FLEXIBLE LEARNING IN THE NEW NORMAL EDUCATION

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Flexible learning is one way to address the needs of education under new normal conditions. Flexible learning gives learners’ choices and opportunities when, where, and how they learn. It uses the delivery methods of distance education, in which the main objective is to provide the learners with the most flexibility on the learning content, access, schedules, and innovative assessment, making use of digital and non-digital learning tools and materials.

Learning institutions have the discretion to decide what most viable form of flexible learning and teaching they will utilize to address the needs of their learners in the existing situation. Teacher-learner engagement or communication can be thru short message service (SMS), electronic mail (email), chat, instant messaging, and other means of communication that are convenient, appropriate, and available are used to ensure personalized, effective, efficient, and timely mentoring and feedback mechanisms in delivering education under this new normal situation.

Flexible learning for distance education is a method of teaching where the learner and the teacher are physically separated from each other. Technologies, such as audio, video, computer, and the internet are used as the delivery mechanism as well as printed materials like modules are used to reach all types of learners and their needs.

One of the major benefits of flexible learning is increased access to learning opportunities. Learners can commonly take it online using a blended model of delivery. Flexibility learning means constraints relating to being physically at a place or present at a particular time are reduced by providing lessons online in a virtual classroom.
However, flexibility doesn’t suit all learners. Some learners need structure and direction, and less experienced learners may struggle with self-direction and motivation, thus, blended learning or a mix of fully digital distance provision, structured face-to-face learning, flexible learning is the appropriate terms for education under the new normal. Other problems are the availability of internet connections due to a lack of resources. Modules and other printed learning materials are still used to reach other learners with difficulties of accessing the lessons online.

Education may maximize our potential to find better, more satisfying jobs, earn more and, perhaps, become more successful in our chosen career, however, because of the new normal condition, continuous learning and having an active mind throughout life may be delayed, thus flexible learning provides opportunities to further develop and enhance one's knowledge and skills needed throughout life. Life-long learning must not be suffered or at risk even we are in the new normal situation. Teachers provide activities that will help the learners develop psychomotor skills even in flexible learning. Opportunities to learn something really should take place in a variety of settings. As it is said, the learner expands choice on what, when, where, and how to learn knowledge and skills he wishes to learn. Flexible learning is moving away from a situation in which the key decisions about learning are made in advance towards a situation where the learner has a range of options to learn. Thus, educators should personally and professionally be equipped with basic skills in using different technologies and platforms to cope with the needs under the new normal education situation.

References:
