STRESS FREE DISTANCE LEARNING

by:

Goeil A. Bernas
Teacher III, Limay National High School

Covid – 19 pandemic adversely affected the lives of people regardless of nationality, educational status, income or gender. The widespread of the virus brings fear to entire human race that changes the normal life into complex scenario. The pandemic spreads all over the world and changes the way we live, interact, work, teach and learn. Many countries experienced an urgent total or partial lockdown which resulted to the immediate closure of different institutions. Thus, teachers and students had to adapt with remote teaching as a modality to continue education. This is also true for teacher education of managing self-capability in adapting the new normal. The need in adapting the to new contexts of teaching-learning program in form of online teaching has revealed how educators and education institutions encountered and experienced the challenges and opportunities to continue their job in time of unexpected circumstances (e.g. Flores and Gago 2020; Nasri et al. 2020; Quezada, Talbot, and Quezada-Parker 2020). Coping with the present threats of the virus could be difficult to deal with but the teachers must not stop in bringing quality education. This enlightens educators to seek trainings and seminars to help them equipped with the new ways of teaching. The pandemic delimits the face-to-face interaction between students and teachers which challenges teacher education to rethink ways of reeducating teachers for scenarios that are unpredictable.

The suspension of classroom teaching in many schools around the world gives the way of establishing distance learning. This modality provides an alternative response to minimize either the contact between students themselves or between the students and teachers. Using distance learning brings students and teachers to the new world of
teaching-learning program. The formation of creative solutions is imperative to sustain the needs of learners.

Educators take on the challenge of designing quality distance learning experiences, they’re coming face-to-face with a range of equity issues in their school communities.

Many students are experiencing problems for the lack of internet and technology access at home. Many individuals who are employed before lost their jobs and are now struggling to meet basic needs. For parents who work in essential jobs outside the home, older students are sometimes responsible for their younger siblings, making at-home learning a challenge. The teachers, administrators, and families of students with special needs are having doubts if it is possible to sustain the needs of learners with disabilities that could give equal opportunity to have quality education in this time of pandemic. Despite these challenging situations, teachers are looking for some effective ways in using available tools to reach the learners and support families in need.

Seven Ways to Make Distance Learning More Equitable

1. Check in with your students regularly.

Creating and saving personal information, especially contact of your students and their families is beneficial in proving them necessary support. It is effective to maintain an updated contact list and use different modes of communication like phone calls, text messages, texting apps, and emails. If you can't reach some of your students or their families, you can try reaching their emergency contacts or team up with community help desk like barangay or municipal officials.

2. Help your students' families get connected.

Distance learning would be effective if there is a stable with internet connectivity. Students who have weak Wi-Fi connection will not be able to do work, view online
materials, or attend online classes. You may tap public officials to seek some help to provide your students and their families with access they need.

3. Choose tools that are mobile-friendly.

Expect that the students and their families are facing technical obstacles. Properly accommodate the problems and empower parents to provide learning opportunities for their children. Ensure the you have provided students self-learning modules, worksheets and other printed materials for they need some other options for learning. Provide a list of high-quality apps that don not demand Wi-Fi or data connection, and check mobile-friendly applications, for some students might only have a gadget for the time being.

4. Provide asynchronous and synchronous lessons.

As synchronous lessons can help students and teachers meet each other in an online way and are more familiar to see how teaching and learning in the physical classroom works. Virtual interactions with teachers and other students can also help learners still feel connected to their learning community. But it is important not to set aside barriers the students might face in connecting to the livestreamed classes. Proving asynchronous lessons available can also help students view prerecorded power point presentations, participate in class discussions, or complete learning tasks on their own prepared time. This provides students flexible learning and more chances for success.

5. Double down on project-based learning.

Project-based learning allows students extra learning through working with the given extended. Giving this tool makes learners student-driven. Inquiry-based projects promotes students’ skills in investing for their learning, which can counter the feeling of disconnection in some extent. Collaborative projects make every project an opportunity to bring out learners’ abilities and learning styles in working toward a common goal. Moreover, you can use project-based learning to guide students who are in need of extra
enrichment or, for students who are having difficulties to complete assignments, an alternative way to improve learning.


Extra-curricular activities build students’ sense of responsibility and discipline. Coaches and extracurricular leaders must continue connecting with their students who have love for sports, clubs and others. Being mindful with the interests of students builds good relationship for they see you as one of their greatest role models.

7. Partner with community-based organizations.

Impose the creation of a team of support from community and school partners which considered as stakeholders. Invite organizations to create a greater impact and to provide the support students and families need. In challenging times, seek others’ help to strengthen existing relationships and build new ones.

Reference:

https://www.commonsense.org/education/articles/7-ways-to-make-distance-learning-more-equitable