CREATING A LITERARY CULTURE IN THE CLASSROOM

by:
Rosalyn B. Angeles
Master Teacher I, Cabcaben Elementary School

It is safe to say that nowadays literary character wise, names easily alluded by students are not the names of Romeo and Juliet, Anthony and Cleopatra, Hector and Andromache. Tristan and Isolde, but the names that ring a bell are, Marian Rivera and Dingdong Dantes, Carla Abellana and Tom Rodriguez, Aljur Abrenica and Kris Bernal, Janine Gutierrez and Elmo Magalona. They would not even know who Adolfo and Florida are.

Creating a literary culture, even in other content area teaching is a great leap to recover that piece of our cultural heritage at the same time linking literature with our study of language and literacy. According to Diaz De Rivera, 2000, we must not forget the significant role in the development of literacy awareness and sensitivity through literature. These are therefore some proposed imperative for teachers to create a literacy culture in the schools.

1. Teachers themselves must be readers. Teachers who chose reading as a leisure time activity are not only knowledgeable about the latest “good reads” but are themselves more fluent in the language. Their lectures are richer and they seem to be able to pose more interesting questions for students to mull over. Teachers need to familiarize themselves with a wide variety of literature that reflects the diverse population they serve.

2. Books and materials must be everywhere throughout the school. Teachers and librarians/media specialists need to work together to ensure that there is a wide variety of content materials available. Teachers must submit lists of possible reference and supplementary materials that must be available on
request by their respective classes. This cannot be possible if the library is inadequate.

3. Students must be given numerous ways to respond to literature. Teachers must use engagement activities, activities that get students to respond to what they have read via the visual arts, creative dramatics, music, as well as creative writing.

4. Reading must be perceived as important. In a literature-rich environment, the teachers read to students daily; students are allowed to read on their own; or they read and do research in groups.

5. Teachers should model an effective reading process. Teachers must show that when students are reading silently or doing independent reading, they themselves are reading.

6. Selections used in the classroom must be appealing and attuned to the interests of the students. Teachers must be good adolescent psychologists and aware of the current trends in youth reading.

Literature is authentic material, and because of the authenticity of the language used, it encourages the students to talk more freely about their opinions and feelings on issues at hand. Because literature makes ideas real and relevant, the learner begins to feel that his/her thoughts are important too, and must be shared. Diaz De Rivera (2000).

Reference:

Diaz de Rivera, Lilia B., Toward Fostering a Literacy Culture, The RAP Journal. published by the Reading Assoc. of the Phil. 2005 p.5-6