KEEPING CLASS ENGAGEMENT ALIVE IN MODULAR DISTANCE LEARNING

by:

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COVID-19 pandemic has brought catastrophe on every aspect of life, and even Education is not spared from this global crisis. Based on teachers' observation during the first quarter of distance learning, there were a lot of concerns about the learning process of their students. Most public schools around the country are currently using self-learning modules, and the teachers believed that it could not be the sole solution for the students to learn all their lessons. Most science classes promote self-discovery of knowledge through hands-on experiences, yet the process is motivating and entertaining for the students in the normal setting. Never yet, for some reason, self-learning modules cannot replicate what face-to-face class can offer.

For science class to be engaging and entertaining in a remote learning situation, a simple, do-it-yourself, hands-on home experiment should be perfect for students to spark interest. The experiment needs to contain a printed, easy-to-follow step-by-step procedure with photographs, a YouTube video tutorial weblink for additional reference and a questionnaire that follows the scientific method during experiments. Materials to be used on the experiments should be non-hazardous, convenient to prepare and readily available in their residences or community. In the US, an elementary teacher asked her students to do a home experiment called "the burping bag", which is done by mixing vinegar and baking soda in a plastic bag. As for her, even though school laboratories were closed, teachers still need to find an alternative approach for students to learn science even in the comfort of their homes (Reuters, 2020).
Another way of keeping students' interest in studying science is by allowing pupils to explore nature in their backyard. Asking the learners to observe living things within their house periphery is a fun activity and informative at the same time. Letting them draw and explain their observation based on their actual encounter with the different variety of plants or various types of rocks will help them understand and retain many ideas about their lessons. By the time of face-to-face classes, highly rated teachers use real-life connections in the classroom to make the learning experience fun, engaging, and meaningful to optimize engagement and learning (Alstad, 2019).

Finally, asking the pupils to create science projects that are motivational, inexpensive, environmentally friendly, and informative is another avenue to promote class enthusiasm and pupils. Projects are examples of hands-on learning wherein pupils learn by doing. Instead of merely listening to a teacher lecture about a given subject, the student engages with the subject matter to solve a problem or create something (Martin, 2020). Some of the benefits obtained from this educational philosophy are that it can increase retention of ideas or knowledge from the lesson. It offers practice in problem-solving and critical thinking skills.

The mentioned remote class activities are generally perilous and can be life-threatening if taken for granted. Teachers should clearly explain the instructions and safety precautions to the responsible individuals involved in the cited classwork. Guidance and utmost supervision of parents or guardians are necessary during these activities to prevent accidents. Safety and health protocols against covid-19 should be followed strictly by both parties whenever necessary.

This educationally challenged era is evident proof that the only constant in life changes. Most people right now need to adapt and survive. Schools should present newer and more practical ideas to help the teaching-learners process evolve and adapt to the new normal. Teachers should be part of the instrument that can still make the teaching-learning process sparks an interest, motivational among pupils, and yet they
are still learning the lessons they need to understand. Creative minds and social empathy are vital ingredients that could fuel on crafting of a solution out of this current dilemma.

This educationally challenged era is an obvious proof that the only constant in life is change. Most people right now need to adapt and survive. Schools should present newer and more effective ideas in helping the teaching-learners process evolve and adaptive to the new normal. Teachers should be part of the instrument that can still make the teaching-learning process sparks an interest, motivational among pupils and yet they are still learning the lessons that they need to understand. Creative minds and social empathy are some of the key ingredients that could fuel the crafting of solution out of this current dilemma.

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