"Expect the Unexpected" is a famous quote that isn't new to our ears since we are all familiar with it and somehow encountered it in our lives. It is a bliss in the heart when things we didn't expect suddenly come to us. Like how we didn't expect to perfect the exam even though it was difficult. And how we didn't expect to win the grand prize in the raffle even though we only had one entry. All these small unexpected things are relieving and joyous. However, not all sudden things can bring relief and joy, not all the time. Like in the year 2020, in the month of March, everyone around the world was in total shock when the governments of different countries announced a sudden community lockdown. Many regions in the Philippines immediately undergo an Enhanced Community Quarantine, wherein every area is in a total lockdown. As a result, the Department of Education (DepEd) suspended the remaining classes of students and temporarily shut down the operation of all schools. For a span of six months, the education of students and the teaching of teachers had been on hold because of the huge waves of Covid-19 cases in the Philippines. Within those months, teachers, who are most often the breadwinners of the family, struggle to sustain the everyday needs of their families since face-to-face classes are suspended. Thus, finding alternative jobs became their key to surviving this pandemic. Teachers took their hobby of cooking as their temporary means of livelihood, and entered the world of online selling. Meanwhile, some teachers who knew how to drive, learned to deliver parcels to the homes of those customers despite the risk and threat of the Covid-19 virus. And on the other hand, other teachers who are at home and have the technology resources try to accept private tutoring for kids online and apply for many online jobs. Teachers used to hold their chalk and books, but now they hold their determination and courage to find a way to provide for their families. No more driving to school because right now they need to drive themselves
to survive in this severe situation in the world. No one anticipates that this kind of phenomenon will occur in the system of education and will cause an immense change in each of the lives of the Filipino teachers.

Adjusting to the New Normal was not easy for all people, regardless of their social status. In the month of September, the reopening of classes has been announced. The traditional face to face classes shifted into flexible learning, wherein the learning programs for students, teachers and communities are based on their capacities. It is such a huge adjustment for teachers and schools to the new learning modalities of education. In order to offer teaching, they learned new tactics and strategies. Classrooms that were once filled with numerous students are now filled with module papers that are being distributed to students. Teachers that don’t have enough knowledge about technology learn how to operate buttons and icons in video conferencing software to conduct an online class. And to provide a better discussion for students, teachers extracted efforts to buy a new laptop and upgrade their internet connection. Teachers make an effort to have something to present in class by preparing a PowerPoint presentation and spending the night editing the video tutorial. Tons of seminars are conducted to prepare all teachers for the new learning strategy. These examples demonstrate each teacher's commitment to their profession and their willingness to persevere in the face of adversity. They also demonstrated that teachers can modify and adapt to a new environment in order to convey fresh information and wisdom to all students. The pandemic brought unexpected changes in teaching, altered the system of education, and created new guidelines for the New Normal, but all of these were surpassed by teachers who bravely fought the battle and continued to teach students because no challenges could ever beat a Filipino teacher's heart to strive for a better normal.

References:

The pandemic is reshaping education, here's how the Philippines is coping (rappler.com)