facilities, incomplete learning resources, and lack of funding, among others, the school and teachers are still in limbo on the school opening. Teachers are trained through webinars and oriented on the LDMs through a training course, but with limited financial and resource support, they can still do little to prepare themselves for the big challenge. Yes, necessary actions were taken, but teachers are still not given
full support, because like public-school learners, teachers also struggle with the new set-up in education. Government support is also badly needed by teachers in this new battle.

References:

DO 21, s. 2019. Policy guidelines on the K to 12 basic education program. DepEd Complex, Meralco Venue, Pasig City.