Writing Research for our Readers
Marie Paz E. Morales

In all its steps, the writing process involves thinking which is actually the hardest part of writing. As researcher-writers, we are expected to be patient, and we consider critiques to better our craft. The reflective process through which our articles are refined entails revisions, rephrasing, proper citations, formatting, and so on. Above all these processes is the underlying message we, as authors, send to our readers.

Academic journal writing is a balance between what the authors want to share and what is expected from the authors by editors and readers. Effective writers are sensitive to what captures the interests of fellow researchers and are able to influence them through their words. The Normal Lights, as an educational scientific journal, serves as a platform for such forms of writing that disseminates relevant and timely researches in teacher education. The Philippine Normal University-Publication Office proudly presents in this volume 10 carefully selected articles that delineate its educational objectives.

Educational technology evolved in a number of ways to become what it is today. The earliest form of teaching was through human speech, passing on knowledge through words. These words were then translated into texts through scholarly books and other reading materials. As we had incorporated more and more of our senses, we advanced through the use of broadcasting and television. Further, we have developed computer-based learning, networking, and other online learning environments. Undeniably, we learn a great deal from social media and the internet. Indeed, digital education has eliminated limitations of the traditional methods. This fact
does not imply, however, that new technologies have replaced the old ones; rather, they reinforce existing technologies. Past developments in educational technology are still effective in imparting information, and experience has taught us that the value of operating certain technologies lies on their appropriateness and applicability. The articles described below showcase development in educational technologies, and studies that dealt with the aspects of teaching.

Development and validation of curricula, instruments, methods, models, assessment tools, and educational instruments are required to assure quality and consistency. Through development and validation of these educational materials, researchers show signs of professionalism and creativity. Their proposed materials purposely function as an enchiridion for teachers. Three of our articles by esteemed authors demonstrate clever execution and creation of meaningful educational tools. In Architectural Drafting Technology Program, for example, Sira proposed a set of standardized competencies developed through soliciting responses from the members of the academe and the industry. This study is truly commendable as it brought into fore the importance of making competencies tailor-fit to industry requirements. It recommended implementation of the proposed standardized competencies in state universities and colleges offering degrees in industrial technology to better equip their graduates in their chosen field of work. Meanwhile, Ebagat, Dacanay, and Simeon developed and validated an evaluation tool for Asian Studies. Their designed Achievement Test in Araling Asyano integrated the K to 12 Araling Panlipunan skills, deemed necessary because of the reinvention of the Philippine educational system. The rigorous process successfully made the following skills incorporated in the test: critical-mindedness, informed decision, research and investigation, historical skills, sustainable development, communication and global perspective, and creativity. The
development and validation of the said instrument was a challenge in itself - funneling, filtering, and selecting items for inclusion in the final form of the standardized achievement test. It certainly addressed one of the strategic directions in developing well-planned products and services that are of value to our stakeholders. For the third study which was concerned with a much younger population, Varela, Reyes, and Rungduin developed a guidance model on personal and social competence specifically for Kindergarten pupils. The MC FISCS model was devised from the themes extracted through the qualitative method of research. This study reminds us that education and proper guidance for children in their early years are crucial as values they would learn will be carried out in later years. We try to inculcate kindness and respect within them so as to help them recognize their potential and be confident and secure, as what we have always wanted for our children.

Intersectionality of concepts and interrelated variables are common undertakings in research. Most of social and educational phenomena can be best explained through multiple overlapping ideas. Jaen and Baccay described the mathematics performance of selected Grade 10 students and correlated it with the pupils’ curiosity, motivation, and attitude towards the subject. Moreover, they explored gendered aspects of pupil performance. We bear in mind that gender is a social construct and that expectations for both males and females are set by society, but these concepts somehow influence educational outcomes. Interestingly and more importantly, the study confirmed how attitude, motivation, and curiosity can influence performance. One of the major barriers in learning mathematics is the persistence of fear and failure, and eliminating these barriers will definitely help students appreciate the beauty of mathematics. De Guzman, Fortes, and Belecina took another perspective and dealt with the learning styles and cognitive processes
of performing problem-solving tasks in mathematics. They categorized students based on their learning styles and the cognitive processes they have manifested. By recognizing how children learn, teachers may develop pedagogical strategies to help them solve problems. Mathematics, after all, is beyond the concept of numbers. It is about measuring and quantifying observations, and it is a discipline to better understand the world we live in.

Also, for this issue, most of our research articles focused on instrument development and pedagogical strategies. Cadiz, Villena, and Velasco conducted a more novel study on conflict management as their developed program is focused on teachers. Organizational conflict is natural and to be expected of people from different interacting backgrounds. This scenario does not exclude the academic environment. The purpose of the study was to resolve conflict among teachers because persistence of conflict may affect productivity, efficiency, and effectiveness in working. The study shed some light on how conflict is sourced and how teachers handle conflict situations. The good thing about how teachers manage conflict is that they confront the persons they are in conflict with and negotiate with them to arrive at a compromise.

As you, our dear readers, will notice, there are three articles written in Filipino for this journal issue. Filipino is a rich language, but ironically and to some extent, it does not merit the recognition it deserves. Global pressures and internationalization may have convinced us that English is the prime language for learning, but *The Normal Lights* is cognizant of the fact that some articles are best expressed using our national language. “*Ang hindi magmahal sa sariling wika ay higit sa hayop at malansang isda; kaya ating pagyamaning kusa, gaya ng inang sa atin a y nagpala.*” We can only assume that the patriotic Dr. Jose Rizal had genuine
concern for Filipinos in mind when he expressed these thoughts. Incorporating these ideas, Villanueva similarly communicated through his study on Outcomes-Based Teacher Education Curriculum (OBTEC) the love for the Filipino language. He proposed a nationalist pedagogy following the 4 Ks: Kaakuhan, Kamalayan, Kalingangan, and Kasaysayan. Meanwhile, Tangonan, Villanueva, and Lazaro-Zamora showed a different appreciation for our language through their program - A Special Filipino Curriculum for foreign students, which is an incredible teachable moment for us to impart our culture to others who pursue Filipino as their second language. There’s a sense of fulfillment for us, Filipinos, to be able to influence foreign students to take time in learning something that is uniquely ours. Another study written in Filipino completed by Lazaro-Zamora examined the alignment and parallelism among teaching, learning, and curriculum guides for the modularization of the K to 12 Filipino subject that incorporates the 21st century skills. The modular method allows students to learn Filipino through their own effort, paced according to their capabilities.

Another special article recognizes that education is a privilege and that not every student can support him/herself academically and financially due to some limitations. Ethnic stereotyping may also elicit discriminatory behaviours from peers and may be internalized by students from ethnic groups. These are just some of the things we need to watch out if we want to help the less privileged pupils. An insightful article by Navas qualitatively described the experiences of low-income students in higher education institutions through multiple case studies. We ascertain from the study that low-income students may develop coping mechanisms and may have effective support systems that will enable them to successfully finish their degrees. Implications of the findings signify institutionalized support systems in the form of
scholarships, part-time employment, and even monitoring. If these systems are in place, then it is less likely that students will feel left out or at a disadvantage; instead, they will see the opportunities amidst the struggles.

To navigate and prosper in the academic world is never easy, and it will always be like that. But we continue to do what we do because we have an affinity for learning. All things considered, we embolden future authors to read more books, be it for business or pleasure, as every piece of information we obtain from the things we read will evidently show in the work we produce and enrich our acumen. The more we read, the more robust our future writings will be, so we best allot time for reading and develop a habit of convening with our colleagues in sharing realizations. For all we know, the answers we are looking for may already be in our hands...or in these pages.