EDUCATION DURING THE PANDEMIC

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Resilience and adaptability, the two traits which were challenged by the COVID-19 pandemic. The speed of how the virus spread and the devastation that it brought was something that surprised the majority of the world. Although some researchers stated that the world is due for a pandemonium after the Spanish Flue of 1918 to 1920 which killed an estimated 17-100 million people or 1-5.4% of the total world population. The Spanish Flue is also second to the worst pandemic that plagued the world, the first is the Black Death caused by the Bubonic plague in the 1300 that took 75-200 million lives or over 50% of the European population.

Fortunately, unlike both of those scenarios, we already have the modern medicine to combat the virus. Covid-19 or also identified by the WHO as the severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2). Is a flu strain that targets the respiratory system causing symptoms like; fever, sore throat, cough, and even shortness of breath and difficulty of breathing. It is a highly infectious disease that can spread through respiratory droplets. Due to the manner of how the virus spread, enclosed spaces and place with high density of people are at high risk. Places like the public transportations, malls, restaurants, business, and especially schools and universities are of the ones that are closed for the protection of the people. The countries affected also implemented lockdowns and isolations to prevent more infections which can aggravate the situation.

However, as the months passed, the economy of the countries suffered. The school year also needs to progress despite the global situation, students must learn. Normal face
to face setting is not applicable since the virus is still very much prevalent and the risk of transmission is still high. Thus the Department of Education (DepEd) came up with the Blended learning. Another option was to fully embrace the online learning approach, however, the Philippine education system is not ready for the transition due to the fact that internet connectivity is not associable for everyone. There are place in the country, especially remote areas that don’t even have access to electricity, let alone internet. Not every student has gadgets and devices to use for online classes.

Unlike for private schools that have the capacity to transition fully to online, public schools are not as fortunate. Thus the blended learning approach. The blended learning also uses online access but only minimal. It is more for commination, rather than actually education. This approach utilizes modules and other learning materials that students can answer remotely and submit at a later date. Through this the interaction of teachers and students will be limited, thus decreasing the probability of spread of the virus.

Although the system is not fully polished and is still in need of refinement to achieve a smooth process, it is the best option there is that will protect both the students and the educational providers.

Now as we enter the fourth quarter of 2021, the rollout of the vaccine is ongoing, but the cases of COVID-19 are still continuously increasing by the day. By the looks of things, there will be more time to troubleshoot and perfect the way things are handle.

References: