OVERCOMING ANXIETY IN DISTANCE LEARNING

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The Corona virus disease pandemic has changed the world. Due to this crisis, the education system in the Philippines experienced a rapid transition from the conventional face-to-face class setting to distance or remote learning. The pandemic serves as the catalyst for this abrupt change. To ensure that education will continue during and beyond this pandemic, the Department of Education (DepEd) offers various learning modalities to sustain and provide quality education despite of community quarantines and lockdowns (Tria, 2020). The modalities offered by DepEd are modular distance learning, blended learning and home schooling. The modules are both printed and digital. Online learning is also integrated in the different modalities (Codamon, 2020). Learners will continue to learn at home with the guidance of their parent. Teachers may guide the learners via text, call, videoconference, and online platforms. With these new learning modalities and set-up, learners are face with challenges.

Due to the sudden change, lack of knowledge and readiness in distance learning, learners may feel anxious while learning in the new normal. Anxiety affects academic performance since it obstructs the normal cognitive process. Anxiety has a negative correlation with student achievement. It has a negative correlation with the realization of important mental and emotional outcomes. It also causes students to consistently underperform (Ajmal & Ahmad, 2019). Anxiety in distance learners stems from different negative life experiences and expectations.

Learners may experience technological anxiety. In online distance learning, learners use different technologies such personal computers, tablets, mobile phones, software, and applications. Technological anxiety is the feeling of being fearful when
using modern technologies in learning. Language anxiety also poses a threat to learning as it causes problems related to self-esteem and self-confidence. They may also experience social and test anxiety. All of this may affect not only academic performance but also the learner’s cognition, behavior, and physiology. More importantly, it may cause resistance to learning (Ajmal & Ahmad, 2019; Tuncay & Uzunboylu, 2010).

Since the setting for the new normal education is at home, parents are the primary source of support for distance learners. Parents are taking more responsibility in their children’s learning than ever before. Parents are key in the success of distance learning. They can help avoid or diminish the negative effects of anxiety to their children. Here are some ways for parents to keep learners away from anxiety: a) make space dedicated to learning; b) set a routine to let learners know what to expect within the day or week; c) review expectations and come up with the list of dos and don’ts during distance learning; d) encourage self-regulation; e) give detailed praise and constructive comments and; f) always motivate and give rewards for accomplishments. These are simple things that parents can do to make learning at home more meaningful and decrease the level of anxiety of learners towards distance learning (Elgersma, 2020).

Learners should also take responsibility in overcoming their anxiety specially for junior and senior high school students. Here are some tips for learners to be successful in distance learning: a) get enough sleep to keep your stress and anxiety levels manageable; b) eat healthy foods to increase energy and academic performance; c) stay organized; d) manage your time wisely; e) check in with yourself and; f) get the help that you need from your family, teachers and friends (Walden University, n.d). With these tips, learners may reduce anxiety and perform more academically.

There are more challenges up ahead in this new normal in education. Parents play an essential role in educating their children and must enjoy the learning process. It is normal to feel anxious towards distance learning. Learner should cope up with anxiety
with the help of their parents. Overcoming anxiety is beneficial for it teaches the learner lifelong learning skills.

References: