Paulo Freire, a Brazilian educator, has contributed a lot to the goals of transformational education when he wrote: “The Pedagogy of the Oppressed” in the 1970s. His book showcases two types of educational praxis – the Banking System Education and the Problem-Posing Education. The former is also known as the traditional one where teachers do all the talking while the learners are sitting meekly, being spoon-fed with information. Its disadvantage is that it does not allow the students to be free to uncover their inner abilities and intelligence. They tend to rely on the information that will come from the teacher. The latter system reflects the student-centered paradigm. Teachers are less likely to talk because they are the facilitators while the students do most of the activities to learn mostly on their own. Praxis is a practice distinguished from a theory. Problem-Posing education became the change, the shift, the new model to achieve the societal goals where our students and teachers are the cores.

Today, there is another revolution in our praxis. Six months ago, the whole world has been stricken by a deadly disease. It almost stopped the breathing of the country when the positive cases of the COVID-19 increased. Day by day, it elevates. It deposited a great threat to everyone, no choosing between the rich and the poor. The school year 2019-2020 did not end gloriously. Some schools were not able to distribute the fourth quarterly examination. The teachers had to adjust with the computation of grades to give fair marks to the students. Some activities
postponed at first temporarily, but now it got longer. It was a dispute – the vision, mission, goals, and objectives of education versus the darkness of the global plague. The Philippines is now on the verge of increasing afflicted people, and today, most parents are worried about the learning of their children, at the same time, their health. No one indeed wants to put the lives of the children at risk, even the teachers will never want that. We, teachers, are also parents so we know the feeling.

The Department of Education has announced before that the official opening of the new school year is August 24, 2020 but did not push through according to plan. Varieties of strategic teaching and learning modalities have been studied and are now being considered to be utilized and applied by educators. The role of the teachers in the new normal is to ensure the productivity of the learning process with smaller risks and bigger advantages. Teachers are led by their school leaders to recreate a structural curriculum with applicable learning competencies that will meet the standards and the needs. It is not easy, though. Teachers are expected to attend the webinar as part of the preparation to construct instructional materials for the students and at the same time, as part of the professional growth.

Webinars are also a product of praxis. These are not simply giving the edge of glory to beat the heat of the pandemic, but these are the turning point of the seasons of change. Not attending even one webinar is like being disinterested to grow concerns in light of this dilemma. Being aware of what is happening in the world is also a role of an educator. Current events are helpful news. Teachers are supposed to care and to make informed actions.

Nowadays, most teachers are busy creating modules, learning kits, educational videos, and other innovative instructional materials. Wise is a teacher who puts his or her students by heart. Paulo Freire has been an inspiration to most educators in the millennia. Through his praxis, we know how to adjust, to uphold the core values we have, to hold on to the pillars of
education, to teach our learners to live, to embrace our new roles, and to believe in the potentials every person possesses. While we are solely affected by the issues and challenges around us, we tend to see the solutions that are waiting to be picked and applied by us. The common quandaries that we face are the equipment and technologies needed by both teachers and students; the distance to reach those who reside in the slums; the protocols that all must obey; the new system that rose; the strategies that are bound to reflect the practices in school and the practices at home.

The new normal has transformed teachers into higher-level innovators working in a different environment. Meanwhile, working from home is the transit of the employees, the teaching and non-teaching forces. The work-from-home setup protects the lives of the educational movers while still upholding and performing the duties and responsibilities set by the authority and the institution.

To the teachers, spending time at home with family is a strong foundation, but it also makes arduous tasks confined with uncertain adjustments. That is not a complaint, no one must complain about the situation. No one has the utmost advantage. Everyone is affected.

The praxis today is the birth of a new pedagogy – the pedagogy of virtual education. We have a long way to go to engage a hundred percent of the students in the online learning modality. It will be tough, but in time, teachers will be able to do it, and no student will get left behind.

References:

• The Pedagogy of the Oppressed by Paulo Freire, 1970, Brazil.