

From the AFINITE President

COVID-19 made a strong impact in the world, making a strong realization on equality. No one is spared, rich or poor, famous people, leaders and even among educators. Although research is not a popular topic to most Nihongo teachers here in the Philippines, The Association of Filipino Nihongo Teachers (AFINITE) decided to push through with this theme entitled 'Adding Value to Teachers' Growth and Students' Development Through Action Research,' because we believed that this will be a good opportunity for teachers to document reflection whether about their own teaching styles or their students' academic performance in this new normal.

No one is spared to make the necessary adjustments whether you are a teacher with multiple degrees, highest Nihongo proficiency level or had been teaching for several years. When the quarantine started early March, there have been a lot of webinars with a variety of topics on how we can shift our teaching to online or blended mode.

Preparation for a forum is always challenging, but AFINITE is proud to host our first online forum for two days with around 100 participants and action research presenters from Indonesia, Malaysia, Peru, Vietnam and Philippines. Our keynote lecture Dr. Feliece Yeban did a perfect job to 'soften' action research topic by engaging the participants interactively in a practical manner and focusing on our actual experience as educators using Filipino-English so that it will be less

intimidating and to achieve our first step which is to make our participants understand how important is action research in Japanese language education, not just to teachers and students but even to stakeholders.

Coaching Workshop on the second day of the forum was also engaging because participants were divided into smaller groups with a specific topic so that we will be guided by our facilitators/coaches Dr. Yeban and Professor Soriano, both from Philippine Normal University on how we can start our action research project.

As AFINITE's President, I believed that we were able to achieve our association's objectives through this forum, with the support of The Japan Foundation Manila and De La Salle University Manila, which is aside from promoting Japanese language and culture in the Philippines; AFINITE also aims to develop leadership skills of the members and provide services and materials that will help them become more competent language educators; to foster exchange ideas regarding teaching methods and; to upgrade the quality of Japanese language education in the Philippines.

Ms. Bernadette Jen Hieida, a language faculty of the De La Salle University Manila-International Studies Department and also an Instructor of The Japan Foundation Manila, is currently serving her second term as President of AFINITE until 2021.

