IDENTIFYING AND MANAGING DIGITAL FATIGUE: WAYS TO LOOK AFTER YOUR WELL-BEING

by:

Jo Marie Nel C. Garcia
Teacher II, Justice Emilio Angeles Gancayco Memorial High School

When we bought our mobile phones, laptops and other gadgets, our goal as teachers is to make our work life easier. Since we are in the digital age, it is hard to imagine ourselves working without programs like Microsoft Word, PowerPoint and Excel. Technology plays a big part in our lives, but none of us imagined it will take the center stage until the pandemic hit us.

Due to the new work set up in compliance with the Inter-Agency Task Force for the Management of Emerging Infectious Diseases (IATF – EID) guidelines, most of us are now working from home. Although this has granted us to stay safe, we are now faced with a new phenomenon that threatens not only our physical but also our psychological health.

The condition is called Digital Fatigue, wherein people feel tired or exhausted as a consequence of prolonged sitting while using digital tools and apps. Given the new reality of our educational system, teachers spend long hours in front of the screen, having classes, attending webinars or doing reports and school forms. Overusing digital tools in the learning process could give us sore or itchy eyes, blurred vision, painful neck and shoulders due to poor posture and more headaches than usual (Coates 2020). More than physical symptoms, some of us also find it harder to concentrate and absorb information.

Avoiding Digital Fatigue is almost next to impossible, but we can do a few things to manage it. First, we should choose virtual activities that we will attend and focus our efforts on using one program or application at a time. We are not obliged to attend all webinars especially if they are happening at the same time. We must also try to avoid
doing other things like chatting, computing grades or sending emails when we are participating in a webinar. Second, set time and space limit. Have a workspace at home and try to work only during office hours so your body can rest and you can focus your attention nurturing your relationship with your family. And last, make self-care a priority. Aside from eating healthy meals, exercising and getting at least seven hours of sleep, teachers should also practice positive affirmation and quiet time, wherein we can meditate or do absolutely nothing for a few minutes to let our body and mind rest. These practices can improve our mindset and trigger feelings of relaxation, motivation and happiness.

References: