

## Foreword

### **Education in a VUCA (Volatile, Uncertain, Complex, Ambiguous) World**

Education in the modern world faces compounded uncertainties due to globalization, and extensive and contemporary use of technologies. Thus, the new normal in education refers to VUCA, which describes the chaotic, turbulent, rapidly changing education environment (Waller, Lemoine, Mense, Garretson, Richardson, 2019). The situation calls for a swift paradigm shift in the way institutions and education agencies adopt to unexpected changes, which may be critical in attuning and aligning to the constantly changing world, and in maintaining a competitive advantage (Mok, 2015). Hence, the emphasis should be on flexibility, and learning and development of new knowledge over finding specific solutions to address all issues concerning education in the VUCA world.

VUCA has been popular as military terms (Nato, 2015), however, its presence in education has already been felt. Volatility (V), refers to turbulence or the unexpected which may have been due to digital economy, connectivity and increased global competition and innovation (Brodnick & Gryskiewicz, 2018). Uncertainty (U) may also be considered as the absence of predictability (Cook, 2015), Complexity (C) describes the multiplex of factors, interconnectedness and confounding issues. Finally, Ambiguity (A) refers to the lack of clarity that surrounds and event (Stensaker, Frolich, Huisman, Waagene, Scordato, & Pimentel-Botas, 2014).

In the VUCA world, the Normal Lights presents 10 articles that may define many aspects of education and how we may successfully thrive and traverse education in a VUCA world. The VUCA concept is now starting to change the education field

that may require a new framework of leadership. In fact, Waller and colleagues (2019) recognize the new kind of educational leadership that is value-laden and purpose driven to open up opportunities for development and greater collaboration. In our context, Desamparo and Barrameda (2019) initiated an assessment of Philippine school heads' value-laden school-based management system and functions, and found that our school heads need capacity training on the aspects of educational leadership, curriculum management, and community building. Their assessment may be able to inform how the country may establish the new leadership paradigm contextualized in our system to successfully maneuver educational management in the VUCA world. In this world of complexity, it may better if leaders are able to collate knowledge and experiences from a wider set of experiences to effectively lead in the 21st century.

Apparently, leadership in the VUCA world requires agility (Sherratt, 2019) which necessitates four components: *results agility* (competence to galvanize others to perform), *mental agility* (more risk taking and connections with new knowledge), *people agility* (resilience and constructiveness under pressure), and *change agility* (experimenting with novel conceptions) (Grint, 2010). Four of our articles exemplify *change agility* in the field of education. Three of these four articles ventured on the use of new pedagogical approaches to achieve better and love for learning in a VUCA world. Mamon (2019) used Problem-based learning approach (PBL) through an action research to teach Disaster Risk Reduction learning competencies to senior highschool students, which he found to be effective in motivating learners to design feasible solutions for their own community. Gonzales (2019) used the “Flipped Classroom Approach”, which resulted in better outputs to professional subjects such as Child and Adolescent Development and Action Research in Mathematics. On the same track, the Modified Alternative Co-teaching Approach used by Angeles and colleagues (2019) generated substantial number of positive remarks from the experimental group as compared to

the control group. The fourth article, “Ugnayan” by Favila and colleagues (2019) proposes a framework for knowledge sharing for senior high school work immersion program with intentions to generate better outcomes of the program (professionals) in the VUCA world. These change agility exemplify a culture in which curiosity and thirst for learning is fostered to encourage learning agility.

In a VUCA world, interventions such as: learning through failure, deliberate practice, psychological safety, and feedback, may enhance the possibility to achieve learning agility (Sherratt, 2019). Five of our articles target the latter two interventions. Diokno and colleagues (2019) used qualitative exploratory method that mapped the perceived source of mental health concerns, hindrances in promoting mental health well-being, and activities that promote the Philippine mental health bill in higher education institutions. They found that the following as sources of mental health issues: self-acceptance, culture, financial status, technology, environment and organizational crisis. Furthermore, they noted three hindrances (unawareness, anxiety, and inactivity of implementers), and six support activities (peer counseling, training, social and religious activities, sharing of experiences and conduct of research.

Three of the five articles on intervention focus on “feedback”. Logmao (2019) found that regular utilization of performance feedback and monitoring notebook (PF&MN) improves their achievement in physics courses. Additionally, assessment of the training of teachers done by Ganal and colleagues (2019) defined their preferences in professional development through feedback system. Lastly, indirect feedback mechanism may be derived from the attempt of Bansiong (2019) to determine the academic variable predictors of licensure examination for teachers.

All such studies call for a redirection in education placing the welfare of the learners at the heart of education in a VUCA

world. Significantly, the attempts and researchers' intentions emphasize the vision of self-motivated learning and reorienting education around a love of learning (Sherratt, 2019), which our tenth article highlights the explored experiences of participants in their career choices, and the driving forces in specializing in sciences. Results of such study may inform activities that centers on love for learning.

VUCA realities traverse the domains of education exhibiting wider perspective of changing environmental challenges. As per Carvan (2015), we are not called just to train fully grown minds, but we are to act to grow bigger minds to pathom Volatility, Uncertainty, Complexity, and Ambiguity in Education through research and other research-related activities.

*The Editor*

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