“LOOKING BACK YET MOVING FORWARD”

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“Cold winter breeze signaled the season of giving where people are highly anticipating another extravagant holidays ahead—Christmas. However, a global pandemic caused this tradition to crumble and individuals were urged to distance themselves from one another.”

The friction of chalk does to a board, bells signifying recess and busy parents picking up their children from school are now nowhere to be found except from fond memories. Global pandemic has taken its toll to humanity for the past year where drastic measures, especially in education, have been observed to cope with this phenomenon that could be taken as a double-edged sword.

Admittedly, detrimental consequences such as: the traditional routine of students waking up early in observance of punctuality, interactive discussions inside the classroom, and children hanging out with friends after class are some instances that vast people are longing for. Past eleven o’clock in the evening or so would be the norm of sleeping these days for children are so drawn to social medias in order to keep up with the latest trend. Subsequently, instilling that tardiness is a bad habit at a young age is not anymore practiced given that they do not have to wake up early just to prepare going to school. Studies suggest that children who are sleep deprived present low motivation and difficulties in learning which is why most recent assessments have low scores. Before, teachers could solve this issue sooner given the face-to-face discussions inside the classroom along with engaging activities that definitely aid in motivating students to learn. Zoom meetings or modules, at present, are ways to counter the social distancing and still pursue discussions. It can never be denied that these are helpful methods yet,
limited. Engagement and physical presence have great impacts on student and teacher relationship that transcends the digital world. Take for example the high-fives that a Teacher give to affirm a great performance of a toddler, it boosts their moral and self-esteem to do more; these are then vital in child’s growth for stepping up in the real world. Same goes with the rapport that has been built through physical interactions, this makes the school a second home for children and for them to consider Teachers as second parents. In this way, they would feel that they are part of something bigger, somewhere they belong to as what Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs would reiterate, self-belongingness. Finally, socialization as a fundamental concept in school which fosters camaraderie and collaboration are tools aiming to produce respect and harmonious relationships despite the differences in beliefs and opinions. Children learn that no man is an island. Unfortunately, these are not possible given the current circumstance and that younger generations are trapped into the virtual reality of friendship. Connecting online is not the same as seeing friends in person, and that children are missing out on genuine friendships.

On the brighter side, this event has toughened up the resilience and creativity of the government, schools, learners and even other citizens. Budgets to fund distribution of electronic gadgets have been raised to reach those far-flung areas along with the installation of free Internet. With these, children can still access education despite their locations. Furthermore, schools look at this situation with a silver lining by embracing technical breakthroughs and can come up with ways on how to address various problems like motivating students to learn, diverting their fears to hope and dreams. Of course, this would have never been possible if not for Teachers—the unsung heroes. No matter how perfect a plan is, the execution of a Teacher has the final say. Teachers tirelessly come up with activities that could engage students even though it is just on screen. To bridge the digital gap, they become much more creative in delivering online lessons and constructing their modules. Instructional materials are now rampant once more coupled with the up-to-date applications online like Tiktok, simply to entertain the students and
keep their attentions. Handouts that were used to be a boring paper full of exercises to answer have been transformed to a crossword puzzle or magazine-like, although still in plain black and white, to entice students in studying. Few changes that showcase our Heroes’ resilience and undying passion to deliver quality education. It is also important to acknowledge the helping hands of concerned citizens who are caring in their own little but priceless ways. Some computer shops allow free printing of modules to students, and some households share their computers for students to comply with the necessary outputs for the subject. Simple acts of kindness that bring out the compassionate side of people amidst this pandemic. Lastly, the students learned independence given that 21st Century Teachers are facilitators. Honing such skill is best in this tough time. They become more analytic and tech-savvy in searching for relevant information online. Fake news are then filtered better these days for the next generation are equipped with capabilities to know what is truth beyond what is popular. Cooperation has become much more needed for them to survive and making sure that no one is left behind. Despite the physical distances, their will to unite and make the most out of this situation has even become brighter.

In a nutshell, fiascos are indeed inevitable, but it is on how we, people of contemporary period, would look at it either as a glass-half filled or a glass-half empty. Systems in education might be failing to accommodate and address all student’s need, yet one can rest be assured that the government, schools, Teachers, citizens and students are also doing their part to strive in this difficult time. Up until now, people are waiting for this ‘rain’ to stop, luckily, they learned how to take a shower under it.

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