

## Foreword

### Continuity of Learning

Agenda 2030 has flourished as the aim of the decade. In the field of education, this global aim targets to achieve Sustainable Development Goal #4 themed as “Ensuring inclusive and equitable education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.” As such, this theme encompasses sub-components to improve global education. These sub-components include better access to education by inclusion of a year of free pre-primary education, equity and inclusion (for gender and those with disabilities), and quality and learning outcomes (underscoring quality and empowered teachers to help foster creativity and knowledge, and ensures acquisition of defined skills in an educational setting that also emphasizes human rights education). Finally, all actions towards achievement of these sub-components are laid out within lifelong learning approaches (The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the SDGs, 2020).

According to the European Commission (2020), the agenda is a commitment to eradicate poverty and achieve sustainable development. It is a continuous effort to help other countries successfully conclude Agenda 2015 themed, *Education for All*. However, the major health crisis seems to have slowed down all countries aiming to achieve the current agenda. The peak of the pandemic appears to most as a stimulant of academic freeze, consequently conceiving the concept of continuity of learning. Major global organizations (OECD, 2020; United Nations, 2020) worked on to lead the development of frameworks and materials for learning continuity which many countries adopted or benchmark upon. As such, countries including the Philippines implemented continuity of learning within or in their country context.

Within the country perspective, the Department of Education (DepEd) and the Philippine Commission on Higher Education (CHED) issued directives on learning continuity (DepEd Order No. 12, s. 2020; CHED Memorandum 04, s. 2020), which influenced the processes and protocols and even the products of the different schools and higher institutions of learning. As part of the latter, the December 2020 issue of the *Normal Lights* journal supports continuity of learning through its publication of 11 articles on education and teacher education. Themed as “Continuity of Learning”, this issue presents four sub-themes: 1) a more focused locale through language lessons and learning; 2) local context teaching materials and teaching processes for improved Filipino student learning; 3) areas other than materials and approaches; and 4) teaching as a profession, for a holistic and quality teaching.

With the current pandemic, movement is very restricted and tourism halted. This scenario highlighted virtual and online transfer of technology in terms of the different aspects of learning, and forced us in a way to focus on all the things readily available in our locale. Two articles featured this principle, emphasizing the locale context through language lessons and learning. Hernandez (2020) investigated the under explored Philippine Englishes (PhE) and found only a moderate awareness of Filipino graduate students. Philippine Englishes, according to him, is a useful tool in lesson delivery when students are not very comfortable with global english that its awareness must be legitimized in the Philippine school. While Hernandez worked on Philippine Englishes, De la Torre and Gonong (2020) explored an alternative process of analysing the varieties of locale languages. Particularly, they conducted a phono-lexicostatical analysis and found four varieties including Bikol-Sorsogon. They also found that despite speakers’ knowledge of the variants, they generally attribute their unique language to the general language “Bikol”. Hence, phono-lexicostatical analysis is a well defined language analysis tool to extract unique variants of the language and

preserve these varieties to sustain the richness of indigenous knowledge in the locale.

In the aspect of teaching and learning, learning continuity is espoused through several approaches. Note-taking (which may be applied in both face-to-face, and remote teaching) investigated by Salem (2020) defined three methods which are often used by students: conventional, structured, and camera-captured. He found that camera-captured, the most popular among students, does not significantly differ from the two other methods in terms of student performance. Thus, Salem (2020) proposed to combine some aspects of the former methods to “camera-captured” note-taking to enhance students’ conceptual understanding and attain meaningful learning. Similarly, the content analysis done by Dizon (2020) on World History teaching guides in the Philippine basic education targets analysing the materials for their capability to develop historical thinking skills among the 8th graders. He confirmed that there was more emphasis on inquiry approach compared to multidisciplinary approach. This qualitative study suggests that a balance should be observed in crafting materials, which is a timely advice while teachers are immersed in materials development for learning continuity during the pandemic. Within the same sub-theme, learning continuity is advocated in the study of Petancio (2020), who aimed for curricular enhancement in terms of concrete applicability of mathematical concepts in the Senior High School (SHS) Technical-Vocational and Livelihood Track. Using the data sourced from practitioners of technical work, the study defines the mathematical concepts that need restructuring in the aforementioned SHS track for meaningful learning of mathematics.

Other than lessons in language and aspects of teaching and learning, this issue also highlights models of behavioral and parental involvement process, which may be adapted to construe learning continuity. Accordingly, Ochoa (2020) used stress management through stress appraisal and coping strategies. Her correlational study confirmed that stress appraisal and academic

efficacy are predictors of coping strategies and that academic efficacy mediates the relationship. With such, programs may be derived and crafted to help students in their coping strategies which may be applied in the current situation. Additionally, since remote teaching and learning in these trying times require students to stay at home while learning, parental involvement (PI) may be a key to better coping strategies as well. In fact, Bartolome and Mamat (2020) found that strong PI significantly improves learning outcomes, but the country needs to craft policies for smooth implementation of PI programs.

While significantly large effort is placed on teaching and learning, learning materials and tools and behavioral and psychological aspects of learning, we also need to ensure that comparable endeavor is attributed to teacher quality and teacher empowerment to warrant continuity of learning. Four of our articles define teaching as a profession for quality. The article titled, “*Sulyap sa buhay ng mga gurong nagtuturo ng Filipino bilang out-of-field: Isang penomenolohikal na pagsusuri,*” explored the experiences of out-of-field teachers. In his attempt, Augusto (2020) found that the teacher-participants encountered positive and negative experiences being out-of-field teachers. He recommended that education agencies in the country should consider strengthening recruitment policies to assist the teaching and learning process achieve quality through teacher empowerment and abilities that match their posts in the field. In the field of science education, Dasas (2020) examined the Filipino teachers’ reflections on critical pedagogy (CP) that may be useful in teaching methodologies in the sciences to perpetuate indigenization and contextualization. He found that beginning teachers perceive themselves as highly critical in the use of CP in the classrooms, yet the way they operationalize their understanding of CP remains undernourished. Experienced teachers and coordinators see promise in using CP in the classroom as it makes learning more relevant. Apparently, the aforementioned articles on teachers inform how we can

improve in service processes and protocols to achieve quality teaching. The last two articles underscore teacher training and pre-service education as tracks for quality. David and colleagues (2020) profiled the graduate teacher education programs in the Philippines. They were able to identify the current status and specific prospects for improvement. Relatively, they aimed that the results of their study would inform policy development and curricular reforms in the graduate teacher education field. Finally, titled as *Dicimus Docere (by teaching, we learn)*, Ordiz and Retome (2020) used tutorial sessions to train preservice teachers. Implemented within the experiential learning paradigm, their intervention consequently led the participant pre- service teachers to discover the passion for teaching amidst challenges in the chosen profession, as such, teaching was neither innate nor a calling; and teaching is chosen and enhanced through reflective and relevant personal experiences across experiential stages.

Neither the pandemic nor the current mode of lesson delivery prevented Filipinos to engage in the learning process. These research articles represent continuity of the learning process despite any adversaries. In fact, the products showcased by the 11 articles may be used as models and information to situate and contextualize learning in the current delivery mode; and to help enhance teaching prowess through for quality and empowerment. While the entire world fears non-achievement of the targeted Agenda 2030 due to the health crisis prompting global organizations to devise frameworks of learning continuity, how the country ensued continuity of learning mirrors how Filipinos value life long learning

*The Editor*

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