

University Students' Reflections on the Challenges, Opportunities, and Lessons Learned during the Global Outbreak

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Abstract

This article is a collective approach that examines the opportunities, challenges, and lessons learned by university students during the COVID-19 pandemic. This multi-authored article invited students at a public institution in the Philippines to submit a response to a call from *The Papyrus* under the *Adviser's Desk* titled, "Educators' Response to New Educational and Social Realities amid COVID-19." The students reflect on the social and educational challenges they face as they pursue their goals, the educational opportunities they experience while attempting to adjust to the new normal of learning, and the socio-educational lessons they have learned as they envision the next normal. The limitations of this article are inevitable as conventional research process was not applied. However, since COVID-19 is evolving and so is research among students, written reflections of the authors are powerful testimonies that open the gateways to their raw emotions and experiences. Hence, catapulting this article is crucial so that future generations can access this metaphorical piece of circumstantial evidence of what took place amidst a phenomenal event that shaped the dawn of global history.

Keywords: COVID-19, reflections, university students, opportunities, challenges, lessons learned

INTRODUCTION

Higher Education under the New Normal (Jovie, Ronel)

The current Covid-19 pandemic has created difficulties and impacted nearly every sector of the human race (Tria, 2020). Multiple factors, such as travel bans (Chinnazi et al., 2020), discrimination (Habibi et al., 2020), economic recession (Fernandes, 2020), school cessation (Viner et al., 2020), political warfare (Barrios and Hochberg, 2020), and polemics (Enitan et al., 2020) contributed to significant disruptions in students' learning (Tria, 2020). This level of global concern presents difficulties for all educational leaders, educators, and learners.

What effect does the lockdown have on higher education? Simbulan (2020) asserts that, as a result of the pandemic, both the governmental and private sectors have adapted to a new reality in which face-to-face interaction and mass gatherings are outlawed. Everyone, particularly

teachers and administrators, has adapted to work-from-home arrangements in which they are still encouraged to do so. Teachers who are veterans in the service and seem old are obliged to learn how to teach online and it is also difficult for them to adjust because it is different from what they have learned before. They are pushed to learn how to cope in order to facilitate the students' learning.

Moreso, the Internet connection is one of the issues that impedes learners' ability to learn from their teachers. Indeed, we are all aware of how terrible our internet connection is in the Philippines. Apart from that, 27.2 million students in the Philippines lack the access to basic resources such as the internet and other technology (Allego, 2020). Access to the internet is significantly more challenging for learners who live in remote regions. For distant learning in our country, additional funding will be required not just for gadgets and educator training, but also for the vast building of communication towers to reach all those in need (Palatino, 2020).

Nonetheless, schools have an important role to play for skill growth (Burgess & Sievertsen, 2020). The closure of educational institutions in the Philippines has had a huge impact on millions of students. Due to the implementation of government policy to stay at home because of lockdown, our actions become limited and controlled. However, learning should not halt. Educational institutions provide remote learning or distance learning for students to learn even at home. Our government and school institutions and other private sectors provided help for those students who were not able to access the new normal system and also provided modular or printed materials for students. Going to educational institutions is an indispensable public platform available to enhance skills, knowledge, and attitudes.

There are lots of innovative methods that educational institutions provide. Educators and other educational leaders take innovative measures to continue the education process. In this new normal, there are multiple pathways to learning that can accommodate every student, even those who are not in school. The introduction of distance learning brought learners to stay at home while learning. Online learning tools such as video lectures, broadcasts, Google, and other platforms are recommended (Toquero, 2020), along with modular or printed materials being distributed to every student's houses. Students also utilize certain video calling application such as Zoom and Google Meet or through social media to communicate with classmates and friends (Cua, 2020). One of the crucial roles of higher education is to design efficient and effective synchronous and asynchronous learning activities for the continuous engagement of students (Cua, 2020) in remote classes even amid pandemic.

CHALLENGES DURING HOMESCHOOL EXODUS

Adapting with new normal education (Charisse)

A novel coronavirus is the cause of the disease and has gained global attention from growing infections and on how to eliminate the disease and flatten the curve of infection (Guo et.al., 2020). The fight against this virus is still ongoing, more specifically in the Philippines. The persons infected of the virus is increasing to date. This public health crisis caused severe human suffering and loss of life that became a global concern (Schleicher, 2020).

Anent to this, the COVID-19 pandemic has created unprecedented challenges. It has impacted our everyday lives, health and economic life, and the educational sectors, and nobody knows when it will end. In this new normal education, one of the biggest questions is "do students learn the way teachers wanted them to learn?" In this life full of uncertainty, both teachers and students struggle to adapt to the new normal education. The immediate transition from face-to-face classes to distance learning modalities, which includes online and modular classes, seemed difficult for both teachers and learners. This crisis revealed various educational system's struggles, not to mention the slow internet connection and the lack of resources for both teachers and students in the country.

Students have been forced to rely increasingly on their resources to continue learning remotely via the internet, television, or radio due to the discontinuity of academic classes. Additionally, teachers were required to adapt to new pedagogical concepts and modalities of instruction for which they may not have underwent training (Schleicher, 2020). Teachers and learners are struggling in imparting and taking the lesson. Though technology has been very helpful in new normal education, it is still not enough to fully learn the lesson. We must consider that not every student has the privilege to access the internet due to a lack of service and network infrastructures, especially in far-flung areas. Seeing our educators' struggles, I think the best way to help them is to have a solid framework to strengthen and maintain learner's education, teaching, and learning processes. The advancement of technology to make synchronous and asynchronous classes is a big help. New normal set-up of education also promotes a good relationship. Students and their guardians must work together with teachers and the educational system to re-create their home environments' learning experience, each home with its unique challenges (Tinga, 2020).



Figure 1. Homeschool learning environment

Security Threats in the Online Environment (Wilmer)

The transition to a new kind of education has revealed flaws in the country's education system. Some argue that online learning is only accessible to those who can afford it, since not everyone has equal access to the tools required for this sort of learning. Further, since most of the work today are through virtual and on different online platforms, security and privacy challenges are inevitable. The online classroom was the only option that the government has, that has the ability

to continue the learning process of the students. However, this does not guarantee the privacy and security of everyone. While videoconferencing apps are frequently used by both teachers and students, they have been known to be disrupted by various hackers who display improper content, collect participant credentials, or play obnoxious sounds in order to disturb a conference, meeting, or class. Additionally, another concern for students is exposure to cybercrime, which may be perpetrated by online predators or others (Averia, 2020).

Student Roles at home (Jessalyn)

Due to the fact that we are no longer able to attend face-to-face classes, we must adjust to the new normal, and the best alternative is to engage in self-paced learning. As a student, I am unable to cope with this type of learning since I am the type of student that learns best when things are presented properly and when I am able to experience the learning. There are also distractions, procrastination, and a lack of engagement in the lesson, such as the inability to communicate personally with my classmates and the inability to clearly share and exchange my views. Moreover, as a daughter, a sister, and a student, I have multiple responsibility. In the morning, I have to fulfill my obligation as a daughter, which is to complete the household chores entrusted to me. Then I will act as a teacher to my younger brother, and occasionally I will have my synchronous class or insert my courses, followed by afternoon home tasks. In the evening, I may carry out my student responsibilities, which include completing my modules. Despite the problems posed by COVID-19, I was able to address my lapses with the support of my family and friends/classmates who were eager to lend a hand, and as a student, I will continue to go forward and be inspired despite the obstacles posed by this pandemic.

Witnessing Global issues (Switzel)

We all witnessed various personal, educational, and social challenges as a result of living through the pandemic. This unanticipated pandemic forced us all to adapt in order to survive. It presented humanity with numerous difficulties and conflicts. Personally, I became exceedingly uneasy as a result of this outbreak. Seeing people cry in the media due to hunger, seeking assistance because they are unable to provide or sustain their daily needs due to the lockdown and financial difficulties, hearing the feelings of all the employees who lost their jobs due to the company's lockdown, seeing the pictures of children crying in the streets among others, present enormous challenges to adjust to the new normal system. It has pushed me to the point where I am about to give up this academic year due to a lack of a stable internet connection, a laptop, and the funds to sustain my load allowance. Additionally, I have read numerous student rants on social media about the need to end online classes and reclaim academic freedom. Many argue that students are underperforming and completing modules purely for the sake of compliance. Others argue that online classes are ineffective due to students' inability to learn well. Numerous students concur that online classes are more stressful than in-person classes. Students' daily priorities include family, school, courses, and household tasks. Anxiety may be felt; since we deal with global issues, we get quite nervous about what is happening in our immediate surroundings. Living this pandemic, we should look forwards and understand it backwards.

Multiple Struggles (Ailyn)

In the midst of difficulties, the resumption of classes served as academic silver linings (Toquero, 2021) to students because they were able to continue their plans to learn despite the health crisis. The medium of classes was classified in many ways, such as online, modular, radio and television, and remote learning that provides opportunities and challenges for students. Opportunities and challenges brought by this pandemic to students should be determined to assess and understand the obstacles that students are facing.

The most relevant technical difficulty the students are experiencing in this new learning experience is the unstable data/wifi connection and the lack of technological devices such as cellular phones, laptops, or computers that are very useful in remote learning (technical struggle). The most common reasons for the unstable internet connection are sudden rain or inconsistent weather, the place having a weak signal and a failure of electrical supply. Also, in the implementation of the total lockdown in the country, many establishments were forced to temporarily close and that implied many workers had lost their jobs (financial problems). It will affect the students in a way that if their family members who support them lose their jobs, then it will be hard for them to buy the materials that are needed in the learning process and to buy cellular load in order to attend the synchronous and asynchronous classes. Likewise, we cannot deny the fact that this pandemic caused loneliness, frustration, stress, anxiety, and even depression for many people due to many factors (mental health issues). It is sad to say, but there are already students who have attempted suicide brought by these online classes and too much pressure that they are feeling towards this new way of learning. There are students who cannot adjust to the new learning experience because they cannot bear not to get stressed or pressured. In this time of pandemic, students lack motivation, especially if they have many things going on in their minds and problems (socio-emotional difficulties). If the students have a low level of motivation, they will not learn anything about the lesson that they are tackling and it will lead to low self-esteem and a low level of performance.



Figure 2. Coping mechanisms of students during pandemic

In times of difficulty, many students are struggling to face the consequences of this COVID-19 pandemic. As a concerned student, I asked a few students how they could cope with the challenges they are facing in learning amidst the COVID-19 pandemic. Generally speaking, according to the students that I have interviewed, the following are the ways they can combat the struggles and challenges that they are facing: faith in God, family support, dreams, being optimistic, goals, grit, courage, self-discipline, perseverance, and always taking a break (Figure 2).

LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES AMID PANDEMIC

Switch to Online Innovations (Rustom)

Learning has not stopped since educational institutions fully integrated technology as the primary tool in the teaching-learning process through online learning during the pandemic. This new nature of the teaching-learning process uncovered several shortfalls and inequalities in educational systems. According to Wrenn (2015), learners from privileged backgrounds who are financially, physically, and emotionally stable are the learners who are best acquainted with the adjustments and changes brought by this crisis in the lens of education, and those from less privileged backgrounds are at risk of falling behind. Umar and Jalil (2012) presented that learners from less privileged backgrounds know minimum knowledge for manipulating digital technologies and applications, both at school or at home. With this, learners are more likely to have an

authentic and meaningful learning experience than learners from low-income families with no access to a better internet connection.

With the introduction of a new teaching and learning environment—the emergence of Discipline-Based Flexible Learning in Mindanao State University-General Santos City (MSU-GSC), personally, I am having a hard time adapting to the new way of learning. I was unable to obtain a decent internet connection and therefore elected to utilize a "Piso Wi-Fi" vending machine. I am without a laptop with which to edit and submit the files. Learning at home is far more difficult than learning in school. Numerous elements can influence a learner's learning process at home. For instance, in my personal experience, we had a simultaneous debate and our neighbors (the wife and husband) got into a fight, shouting at each other and hurling ugly comments. Due to the fight that occurred at the moment, I did not have a productive learning experience. At home, a learner has little influence over his or her environment, in contrast to school, where learners are enclosed in a controlled and secluded four-cornered room.

At the moment, I have adapted sufficiently to this new mode of learning necessitated by the debilitating effects of this worldwide health crises. From November 28 to December 3, 2019, Al Benzhar Lumanggal and I represented the Federation of Elementary Educators (FEED) at the Angat Buhay Youth Peace Advocates Summit (ABYPAS) to present our project, "Reader of Peace," a board game developed in collaboration with our team members: Marc Omar Nawa, Carlito Rotersos, Matthew Romano, Carla Marie Rubio, Renzl Tabaculde, and Jeniva. At the summit, the team took first place out of 31 peace initiatives organizations from throughout the country. The Vice President's Office (OVP) and the summit's organizers financed the initiative with P25,000 for each version of the board game.

The squad represented the country in the Asia Pacific Youth Exchange in South Korea in August 2020 as a result of winning the top slot. Regrettably, the said event was rescheduled because to the COVID-19 epidemic. It was changed from a team to represent and go to South Korea to an online summit. The Asia Pacific Youth Exchange Online & Global Social Innovation Idea (APYE Online & GSIIC) Competition took place between July 29 and August 28, 2020. The online summit intends to provide novel solutions for resolving COVID-19's most critical concerns. Initially, the team presented the "Reader of Peace," but due to the summit's adjustment, the team also adjusted the board game. The team came up with a fresh name and mechanics for the board game. The team created the TAGBO game, which stands for Together in Amplifying Goals Board Game. It is a board game for mobile devices that depicts people's good and negative behaviours during the pandemic. It addresses how these practices affect their families, communities, and government in particular. The team faced out against 135 other teams from across Asia.

Mobile Game for Peace and Unity (Al Benzhar)

The world has gradually come to a halt and shifted as a result of the COVID-19 epidemic. Globally, people are suffering economically, socially, politically, and, most significantly, psychologically. Schools, offices, and other facilities gradually close as people are prohibited from entering public locations as part of the national government's home quarantine program. As the pandemic progresses, shame and bad mindset continue to deny people. "It takes a village" - To what?

Unfathomable—has never been more pertinent. The COVID-19 pandemic is a rallying cry for everyone to unite in order to defeat this lethal sickness.

The global crisis will not be resolved if only a few individuals, organizations, and other sectors attempt to resolve it. Thus, everyone's engagement is necessary, no matter how small, as it will all have a significant impact collectively. Individuals, families, the community, and government should all work cooperatively. Indeed, participation of individuals is promoted, not just government leaders.

Additionally, one of the consequences of the COVID-19 epidemic is mental instability. Children are not just vulnerable to virus transmission but also readily affected psychologically as a result of solitary confinement during the pandemic's peak. Children who should be in school and developing their social skills are compelled to adjust to conversing via an internet platform. In particular, they install smartphone games to keep themselves engaged.

Every child has access to mobile educational games. During the first quarter of the pandemic, February 2020, the weekly game download rate jumped by 80% over the previous year (Leventler et.al 2020). Maximizing the use of this game is critical to ensuring that youngsters keep their mental health while also being more aware of everyone's role in minimizing COVID-19 transmission.

The mobile game (Figure 3) raises awareness of the transmission of COVID-19 and aims to address poor health habits by showing good and bad habits/actions of individuals, families, communities, and government. The game emphasizes that if a particular player lands on a good habit, (e.g., properly wearing a mask) it will have a big impact on the whole. In reciprocal, when a player lands on a bad habit, (e.g. unhealthy eating habits) it will have consequences for everyone else as well.



Figure 3. The Abstract design of the proposed Mobile Game

There are plain tiles, and tiles that show the good and bad habits of a particular player during and after a pandemic. The good habits shown in some tiles will give them all a bonus to proceed. Then the bad habits shown in some tiles will give them consequences that they must help others. Essentially, move your pawn around the board and attempt to achieve the middle, which is called the "Home of Success", where everyone will be the key to solving the peace puzzle.

The very good thing about this game is that everyone will be the winner, or no one will win nor lose. Each player will help each other in order to win the game and finish it concisely. Everyone must shout "WE ARE UNITED!" after they reach the middle part of the board and solve the puzzle, which is a sign that the players completed the game together.



Figure 4. The additional materials of the proposed Mobile Game

The mobile engages the players in simulations of how themselves, family, community, and government work together to prevent COVID-19 (Figure 4). The game promotes collaboration with one another in order to achieve the goals together, rather than insisting on a particular people or sectors. It emphasizes that the success of an individual is the success of everyone, while the failure of an individual is the failure of everyone as well.

The mobile would be developed by the end of November, 2020 and would launched on the Google Play Store so that everyone can access the educational game. This is an offline game, meaning once downloaded, it is accessible even without access to the internet. This mobile game will provide an opportunity for partnership with the Department of Education, so that teachers can integrate the game into delivering their instructions about good health habits and other subjects where it is applicable. Acknowledgment is given to the Asia Foundation and Maguindanao Development Foundation Inc. (MDFI) for funding this mobile game project.

When the COVID-19 pandemic started, our transactions, business, hobbies, work, and even classes switched online. The best thing to do in these trying times is to treat everything as an opportunity for us to grow and win together in this global crisis. Maximizing social media and mobile phones is one of the best opportunities for us to learn, re-learn and unlearn. Collaboration is one of the keys to achieving the goals. No matter how big or tough the problems are, if people in a certain community are united, and give each other a chance to grow, they will overcome the problem together. Children are the primary targeted beneficiaries of this innovation, especially those children in far-flung and conflict areas. Children in these areas lack knowledge in terms of their responsibilities in maintaining their sanity and following good-health habits. They are the

primary victims of this pandemic. With the help of this mobile educational game, children will increase their brain function, reduce anxiety, appreciate the importance of having healthy habits, and, most of all, become more aware of their roles as individuals in amplifying goals.

Leap of Faith and Survival (Dea and Razzel)

Indeed, this global crisis has changed many aspects of our lives. It hit us so hard to the point that some people took their own lives. Even in these new academic settings, there are already individuals who have taken their own lives for the reason that they cannot adjust to the so-called new normal embraced by society. As Charles Darwin said, "It is not the strongest of the species that survived, nor the most intelligent, but the one most responsive to change". It is a reminder to us that no matter how intelligent and strong we are, if we cannot even respond to change, we might fall into the darkness of our fear and anxiety. Though this pandemic affects my academic venture, I myself do believe that in order to adjust, one needs a span of time to really adapt to this new setting. Inclined with this, I just want to share my sentiment that I do not have any gadgets to use in this demand for academe. With this said, I realize that if you want to pursue your studies, you should start right away in order to keep up with the demands. "Struggle has always been real". I can attest to the difficulties and pressure experienced by students, but these did not really stop me from pursuing my dreams. One way to survive everything is that I have to motivate myself in order to thrive. I always keep in mind that God is always there for me despite the trials, challenges, and anxiety that I have encountered. I know that apart from Him, I am nothing. He is the one who gives me strength every day. Rather than being chained to this anxiety, fear, and worry, I have chosen to take actions to finish this profession I took. I know that someday, all the efforts, tears, sorrow, and hard work will pay off. I have been claiming this, as Jesus said in Jeremiah 29:11 *For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans to prosper you and not to harm you; plans to give you hope and a future.* Indeed, cling to God's promise that nothing is impossible and all things work together for our own good for those who love Him.

With all those challenges and problems that I have encountered, what I usually do to these changes is to slowly absorb the situation and think of some strategies such as time management. We are bombarded with lots of activities so we really need to do time management for us to finish our activities without panicking. One thing I did just to manage my time is to make a list of our activities and mark it when I am done. And when I feel that there is no idea that is going out of my mind, I stop working and look for a place that makes me feel relieved. I just let my mind get refreshed and let it rest. Also, when we are having our synchronous classes, I always have my pen and notebook beside me so that I am able to take down notes for my reviewer later on. And the most important thing is, when you are down, when you feel that you cannot do all the activities that you have, when you feel that you are about to cry and feel so weak, just kneel down and pray. Talk to God, tell Him all your worries to ease that feeling that you have. Each of us are struggling and adjusting to the changes that this pandemic has brought. I know that it is not easy to deal with our situations right now but we should put in mind that everything has an end. For all the students like me who are in doubt if we can still continue our studies or not, do not let this pandemic hinder our dreams and goals in life. We should not stop believing that we

can do it by trusting God and also by trusting in our capabilities. We must go and live despite the challenges that this crisis has brought.

SOCIO-EDUCATIONAL LESSONS LEARNED

Redesign Society to Adapt to Educational and Economic Challenges (John Mark)

Necessary quarantines and social distancing were implemented by different countries to contain the pandemic. The world has consequently been put on a great lockdown. This brings new challenges for different educational institutions. It changed our educational system from a traditional way of teaching to a digital form of education. In the setting of Philippine education, the opening of classes has been delayed and postponed many times (Malina, 2020). It brings us to the question of whether schools in the Philippines are ready to open in the middle of a pandemic. In the beginning, I considered this lockdown an opportunity to relax and a time for vacation, but after it extended many times, it made me realize the value of attending school. In order to adapt to the situation, different educational institutions were considered, including blended and distance learning in the new normal (Malindog, 2020). During this time, digital technologies have played an essential role in teaching and learning. Although taking online classes was a challenge for the students, it was also a challenge for our teachers, who were trying to do their best in order to deliver every module as well as teach the students through online classes. But no matter what the challenge, they should adapt in order for their academic path to be unaffected.

Moreover, there is a big question caused by the novel coronavirus: how will our societies reopen in the wake of a pandemic? The normal way of the economy and governance was disrupted by COVID-19. An unexpected economic crisis was experienced across the globe. Now, we have the chance to use this data to plan for a new and fair social contract we can have in the post-pandemic. The essential health package consisting of prenatal care, immunizations, and treatment of communicable diseases was recommended by the World Health Organization (2020), which has the goal of achieving universal healthcare. In this recommendation, it is indicated that it will be provided by the government of every country (Shafik, 2020). Most countries can afford healthcare standards, except for some low-income societies. They may need foreign aid in order to achieve this minimum health crisis.

Our workers play a significant role in society-helping other people, providing for the needs of society, and contributing to the economic growth of a country. In the outbreak of the pandemic, most people lost their livelihoods-many people now are on temporary contracts or self-employed. In order to address the growing prevalence of more flexible employment models-according to Shafik (2020), there is a need for new social contracts for work. There is a high chance of economic dislocations not just because of the pandemic, but also because of the digital revolution and automation. A new social contract around work must provide greater security for workers-having minimum wages or wage subsidies, mandating benefits for flexible workers, and investing serious resources in retraining those who face unemployment. Even though the pandemic is not over yet, we need to redesign what kind of society we need after COVID-19. This would be an

enlightened investment from the previous generation into the next and provide the underpinnings of a better social contract.

Strive to Make a Difference in Society (Meryll, Ashley)

Apparently, COVID-19 has caused a big time inconvenience to the education of everyone. Some are forced to take jobs and sell stuff just to sustain the needs and demands of this new normal. Tracing back to the pre-COVID-19 era when everything was still alright and normal, there are already some students who are taking part-time jobs as an alternative source of allowances. Particularly in *Centro Uhaw*, as a bandwagon name for a place which is full of small businesses and it is very popular with the students of MSU-General Santos City. It is the after-school-scenario of students being found somewhere in the area doing their own thing. However, as a consequence of this pandemic, some of those businesses were forced to close. This results in the termination of the income of the owners as well as the students with part-time jobs. The lively small community of *Centro Uhaw* has become dull and limited (Figure 5).



Figure 5. Centro Uhaw during early community quarantine

It is natural that the requirements of the new normal resulting from COVID-19's impact are not for everyone. Not everyone is capable of coping with an unexpected scenario like this. It is really heartbreaking for some students who are struggling to keep up with actual classes and much more in this new normal, which adds significantly to their burden as students. The COVID-19 crisis is already having and will continue to have devastating consequences for individuals and communities across the globe, which must not be underestimated (Robinson & Wyss, 2020). COVID-19 is really a disaster for all of us students, employees, teachers, and all people in society. It is a thing that is beyond the control of anyone. Hence, we all ought to accept our fate and adapt to what is most convenient for everybody, which is the new normal. As a student, all we have to do is to follow the protocols and agree to the institution's decisions and conditions, since they are the most knowledgeable about what's best for everyone. Let us all hope for the best and also for the students who are forced to stop their dreams for a while to find a way to come back to school.

In addition, the Covid-19 phenomena is illuminating, particularly for prospective educators. It helped me appreciate the magnitude of the teacher's role in our society and the critical nature of communication and connection with our students. This pandemic demonstrated the critical need of community cooperation in establishing the goals and objectives we desire. This phenomenon should act as a reminder to our government to spend more in educational systems and upgrade our country's internet connectivity. As prospective educators, we should always strive to make a positive difference in our society and strive for change. As I have observed, the primary reason for the disease's rapid spread is a lack of discipline on the part of the populace. As future educators, we must always ensure that students maintain self-discipline, even when no one is looking. We should create activities that focus on self-discipline development and cater to their demands or reach the desired consequence someday. This experience also taught me the value of the directions and instructional materials we utilized as teachers, and how one day we will need to make practical and simple instructions for a youngster. Many individuals suffered misery as a result of this pandemic; they lost loved ones and careers, and our way of life altered forever. However, the silver lining is that we learn not to rely on others, as everyone has their own priorities; we learn to regulate our time and activities even without supervision. We discovered new aspects of ourselves.

Vision of Tomorrow (Lady Mar Gift)

There are a lot of hurdles in this new normal learning environment, just like it is hard to cope with the lessons, especially when we are having synchronous classes due to poor connection and not having a stable connection. In worse scenarios, we unintentionally miss some of our classes. It was totally different from an interactive discussion when the pandemic was not there yet. One time, it made me burst into tears and blamed my parents for whatever happened to me in the future, as I am going to take this new normal learning. The pressure is really on, which can make me psychologically, mentally, and physically drained. It is so hard to cope with it, especially when we do not have the means to do it. Along the way of having and experiencing new normal learning, I figured out something which could help me survive in the middle of this situation. It is just a matter of adapting to changes and putting your mindset towards the goal of a better destination and path. It is about setting your goals and not being afraid to make mistakes. There were some instances when I forgot about my schedules and activities, which made me pass them late. In this new normal of learning, all I have to do now is manage and organize my time. It is like a task management wherein if I can make it now, why make it tomorrow? It is about having a vision and being determined enough to finish something if you can as soon as possible, so you do not feel stuck up in one module and having a rush hour that causes panic. Along the way of figuring these things out, I realized that I am not the only one who is suffering from this new normal, so instead of being unmotivated to pursue what I have started, I used to think of possibilities that I could have in the future. I have dreams that can make me happy and excited about achieving them, families who are always there to motivate me, friends who make me laugh despite the pressure of academic demands, and most of all, the Almighty God, who makes me feel to keep on trying and growing, stepping forward closer to my dreams. I can say that everything is really worth it.

Empathy and Hope for All (Jerrah)

As a person touched by this pandemic, I feel that we should be alert to the point of considering everyone as COVID-19 positive. With this in mind, we should not be complacent in our efforts to be COVID-19-free, even if they are your family, relatives, or even friends. In terms of schools' responsibility, they should also consider each student's mental health and limit the quantity of schoolwork assigned, as students' minds require a break to function effectively. It should be considered that the assignments assigned to students should take into account each student's learning potential. It should be stressed that teachers must also understand that each learner has their own unique style of learning and that it takes time for each learner to properly absorb the material presented. It takes collaboration and understanding on the part of society to support government officials who are also attempting to find a solution to the current crisis. It should be addressed that regardless of how much enthusiasm and work the government expends, if we as individuals do not participate with the government's rules and regulations, everything is pointless. Our defiance would merely prolong our misery and result in an extension of COVID-19's term. Additionally, government authorities are asked to think creatively in order to develop a strategy for combating COVID-19 in the country. In each country afflicted by this pandemic, the government is seen as the focal point of resilience. That is why people should act in accordance with the country's requirements. The future is uncertain at these times. Things may never return to their previous state. However, regardless of the difficulties we endure during this pandemic, a flicker of optimism will blossom in time.

CONCLUSION

This world faces an unpredictable global health crisis. The Coronavirus pandemic continues to spread across the world with its trajectory and devastating results. Due to its impact, everyday routine changes, most especially the way of living. This pandemic is not only a threat to human health, but also considered as a crisis in other aspects of human life: society, the educational system, and the economy. The most obvious consequences are economic recession and educational inequalities.

At this time, we can look for a solution to solve this present crisis and prepare society for the future. In the aspect of education, educational institutions transform the setting of the learning and teaching process from the classroom into virtual learning. In keeping with this, it is critical that students maintain a persistent commitment to learning, relearning, and unlearning in the face of adversity.

Looking forward, the world should prepare and redesign the society we will have in the post-pandemic. It is an action to learn and evolve in a crisis and to develop a better approach to addressing future crises. The pandemic reminds us that people should maintain stability when facing different challenges. We must also take measures to cope with these kinds of challenges together. Coordination is one of the things we can do to survive this pandemic. We must strengthen positivity and connectivity between people and other countries. In these difficult times, all we need is collaboration to address these kinds of concerns. Educational institutions can still provide and deliver quality education to learners even when they are facing extraordinary challenges. Lastly, organizations must always prepare for times of crisis, not just today, but in the future as well. Following the safety protocols implemented by the government will reduce the

spread of the virus. No one is safe until everyone is safe. Let us adapt to the new normal and prepare for the future by redesigning a better society that we can look forward to after this pandemic. Hence, universities should assist students in continuing their education throughout the pandemic. In the world following this coronavirus, we can confidently assert that global solidarity will triumph over any crisis if and only when we all do our share.

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