THE BACKWARD DESIGN IN THE NEW NORMAL

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Normal as defined in Merriam Webster Dictionary is something usual, typical and expected. However, when the pandemic of COVID-19 hit we enter in a season of something different and now different becomes the new normal because the changes that happened became the usual for the span of one year and 3 months. Education is not less than different to experience the said “new normal”. It shifted from face to face learning to online classes and modular learning, four to five times a week meeting of classes in different subject areas to two to three times a week, from students wearing their uniform to just wearing their usual home clothes and from teachers doing scaffolding to parents doing it.

Though things made a lot of shifting, there are some things remain the same in the “new normal” and will always be the normal. One, despite the shift on the learning environment, educators still need to listen and consider students’ context like access to technology and learning materials whether they are books or online journals. Peer to peer collaboration is not to be neglected. When there was no pandemic, students’ love to have a conversation with their friends online already so social media can still be used to promote collaboration and teamwork. Since we are all experiencing some hardships brought by this COVID-19, teachers might as well make their students feel how concerned they are by asking them how they are. Second, given that teachers and students now meet once or twice a week why not make the most out of it by adjusting the content and pedagogy by simply putting first what is important, the goal. Lessons always start with the objectives even before you plan out the strategies, therefore from face to face learning to online learning “what do we want them to learn?” remains the basic procedure. However, times of meeting become fewer so this gives a chance for educators
to evaluate what is the most important goal, that’s how content and pedagogy can be adjusted by focusing on skills and competencies that the students need to learn. Since some days are contributed to doing the activities then feedbacks from teachers are necessary so that students will be informed if they do the activities right or not. Third, inside the classroom teachers scaffold instructions and goals so in an online learning environment scaffold is never neglected but given emphasis because it is when instructions become hard to relay, and much needed by those doing a modular approach. Contents can be chunked, instructions and rubrics must be clarified and for easy completion of activities, templates for formatting can be done if it is necessary, so both ends, the teacher and the students will not have a hard time doing their tasks. Scaffolding was done before and it is still done in the “new normal”. Fourth, Teaching and learning will never be complete if learning is not assessed regularly. Assessment is vital for the achievement of the goal. It is and always important to point the mistakes committed to prevent mistakes and to point out how they happen so that students will be informed what competencies must be enhanced and to evaluate whether they are learning the skills or not. In this case, rubrics must be created.

COVID-19 didn’t change what is usual in the heart of education, it just imposes adjustments but in the end it is always the backward design.

Reference:

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