

## **Reflecting on my Learning Journey in Adult and Tertiary Teaching, 2020**

I describe myself as a person who always loves learning.

Studying in these courses made me accept my weaknesses, work on them, and use my strengths well. The structure of the online learning pushed me to go back to a more disciplined routine --- to think about the assignment, to write, to rewrite and to also focus on the technical aspects. Reading the course materials was a chance for me to reflect more on my teaching practice especially as I read the adult learning principles/theories and inclusivity and cultural sensitivity in an adult learning environment.

There were times when I affirmed to myself that I was doing the right thing in my practice. There were times when I told myself that I needed to improve on a thing or two. There were times when I told myself, the reality does not match with what the adult learning principles/inclusivity and cultural sensitivity on paper say. In general, I realise that indeed, learning theories and principles (as well as practice of inclusivity and cultural sensitivity) are there for a purpose: they become an anchor to my (or other tutors') teaching practice.

I also reflected more on the inadequacies of educational providers in terms of policies and responses to change. I just thought that the proverb, "It takes a village to raise a child" is very appropriate. Teaching-learning process is holistic --- the learners, the tutor/facilitator, the process, the organisation's policies and procedures, the core values of all these entities, priorities and thrusts --- all contribute to the success of learning and teaching delivery and outcome.

The pandemic situation posed far too many things to focus on --- stability of jobs, family's safety and well-being, mental health, and community cooperation. Studies (and the course itself) were initially relegated in the background. But they also served as bases on which priorities and discipline needed to be in place. I told myself, I needed to do the Course's online learning despite other things. Luckily, as many others in lockdown have experienced, studies in my case became an avenue for stability and calm. I had to keep myself busy in that Covid19 situation instead of neglecting my studies.

There were lots of learning curve moments within the readings, writing and submitting periods. The crunch time was when I would rush up finishing the essay and minding the technical aspect. I realised I had to avoid cramming and instead, work on the assignment slowly and gradually, go back to the details of the referencing guidelines, and have time to go over the essay. I thought I improved on this process for the second course on Intake 4, but I realised, I still needed more time, avoid cramming, and be more thorough.

I also realised that through the courses' readings, I needed to study/refresh myself, read some more, apply the theoretical part, and fully experience the theories and principles as an overall part of teaching-learning process and actual life events.

*cont on page 2*

Generally, the theoretical models and the learning contexts feed or nourish each other. Both need to blend well together in the actual setting if adult learning were to thrive.

### Highlights of my Studies

The highlights for me are the crunch time --- the deadline periods --- and how I was able to cope with them. Submitting the papers a few minutes before the deadline of 11:59 p.m. gave me a very high adrenaline rush (but a very low energy level a few days later).

Communicating with classmates in the Discussion Board was also a highlight --- I was able to confirm with them that what I was mostly doing in the practice was right. Interacting with them also gave me that sense of belonging as it was not easy to read, digest the readings, write the paper, by myself. Receiving feedback, either on the assignment questions, the paper itself, clarifications from and with the facilitator, also made me feel I belong.

On a 'pandemic' note during the first intake, working/reading the materials, researching, and writing the essays made me busier, so it was more bearable to cope with the Covid19 lockdown condition. The weekly Discussion Activity during the second paper (Cultural Sensitivity...) made me busier, but gave me more time to read, reflect on, and prepare for the final Assignment.

### Summary

With a condition such as Covid19 amidst changing and volatile times, distance learning should be widely implemented both for the convenience of the learners and the tutor/facilitator. This 'new normal' will take us to more challenging frontiers of open-distant-flexible learning, therefore, every provider --- private or government --- should provide both physical resources and intellectual/virtual access to both learners and tutor.

Despite my tighter (and more) stressful life as a working student, I have no regrets in studying this course for the past two intakes. Not only did it nourish my brain, but also taught me to practise discipline and enhance my homegrown values.