RAISING THE CALIBER OF NUMERACY AND LITERACY TOWARDS A MORE SIGNIFICANT LEARNING

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There is no denial of the fact that today’s educational agenda have transcended the traditional ways of the teaching and learning process in which we are dealing with a progressive technological utilization. Almost all the instructional materials qualify the use of computer, internet, printer, and audio-visual types. On the contrary, these technologies also have their own loopholes especially to the schools that have no access to modernity and advancement in their local areas. Remote places remain to be far-flung. Despite these quandaries, the Department of Education (DepEd) has many ways to reach out the aspirants waiting for support and assistance.

Is the availability of the technology the only problem to solve? No. School administrators must also consider that teachers need an equivalent training on how to implement technology-based materials so that the learners will be able to play along and know how to apply these experimented tools to better their learning absorption. Numeracy and literacy are amongst the most important aspects that should be mastered by the learners. In the past, counting and using mathematical formulas constituted to the numeracy training of the child, while literacy focused on the basic reading, writing, and comprehension. There were pupils who fell last in the line, facing struggles in recognizing alphabets that form into words, encountering hardships in doing addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division, and having troubles in understanding the purpose of what they are doing.

These predicaments had been addressed and had been given attention by developing activity-based instructions. The pupils are being trained to be more inclined
in the “i+1” concept of adapting numbers and words as they perform various roles in all subjects taught in the classroom. The reason behind this is that in our country, functional literacy is a priority, so any effort about this that is accomplished by the educators, school administrators, and stakeholders is celebrated and recognized. In an article written in worldvision.org, the Philippines has steadily made a big jump in its functional literacy rate over the years. As established by the National Statistics Authority, functional literacy is the level of literacy that includes not only reading and writing, but also numeracy skills that help people cope with the everyday requirements of life.

We have historically thought of literacy as reading and writing skills; but our perception of literacy today includes far more than that. The ability to learn, comprehend and critically appreciate different modes of communication, including spoken language, written text, broadcast media, and digital media, is part of literacy. When we refer to “literacy”, we mean this wider understanding of ability, including speaking and listening, as well as communication. On the other hand, the ability to use numbers, add, subtract, multiply and divide is not limited to numeracy. Numeracy requires the ability to use mathematical knowledge and skills in diverse social environments to solve problems and fulfill the demands of day-to-day living. A young person needs to be able to think and interact quantitatively in order to have this capacity, to make sense of data, to have a spatial consciousness, to understand patterns and sequences, and to consider circumstances in which mathematical reasoning can be used to solve problems (Department of Education and Skills, 2011).

It has been the bible of all the teachers that no child must leave the school without having mastery in literacy and numeracy skills. As they grow and progress, they are dealing with a higher level of Mathematics and Language subjects, enabling them to a more profound cognitive development. Basic education is linked from elementary to secondary and today, spiral progression of the subjects is practiced. If a learner does not
learn how to understand basic problem-solving activities, it will likely be a problem when they meet the subjects – literature, algebra, geometry, and so on.

How can teachers and school administrators raise the caliber of functional literacy skills? There are so many strategies, but efficiency and effectiveness are only attained if these are appropriately measured in a type of classroom environment where the cycle of the situational learning happens. Take time to read the following:

1. Apply the three learning domains – cognitive, affective, and psychomotor – in teaching numeracy and literacy skills. For example, the pupils may perform a role play about buying vegetables and fruits in the market by asking for the price, computing the expenses and the change, and by familiarizing themselves with the terminologies.

2. Put your shoes in the situation of the learners. Do not create activities that are easy for you as a teacher, base these on how the learners learn.

3. Divide the learners into different groups upon implementing peer-based functional literacy activities. This engages them in socialization and raises their self-esteem to work collaboratively.

4. In conducting individual school tasks, be aware of the learning levels of the learners. There may be fast-paced learners, but there are still pupils who are struggling to follow. Make them feel that they belong and that they can line themselves up without feeling anxious.

5. Teach the learners to do self-check-up by administering them simple questionnaires that they can analyze and answer both quantitatively and qualitatively.

6. In reading classes, let them create their own questions to be discussed in the entire class to see if they comprehended the selection.
Lastly, in numeracy, contextualize the currency of the money or value to use in example activities. As much as possible, it should be peso and not dollar.

There is so much that teachers can do, but the most important thing is not just to focus on the learners alone. Schools are meant to be in partnership with the community. Encourage the parents to extend the advocacy of the numeracy and literacy skills at home. At the end of the day, children go back to their houses after their learning sessions from the school. What they did with the teachers must be extended at home.

References:

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Department of Education and Skills (2011). Literacy and Numeracy for Learning and Life. The National Strategy to Improve Literacy and Numeracy among Children and Young People 2011-2020