The Department of Education (DepEd), with positivity and confidence to its equipped teachers, competent school administrators, and supportive stakeholders, has taken a huge leap on opening the classes despite the problems brought by the pandemic. Though many were adamant in accepting this decision, never yet accusing the institution that it is unrealistic, indifferent, and ambitious, DepEd still realizes its mandate to educate Filipino youth in any circumstances (DepEd, 2019). Thus, no pandemic can stop the institution from delivering quality education to the Filipino youth (DepEd, 2020a). However, the question now is how DepEd manages to provide quality education during this time of the pandemic.

There are four (4) explanations on how DepEd manages to deliver quality education to the learners amidst the global crisis. These are proper planning, upskilling of teachers, developing different learning materials, learning through different modalities, and partnership with parents. Through these efforts, intertwined with the teachers, school heads, and stakeholders' participation, providing quality education is made possible.

Proper planning. Covid-19 almost caught everybody off guard (Diliberti, Schwartz, Hamilton, & Kaufman, 2019). No educational institutions have predicted and made an immediate and outstanding plan to respond to the pandemic's challenges. However, though this has been true for many, DepEd still strived to manage and respond to the situation (DepEd, 2020c). Collaboration within stakeholders has led
teachers and school heads winners over the problems. Likewise, their localized plan effectively responded to local needs of situation.

Upskilling of the teacher. Pandemic has moved DepEd to immediately prepare teachers especially in different learning modalities (Briones, 2020). Though this is not new, there are teachers who still lack knowledge and skills. As a response, massive online training from different organizations in partnership with DepEd started to empower teachers with appropriate and suitable teaching strategies and techniques parallel with the situation. Exploiting the availability of mass media platforms like Facebook, learning became open regardless of institutional affiliation. Hence, teachers took the opportunity to upskill and to improve themselves in teaching to better serve their pupils. Likewise, there are also school-initiated video conferences in various behavioral and psychological topics. Through these, teachers became aware, informed, and later developed the skill needed for this learning setting. They are prepared physically, emotionally, socially with the challenges of teaching for this school year (Johnson, 2020).

Development of different learning materials. Researches attest to the effectiveness of Self Learning Modules (SLM). On this basis, massive development of SLM across grade levels is initiated. Teachers, master teachers, supervisors, and even school heads participated and collaborated to develop these materials. Even sacrifices became inevitable, SLM from 1st to 4th quarter are developed. Though some materials manifest limitations, these are clear manifestation of competency, passion, dedication, and love of the different people who devout themselves for their creation.

Learning through various modalities. The different situation calls for a different response. Schools became versatile to the needs of their pupils taking in mind that learning is not exclusive to face-to-face. There are other means to provide education. It can be through modular, online, radio broadcasting, or even television (DepEd, 2020b). Looking at the potentials of social media, even teachers have utilized the use of free
internet platforms for instruction. Communication is possible through Facebook messenger becoming an avenue to provide quality education to the pupils.

Partnership with parents. During this pandemic, parents' role in the academic formation of the pupils became evident. Likewise, their collaboration in the learning process has been made very clear. Therefore, strong partnerships with parents became one of the most important concerns in the school plan. Though teachers are conducting remote home visitation, teaching and learning is still very hard to happen in the absence of common ground - classroom. Hence, with the help of the parents, this dilemma is overcome. Parents became the domestic teacher of the pupils, especially in the lower grade level (Bhamani et al., 2020). With the consistent follow-ups and direct engagement, pupils can still experience quality education.

It is a misconception that quality education is synonymous with a Utopian concept of intelligence wherein all need to have a genius's intellectual quotient. Moreover, it is not a teacher-centered education wherein the most important influence on learners' education is the teacher. Further, it is not also confined to the four corners of the classroom, nor is face-to-face instruction the most effective means. Education is more than the school or the classroom. Neither the teacher nor the school is the only vessel of information. Quality education is more than the conventional perception of learning. Actually, it happens when pupils develop all of their attributes and potentials as human people and members of society (Thangeda, Baratiseng, & Mompati, 2016). It is neither about memorized information nor how competencies are applied in their daily lives. Quality education is learner's holistic academic formation, thus preparing pupils for life, not just for testing.
References:


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