MAKING LESSON RETENTION BETTER AMONG STUDENTS

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Often, we don’t just notice but encounter as well that when the teacher had his/her throat sore due to day long discussions, it is expected that students have learned enough to be remembered the next meeting. Only to find out that upon coming back to school and having a short and quick recap of the lesson, students are blank-faced and struck with selective amnesia.

This often irritates us, that after all our efforts and passion put to the ultimate display of teaching prowess, still students find it difficult to remember let alone master the subject matter. Almost all schools experience this phenomenon. The retention span of the students is so short that there are times that what was just taught a few hours ago was lost in space already. I even tried to test my students by simply asking what was the last word I just said, and sadly they can’t remember. Why is this happening?

According to research, the brain is wired to forget things that have no impact or importance in the decision making process of thinking (Neuron, 2017). This explains why the students kept on forgetting what the teachers have been drilling into their heads. The students might not be able to grasp the relevance and importance of finding x in math or balancing atomic equations in science. These learnings do not add up to the mental process of the student in making reactions, decisions and judgments on what is happening to him/her outside the school.

It has been discussed in numerous seminars and trainings that teachers must be able to bridge the gap between the classroom and the community. What happens outside the school must be directly related to what is being learned inside the
classroom. By doing so, the teacher establishes the link with why there is a need to find \( x \) in solving problems that have multiple variables and unknown factors. Balancing of atomic equations must transcend to how the world is governed by balance and equilibrium. The students must be able to realize that there are consequences if balance is not present. These are only some examples and I’m pretty sure that the readers can think more.

This leads us to innovate strategies in making lesson retention better. Edutopia (2017) suggested five tips in making retention better. One is peer to peer explanation. If students are able to communicate concepts and ideas on their own words to people of their genre, they will be able to send messages that are lasting. Since the language is not too difficult for them to digest, they can see the relevance of it through the lenses of their age bracket. Two is spacing effect. Here, a regular and quick recap of what was taught is the key in retaining the information needed to be remembered. Before heading to a new topic, revisit what was discussed already. Three is a frequent practice. This is self-explanatory. If the student has regular practice then is easy to remember. Fourth is interleave concepts. This is integrating concepts with other ideas, more like the interdisciplinary style of teaching or context-based teaching. The teacher may link the idea discussed from one subject to another. This will lead the student to the realization that subjects go hand in hand and are not isolated concepts. Lastly, combine images with text. Images create a great impact on the retention of students. People remember more what they see rather than what they hear or read.

If these strategies are incorporated in the classroom, then it is a sure win that the lesson taught by the teacher will last in the memories of the students.
References:
