THE CHALLENGES BROUGHT ABOUT BY THE ‘DIGITAL DIVIDE’ IN EDUCATION
By Alvin A. De Leon, Teacher I
Balsik National High School Senior High School

Education in this time of pandemic leans heavily on the nature of communication facilities available for both the learners and the teachers. Remote learning will be on the rise this school year since face-to-face interaction will be highly risky for everybody. The scare of the corona virus is enough to keep the people shut from their houses as much as possible. This prohibits people, in this case students and teachers, to have personal meet ups to discuss lessons at school and favors the varied means and ways communication so as to make education possible.

Though communication can always be reached in various forms like calls, messaging and video chats with different facilities like internet, mobile smart phones of old school land lines, the problem is that not all are well equipped in utilizing these tools for learning.

There are two factors that affect much towards the success of education through modernized communication tools. These are the capacity of the individual to manipulate the communication devices and the availability of the communication facilities in different locations.

The first one deals with the people who are tasked to use communication applications and devices to enable learning to take place. It is a known fact that not all, both students and teachers, have the skill n using computers, smart phones and gadgets let alone communication applications like google classroom, zoom, messenger chat, live streaming and the likes. The proportion of teachers to students regarding knowledge in using gadgets leans heavier among teachers than those of students. This is due to the fact of the nature of the individual in connection to technical and digital knowledge. There are those who are called the digital natives. These are mostly students or teachers of younger age who were born and aged alongside the development of computers. And there are those who are called digital immigrants. These are people who lived before the computer had its boom in the society. These
disparities affect the ability of the individual to proceed properly with education in the new normal set up.

The second aspect is the availability of communication facilities. There are still regions and areas in the country that’s has no electricity, no phone signal and no internet connections. Students and teachers living with such conditions are at the disadvantage side as compared to those in the cities or urbanized provinces where internet and strong phone signals are available.

These disparities constitute the digital divide among people in a specific location. People are divided in terms that those who are lucky to have communication services and those who were less favored.

This condition must be dealt with by the Department of Education if they wish to see good results for remote learning this time of pandemic. Though honestly speaking this is a huge hurdle that can not be easily surpassed. Hence, the solution now lies not with just what the bureau can provide but also with what the teacher can contribute. If passion for education and compassion for students live true to the teachers, then the impossible will soon be made possible.

Reference: