EMBRACING THE POWER OF 21ST CENTURY TEACHING FOR BETTER LEARNING

by:
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A teacher has many roles in the classroom – to manage, to educate, to assess, to evaluate, to understand the feelings of the learners, to love, and most of all, to think of ideal, practical, and constructive ways on how the children will enjoy the session as they learn. A teacher, too, has many faces – the face of a leader, of a nurse or a doctor, of a lawyer, of a painter, of a singer or a dancer, of a friend, of a joker, and indeed, of a parent who never ceases on taking care of the student unconditionally. We can always hear that every student is unique so is every teacher.

In the past, we have argued about the approaches and pedagogies an educator should use in the classroom. Many would follow the traditional and Aristocratic while many would ensure the contemporary. The two opposing matters still create balance and have their own historical backgrounds and perspectives. Paulo Freire, a Brazilian Educator, wrote his book “The Pedagogy of the Oppressed” in the late 1970’s as he traveled across the world to observe how schools teach and shape a learner. He noted two theories by which he explicated his factual observation and evaluation. The first one is known as the “Banking System of Education.” Here, teachers are the masters and the manipulators of their time in the classroom. Freire described the pupils as beings who sit meekly on their chairs while waiting for the knowledge to be spoon-fed to them. The teachers sounded terrible in some of their ways for they were feared by the children like no one wanted to speak up and express his or her own ideas. Freire stated that this kind of approach has its advantages – that the learners learn to behave, be patient as they wait for their turn, and be obedient to the one in-charged. Apparently, it restricts a child to be
ready for his or her role in the future and doesn’t learn to be appreciative of themselves, instead, he or she learns to deprecate his or her own value.

Freire thought of a more constructive theory to balance the traditional one. He named it **“The Problem-Posing Education.”** Here, teachers should be the role facilitators while the learners keep themselves abreast on their own progress. True teachers get out of ignorance and do not tolerate mediocrity. They should be more encouraging and motivating as they inspire the students to be ready for their future and to be happy by expressing themselves in any forms of arts and intelligences. The teacher should teach the lesson and give activities that will test their children’s skills because they need to learn a lesson by doing it. The classroom should be child-friendly and that a learner must not be marginalized, stereotyped, nor discriminated. The atmosphere must be conducive and constructive as students exercise what they have learned to their real-life situations. The only disadvantage is that the learners might go beyond their limitations and might possibly be out of control, so the teachers still play the most significant role – to guide them to any path.

Today, our education system has entered the epoch of the 21st century education where everyone has the right to learn. The Education for All (EFA) encapsulates the idea that no one should be left behind. Paulo Freire had contributed so much in this modern age of teaching and learning. Without his ideas and philosophies, we will not be able to grasp the foundation of the notion that teachers should reach out all the learners not just behind the walls of the classroom, and that the teachers should teach the way the learners learn. In fact, we can still follow the traditional ways, but in some cases, these should be concocted with the modern ways.

Nowadays, the chalk and the blackboard are not sufficient to provide what the students need. The technology and other creative things can be the add-ons to learning. The facilities must be widened and built to explore the expanding horizons of education. But always remember that everything will become stale, even the instructional materials
that are continuously being developed and innovated. One thing is for sure, teachers will never be obsolete; teachers will never be beaten by any solid object; teachers will never be replaced by robots; and teachers will never be considered ineffective and inefficient channels of learning, because whatever the case may be, all those who teach passionately are the most powerful conduits of the 21st century education. In these times of changing eras, what we need to embrace are the new ways and varied pedagogies the teacher incorporate to deliver the better and the best learning the students deserve.

“As we look ahead into the 21st century, leaders will be those who empower others.”

- Bill Gates, co-founder of Microsoft

References: