INTO THE WORLD OF WATTPAD: MAKING READING A CRAZE

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Reading seems to be one of the hardest things to develop among students of today. Though they are provided with a plethora of ways to enjoy reading, many still find it boring, tiresome, and annoying especially when they have to bring thick huge books along with them. That’s why it’s a good thing wattpad was invented.

Allen Lau, Wattpad’s co-founder and CEO, mentioned that wattpad started as a mobile reading app which allows people to share their writing on mobile devices. Through word of mouth, it soon became so popular that millions of people around the world started using this application. It is continuously growing up to this day with most users residing in UK, US, and Canada. It is also the number one app in the Philippines (www.google.com.ph/amp/s/amp.theguardian.com, 2014).

Personally, I am using wattpad in encouraging my students to read. Instead of requiring them to bring books during our reading sessions, I only asked them to install the app on their phones. Having wattpad installed in one’s mobile phone is like having a library with you. Fortunately, almost all of them have cellphones and some of them are already using the app. Teenagers can easily be hooked with this kind of reading. As Kirci (2014) cited, younger generations of today are at such an age where they are more perceptive to new ideas and new concepts and that’s why wattpad started taking off.

In addition, this application motivates students more than the usual reading of a book. Aside from the fact that phones are handier, they also can socialize with other readers and writers. They could browse through others’ comments and post their own stand and opinions about a particular story. As a teacher, if you are worried about what the students might read, let me share with you my experience. This is actually one of my dilemmas before: filtering the students’ reading lists. To do this, what I did was to create my own wattpad account and add students to it. As part of our agreement, they could only read stories that are included in my reading lists. In this way, I could still review the contents of what they are reading which should always be appropriate for their age. After doing this, I was actually surprised to know that even after school, they prefer to continue reading at home since they are already ‘engaged’ or ‘addicted’ to what they read. Also wattpad allows them to choose the genre they like. They could favor humor, teen fiction, action,
horror, romance, science fiction, adventure, fantasy, historical fiction, mystery or thriller, paranormal, vampire, werewolf, and many more. Not only that, they are also taking down notes of their favorite words or quotes from the stories.

Another positive result of reading wattpad is that it incites creativity among its readers who might also be writers. Among my students, I am proud to say that because they have read great stories, some became too inspired that they, too, are now writing their own stories in wattpad. This app inspired them to be like their favorite authors who also started by just freely sharing what’s on their minds but soon gained gigantic success when their stories were published or transformed into movies due to creative contents.

Similarly, Medina (2014) also underlined the advantages of wattpad. She posited that it kills boredom, provides free will to write what’s on your mind, improves your writing skills especially when readers comment for the betterment of your story, allows you to interact with others, enhances creativity, and gives you opportunity to be discovered as a writer. As teachers, it is our prime responsibility to unfold and elaborate students’ reading skills. Let us not confine them with traditional books because there are still lots of great writers to be discovered out there. Be unafraid. Allow them to explore the world of wattpad and witness how reading could become an enjoyable craze. As napsandaftemoontea, a wattpad writer, noted, reading is to the mind what exercise is to the body. We are what we feed our minds.

REFERENCES:


