EMERGENCE OF EGAMES/ ESPORTS IN PHYSICAL EDUCATION AND HEALTH

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The digital age has conquered our ways of life and we cannot deny the fact that most of our students of today are immersed in the continuous development of technology. These innovations bring color and ease in various aspects such as researching for information, looking for answers in homework and assignments, knowing the procedure of cooking a dish or fixing a piece of broken furniture, communicating instantly even to those who are far away from us, and spending time enjoying whatever is there on the gadgets and the internet. Our learners own smartphones that they use not just to learn, but also to entertain themselves. Nowadays, with the prevalent case of the worldly pandemic, young people engage themselves in online games for some reasons: 1) to protect their mental health; 2) to relieve their distresses; 3) to get connected with their friends; 4) to do better apart from the real world, and 5) to participate in such games where the platform makes them grow and innovate.

Sports are still on track as many people choose to play and move their muscles for exercise. Even with the risk of COVID-19, some go out to play basketball, volleyball, badminton, swimming, tennis, track and field, and many more. Sports and games play a vital role in the physical, mental, emotional, and social health of the citizens. In fact, it raises a person’s cardiovascular immunity and develops a more flexible body. When health is there as an issue, sports and games are answers to resolve the conflict – resonating to a more creative and stronger recreational activities and leisure. This is also the basis why Physical Education and Sports never get too old in the Philippine Education Curriculum. Senior High School students take these subjects for four semesters. They
venture on dance, local and international games, arts, and health. Meanwhile, the sports world expands just like the other conventions and specializations.

There is now what we call E-Games or E-Sports.

According to Wagner (2006), eSports is a competitive computer gaming popular to children, teenagers, and even adults. It was not given attention before due to slow pacing of the technology in the country. The eSports phenomenon has become the rudimentary element in the culture of the students especially now in the 21st century or digital age. Although this technological advancement has first appeared in the 1990s, computer and software experts partnered themselves with game developers. There was no clear objective before that the eGames are for educational purposes. Instead, its primary goal was to allow players to stay at home while having fun.

Due to the dominant influence of these high-end games, even the educational community has been integrating its concept and idea to promote holistic education and to raise awareness of how media platforms reshape the culture of the learners in strengthening their recreational routine. The games they play began with the era of DOTA (Defense of the Ancients) in 2002 and after more than a decade, it was considered an eSport.

Afterward, game applications and stores promoted GTA (Vice City), Left 4 Dead (A Zombie Game), Call of Duty (COD that has a mobile version and is widely played by many), Clash of Clans (COC), Valorant, and Mobile Legends (ML) Bang Bang. In the last SEA Games in the Philippines that occurred in 2019, eSports have the following categories to play:

- Cross Fire;
- DOTA 2;
- FIFA Online 4;
- Starcraft II;
• Garena Free Fire;
• Hearthstone;
• League of Legends;
• PUBG Mobile;
• Arena Valor; and
• Mobile Legends: Bang Bang.

This event certainly called the attention of the community to accept that eSports are a trend and can boost the confidence of the players. However, many experts still see the disadvantages of mobile and computer gaming. Professional gaming must still be in the pedestal to reflect the discipline a player needs. Too much engagement in the world of online games and sports is called addiction and is inversely proportional to health risks.

Now that our society is embracing the new normal, our young generation approves this norm – that gaming is their best escape from the problems and pressure. The emergence of eGames or eSports must not be romanticized. Instead, teachers must restructure their purpose. Integrating it into Physical Education and Health subjects is not a problem as long as the pillars are built concretely. Students must enjoy learning, must go out and play, but at the end of the day, they are supposed to learn from what they delve onto. The usual routine to exercise and play sports has widened its horizon.

The virtual world is not far from the real world anymore. Teachers will still be there to advise students about the limitations of eGames.

References: