TEACHING AGRICULTURE: TOILING NOT ONLY THE SOIL, BUT THE HEARTS AND MINDS OF LEARNERS

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When I was in elementary, one of my favorite subjects is EPP: Edukasyong Pantahanan at Pangkabuhayan-Agriculture Arts. Whenever the time of EPP advents, it gives me joy and excitement because I love planting. During my high school days, it was not the same when I was in elementary since the time allotted for it is very limited. Also, I was already in my adolescence period, so I felt a little bit shy because toiling the soil would entail getting dirty and sweaty.

The stigma continues. As a teacher in Senior High School, I am quite amazed why our learners have a negative notion about agriculture. Many of my students in STEM and GAS do not want to take agriculture as their courses in college. I would continuously and untiringly persuade them to pursue it because, the Philippines is an agricultural country, and if they are imbued with it, for sure, they will have a prosperous life someday and not only that, the food supply will be abundant in our country, excluding in the picture the perennial idea of importing to other countries whose engineers learned a lot from our agricultural universities and research facilities such as UP Diliman, Central Luzon State University and International Rice Research Institute.

The negative connotation in Agriculture is gradually diminishing because of the Government’s programs that would entice the students to study about it. Full scholarships, OJTs abroad and high paychecks are some of the strategies being done so that students will consider Agriculture as their course in college. Let me just clarify that I am not against other professions, I too, as teacher would love to lead my students to take what they love. I am just giving them a broader perspective in life. 20-40 years from now,
if the trend would not change, I think the prices of prime commodities such as rice, hog, cattle poultry and some agriculture products will be as precious as those of cars and jewelries because according to the Law of Demand and Supply, prices will tend to go up since there are lots of demands but the supply is scarce.

I think it is about time to end up the wrong connotation about Agriculture. I think all of us educators should start inculcating in the minds of our learners the beauty and significance of such in one’s life, for without, man will be greatly troubled. Let us support our farmers, animal raisers agriculture engineers and innovators by not only believing in them but patronizing their products instead of imported goods. After all, as what the famous Filipino adage says: “Sa mata ng bata, ang maling ginagagawa ng matanda ay nagiging tama.”

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