TEACHING STRATEGIES IN 21st CENTURY

by:

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We grew up believing with what our teachers taught us. Teachers provide content, facts, names, formulas, research, theories, details and information. Filipinos nowadays are enjoying the fruit of modern technology but why we are still learning the traditional way wherein the mode of learning process is teacher-centered. A learning process which is student-centered may be revolutionary and more effective in terms of developing their skills. The question is, what does it mean to teach in the 21st Century? Students of this present generation can find information on anything, anytime, anywhere and any way they want. It is evident that teachers are no longer the only source of relevant information anymore. Almost every detail about anything could be found in the internet using different tool for researching and obviously, it is more precise and accurate depending on the source of information. There is blogs, facebook, cellphones, twitter, Wikipedia, youtube, mp3 players, bing and virtually limitless information whatever, whenever and wherever. The most important thing that teachers must think is how to teach students how to handle these limitless resources. Surely, most of the students knew how to use a research engines but has anyone show them how to validate, synthesize, leverage, communicate and spread information, collaborate and problem solve with information? These are very important skills that the students should possess or master through time in order to survive or excel in their selected field as they strive to make a living. With all of the information available with one click away, teaching force must think on where to be focused, is it on facts and content or skills? Think of the skills used when you ask, how do I play my bass? What’s the best course for me? What’s the fastest route home to avoid traffic? Should I rent a house while studying far or go home after the class? How can I get my image on there so companies will hire me? Who should I vote for Supreme Student Government? How can I check the background of the candidates?
Where can I get reliable news and information? What is the most efficient tool for my school project? As an educator, we must know would we ask these questions and find out students’ interest and when found out, facilitate their learning process and guide them to their chosen career path. The skills that teachers should develop among students are skills that will make the students more competitive and these skills are remembering, understanding, applying, analyzing, evaluating and creating. Teachers must eliminate the belief that they will be productive through injecting all knowledge to the students without proving their own capabilities and own abilities. It is not easy to create but creation does have different meaning today. There are different forms of creation in this computer-age generation. Students can prove it through blogging, podcasting, animating, planning, recording, designing, programming and other skills that could be enhanced by exploiting the benefits of technology. More comprehensive and updated details, facts and information could be extracted from the works of experts posted in the internet for the welfare of the global audience. We, as teachers thought that not everyone could avail the benefit of modern technology but not all parts of our country suffer from this problem. Our government is doing everything they can to give the best facilities and equipment to improve the quality of education. For the schools that are enjoying these privileges, it is the perfect time to start and adapt a new strategy that fits the K to 12 Basic Education Curriculum of the Department of Education. About the ICT skills, many of us thought that it could only be enhanced and improved by taking up ICT courses. There are simple but effective ways that could make them possess the skills by means of their own way. Examples are paraphrasing, experimenting, bookmarking, reflecting, tagging, searching, integrating, linking, attributing, mashing, editing, networking, uploading, posting, subscribing, locating, twittering, commenting, and many more skills that could be learned by watching videos and making their own research in the internet. Isn’t it fun to watch the works of our students in the internet building the students’ accountability and responsibility and at the same time competing with the works of other people professional or not? This opportunity absolutely fits in Bloom’s taxonomy. What about
reliability and integrity? From they are learning these? Is it from them alone or from different resources? It could be from their parents, relatives, friends, stranger and even from them. Where do we expect them to learn about slander, pirating, plagiarism, crowd sourcing, copyright and confidentiality? The answer is professionalism. The teacher is the one responsible in teaching this attitude to them. The big question is what does this means for the classroom? It means we need to rethink the tools we use and the type of problems we ask students to solve. The main role of the teachers is to facilitate the students’ learning process as they discover the solution to the problems that the teachers them to solve. Aside from classroom, how could a teacher gather and discuss data? This could be discussed via facebook, cellphone, twitter, crowd sourcing and online surveys. How could a teacher talk about reliable sources? Teachers can use Microsoft office 2010, web applications, search, podcasts, Wikipedia, drigo, blogs or del.icio.us. How could students publish and evaluate their work? Youtube is the most common tool used in publishing their works. Students can reflect by watching their own work so they could evaluate their performance in order to make it better next time. Their work could also be evaluated by reading reactions, comments, suggestions and recommendations by people who watched their work. How could students collaborate? They can use facebook, twitter, skype, skydrive, Microsoft lync and cellphones. How could struggling students benefit from these resources? They can use video lessons in youtube and google, virtual manipulatives, bubl.us, wordle, audacity, videos created by their own teacher and other websites. What if the students do not have any computer or cellphone? The teacher can simply download the videos, burn it in compact disc, give it to the student, ask the student to watch it using dvd, vcd player or other media player at home anytime and as many times the student wants until the content is mastered. What if there is no television or dvd in their home? The teacher ask a peer to assist the struggling student by having the video downloaded in their cellphone, computer, tablet or any media and administer peer tutorial using their time for collaborative learning. This method could enhance skills of both parties. When the students got home, ask them to answer the guide questions set
by the teacher using any resources they prefer to use. Ask the students not only to “know” but to explain, justify and evaluate their opinion and resources. For example, what is the current relationship between China and the Philippines? This is a fresh issue so lots of information could be attained in the mass media. The students will be able to form a concrete answer with concrete evidences and justification. If you were to join a school club, which club will you choose? What are the top rated jobs in this country? What required skills do these jobs have in common? Teachers could ask them to find online presentation program. With that, the teacher could instruct them to use it to create a 2-minute or less presentation of the pros and cons of the problem. Think of what skills could students gain in through this process. What kind of discussions could this create in the classroom? How could students share, collaborate, compare and publish these ideas? Let us think of the possibilities. How do we manage our gadgets at school? Very simple, the same way we manage our papers. Maybe these tools provide temptation but they are not the source of negative behaviour. Teachers should always remember that any lesson we create, no matter what tools are used has to be relevant, challenging and engaging.

For example, why does every lesson have to entertain students with toy, animated presentation or music? These tools are no longer about pure entertainment. Students do not need to be entertained, they need to be engaged. Entertainment is not the same as engagement. If we are going to compare these two words, entertainment is passive while engagement is active, entertainment is for enjoyment while engagement is for learning, entertainment is short-lived while engagement has long term results, entertainment doesn’t require relevance while engagement must be meaningful and applicable, entertainment is an escape from problem while engagement means problem solving, entertainment is to use the creativity of others while engagement requires creativity of the participant, and entertainment can and should be fun and exciting as well as engagement. Our charge is to provide meaningful and powerful engagement to attain success. So where does it start? It starts with us teachers. Let us see what’s out there inside our computers. Let us find sites, try some software, do some research, discover new
strategic methods, adapt new strategies and watch works of experts. We can start small. What is one you could do in the next 2-3 weeks to better engage with 21st century skills? We can also

collaborate with ICT experts or interested people. Don’t do it alone. Plan carefully and ask what others have found successful. Let’s take risk. Change cannot occur without conflict. Try it and see what happens. Remember the big picture. No matter what content you teach, no matter what skills you teach, no matter what subject you teach, the question to ask is, what does it mean to teach?

Reference:

http://prezi.com/gx6ycgphlszm/ video of Sonja Delafosse.