

## **In Light of Learning Losses**

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The Philippines is one of the countries hardly affected by the pandemic around the world. Even though face to face classes have been discontinued, the Philippine education system has been attempting to find ways to continue educating students. The Philippines has transformed into a new normal education with the educator's constant innovations and active participation of other stakeholders serving as the driving factors behind its success (OECD, 2020). As of the present school year, the Department of Education mandated that all year levels in public schools shall fully operate under face to face modality.

The emergent nature of the COVID-19 pandemic brought extreme disruption to the educational systems around the world. At its peak (UNESCO, 2020), reported that nearly 1.6 billion learners in more than 190 countries, or 94 percent of the world's student population, were impacted by educational institution closures. In this context, as per Department of Education (DepEd) Secretary Leonor Briones, amidst the COVID-19 crisis, education must continue. Despite the health risks due to the given situation, DepEd provided guidelines and policies regarding various modalities and approaches in teaching to provide quality education to learners in the middle of the pandemic. Given the circumstance, the "new normal" of education is introduced, focusing on the mode of the delivery of instruction, with the distinctive rise of online learning and modular distance learning.

The Department of Education in the Philippines had three learning modalities as a solution to various situations in education settings: face to face, distance learning, and blended learning. Distance learning is further divided into online distance learning (ODL), modular distance learning (MDL), and television and radio-based instruction (TV-RBI). Merging any of the modalities is also possible and it is called blended learning. The combination of MDL and face-to-face give rise to what is called remote learning wherein only a portion of the allotted time is spent in the classroom; while the rest of the lesson and activities are already laid down in the module that is being distributed to the learners. Other combinations of the learning delivery modalities are being studied and prepared for the large audience like a combination of MDL and TV-RBI. Online distance learning, in itself, is divided into three sub-modes: synchronous, asynchronous, and hybrid. The synchronous approach allows all students and their teachers to interact at the same time resembling what a physical classroom looks like. The only difference is that they are located in different places but are connected using a particular tool of communication-powered by the internet. The asynchronous learning approach provides students some flexibility as they are the ones to choose when and where to take their assigned courses and lessons. Virtual teachers maximize the use of pre-recorded materials to give out instructions to their students. The common tools used in an asynchronous learning method are e-mail,

digital library, discussion threads, and pre-recorded audio and video. These modes of learning helped the teachers to deliver their lessons for the learning continuity of the students.

As of now, the educational sectors are still finding their way to minimize these identified learning gaps and losses. As one of the countries that had the hardest hit by the pandemic around the world, DepEd still managed to continue the learning of the learners. Although face to face classes have been discontinued, the Philippine education system has been attempting to find ways to continue educating students. That's why, during the start of the school year 2022-2023, the Department of Education spearheaded the full implementation of face-to-face classes in public elementary and secondary schools all over the country.

Due to the identified learning gaps and loss to learners with the conducted Regional Diagnostic Assessment of DepEd Region III, several remediations were opted to. Historic data provides researchers with information regarding where student learning should be year over year and is often measured through regular testing. This was also seen after the conduct of the regional diagnostic assessment in region 3. After the assessment or the regional diagnostic assessment of the learners to the core subjects such as English, Science, Filipino, and Mathematics, most of the schools organized their innovations to paced-out their student's learning losses. At the elementary level, one teacher's way of bridging the learning losses was to have a remedial class for those learners that need remediation. The two major concerns that need remedial classes should be of linguistic and numeracy skills of the learners. The needed linguistic skills observed are their ability to read, speak and write. In addition, they also needed numeracy skills that include the basic concepts of understanding numbers, solving number problems, adding, subtracting, and also answering word problems.

After two long school years of modular distance learning, the teachers were challenged due to the number of learning losses of the learners that they needed to cater to. The first quarter of the school year was crucial since the learners are still adapting to the new normal. The observable learning losses during the first quarter were seen through the learner's reading ability and logical ability. These instances became the major issues and concerns of the teachers in our regular meetings. With that occurrence, the workforce of teachers and hardworking, they've come up with differentiated instructions and activities during remedial classes. The learners' who are identified with learning gaps in a certain topic or subject area attend remedial classes. The conduct of remedial classes was a bit difficult for some teachers since it is not obligatory but rather voluntary attendance only. Because of that, teachers in different subject areas used differentiated activities and instruction depending on the level of their students. After a while, teachers reported that there is a significant change in their students' learning although there are students who still need a remedial or intervention to keep up with their classmates.

Gladly as the first quarter ends, there are only a minimal number of learners who are still in need of remediation. Despite that, we are still hopeful that in

quarter two or three, there will be no more learning losses and learning gaps. I know for sure, that with the dedication and commitment of my fellow teachers, we can achieve more of that.

Through remedial classes, the basic concepts in phonemes and morphemes will be taught at the early stages of the learners and in correspondence with their numeracy skills. In addition, through remedial classes, not only the learning losses will be achieved but also to teach life-long learning for each student. Indeed, in light of the learning losses, educators stand firm to address the repercussion brought by the pandemic.