E-LEARNING AND HOW TO ADAPT TO THE NEW NORMAL
Written by: Normita S. Bartolome
Teacher III
San Pablo Elementary School
Dinalupihan, Bataan

Early this year, the world shuts down unexpectedly- the streets turned empty, malls were closed and classrooms were filled with silence. The global pandemic caused by the corona virus also known as COVID-19 has threaten not just our health but also our economy and most especially our everyday lives. We were forced to stay at our homes and connect to our loved ones, colleagues and students virtually. Now that there is still no cure nor vaccine has been developed to fight the virus, we must adapt to the “new normal”-that means staying at home more and connecting virtually whether for a job or a personal matter.

As teachers, we are used to going to our classrooms and meet our students personally, but now that our health is threatened how can we apply and adapt to the proposed virtual classroom and e-learning?

Here are some tips on how to stay connected with your students virtually:

*Always check-in with your students and their parents.* In this trying time, our students need more attention and affection, checking them in by group or one by one can be of good help to maintain a good rapport with your students even you are not in a classroom. Also, never forget to have a good communication with their parents so you can address an issue right away regarding the child’s performance. Aside from the virtual classroom you can also create a group chat in any social media platform to keep connected with their parents as well as the students; make them feel that despite the situation we are in, you are always a message away. Remember that social distancing and a pandemic is never a hindrance to connect.

*Your teaching skills will serve you well online.* We know how difficult it is to adjust to a new environment and how scary it is to go out of your comfort zone, but bear in mind that e-learning is not a reason to feel so lowly of yourself but instead a place for improvement and new learning experience- all you have to do is familiarize yourself with the application features and prepare your virtual aids and any teaching tools you provide for your e-learning session.
Keep in mind that what you are doing are just the same with the practice you do in an actual classroom, your preparation for an actual classroom is not different from the way you will teach virtually; remember that you still have the same audience just in a different medium.

Consider one’s availability and access to internet. In today’s digital world, it is sad to know that not everybody has access to internet especially today; it is never a priority for each student to have a strong internet connection and an updated smartphone or gadget, today’s priority is all about survival. The challenge to adapt to the new normal has been more challenging to our students especially in far flung areas, that is why their situation should also be addressed. Aside from the efforts of our government to address these issues, we can also be of help to our students by giving them consideration in a way they will not feel they are being left out. We can prepare a flexible deadline of submission to our students so they can prepare more academically and technically, also, provide a handout or a module that can be easily downloaded for easy access of everyone. If you can, you may also teach basic computer knowledge to students or parents who are not literate enough to computers.

Yes, today has been a challenging time in our world that greatly affects our education system, but, we can overcome these challenges by lifting each other up. It’s now, more than ever, that we practice the art of Bayanihan as one community; the change may be scary but always remember that this battle is not only conquered by one but by many.

Sources:
teachbetter.com
teachforamerica.org