

## Foreword

### Transitioning to Post-COVID-19 Education

The COVID-19 pandemic has brought significant learning to everyone. After this major global crisis, the shift to post-COVID education is a crucial turning point in education and learning history. This shift does not just discuss reopening schools and returning to face-to-face setup. Post-COVID may represent a shared effort to reshape the nature of education in a world already transformed by the pandemic and strengthen education as a common good (*Education in a post-COVID World: Nine Ideas for Public Action*, 2031).

In traversing this transition, the world has given us a chance to be creative and think beyond the usual and a unique opportunity to shape an education system that isn't just a response to challenges but a forward-thinking force. It should prepare learners with the skills and mindset to succeed in a constantly changing world. These are the major elements of *The Normal Lights* December issue focusing on two key elements of teacher education: pre-service training and education and in-service teachers' experiences in the pandemic period and transition to post-COVID education.

Three of the eight articles in this issue underscore the importance of navigating the pandemic era with adaptability, resilience, and collective commitment to pursue excellence in education. Frigillano (2023) conducted a quasi-experimental study to investigate the effects of humorous linguistic memes as a coping strategy against anxiety and found that frequent exposure to funny memes may contribute to good mental and emotional health, potentially reducing anxiety about a stressful situation. We bank on the fact that the post-COVID era highlights making accommodations for neurodiversity in education (Team, 2023). Similarly, instructional practices

and their extent of alignment to CPS v6.1™ were founded by Panergayo and Pelgone (2023) to influence the level of creativity in problem-solving. Creativity is an important 21st-century skill (De Cássia Nakano & Wechsler, 2018; Piirto, 2011). On the other hand, Dela Pena et al. (2023) emphasized technology use and a flexible learning modality for students with visual impairment. Student gains in this modality are claimed to have been influenced by the social support system (Ratten, 2023) and suggest that the post-COVID transition may focus on adopting flexible or blended learning for inclusive quality education (Zhao & Watterston, 2021) and capacitating teachers.

The next set of articles explores the recalibration of teachers in different aspects of the teaching and learning landscape. Talain and Mercado (2023) used a concurrent triangulation design to investigate the teachers' perceptions of using differentiated instructions for English language teaching. They found that teachers perceived differentiated instruction as a potent approach designed to employ strategies suited to the needs of English language learners (ELLs). Such may be a teaching approach that may persist even post-COVID education. The second article for this set utilized a cross-sectional study to describe Filipino public school teachers' empathy levels and whether these levels are affected by attributes such as age, sex at birth, educational attainment, years of service, and grade level taught (Santiago, 2023). Accordingly, the results of Santiago's study underscore that teachers teaching for 1-5 years had higher affective and overall empathy than those teaching for 16-20 years. However, no such differences were observed for cognitive empathy. Such results may influence the well-being of teachers, which may be looked into in teachers for quality post-COVID education. The last article in this set provided a technology-influenced learning material for teaching foreign students Filipino as a second language. Pacol (2023) labeled this learning

material E-BAKADA to emphasize ICT integration, which stakeholders evaluated as very interesting and helpful in achieving its goals. These three articles in the second set for this issue emphasize several post-COVID strategies for quality education, such as changes in the role of teachers, systems that support teachers' new roles, and technological support for the new roles of teachers (Ciarrusta et al., 2023).

The final set in this issue highlights preparations for pre-service education. Cabansag and Santiago (2023) investigated the key elements of relevant pre-service training from the perspectives of science education graduates. They found that these key elements should include procedural and pedagogical content knowledge that facilitates learning, skills for lifelong learning, behaviors for self-regulation, and behaviors supporting effective teaching and learning. Connectedly, Torego (2023) discusses that language may also be a relevant factor in pre-service training, as evidenced by the results of his study that teaching in one language is not beneficial while teaching in two languages (the language of instruction and first language [L1]) is desirable and easier for learners to understand. His findings underscore that code-switching benefits the teaching and learning process in both his country's participants (the Philippines and Indonesia).

The articles for this issue emphasize three key changes that post-COVID education should highlight: a developmental, personalized, and evolving curriculum, student-centered and purposeful pedagogy, and an emphasis on integrating technology in the delivery of instruction (Zhao & Watterston, 2021). In our attempt to draw the education landscape forward, we present these articles as our contributions to more explorations in this field. We fervently hope that readers benefit much from them as we transition to post-COVID education.

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