THE PLEDGE OF A LANGUAGE TEACHER

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All my bags are packed, I’m ready to go
I’m standing here outside your door
I hate to wake you up and say goodbye…

-Leaving on A Jet Plane (John Denver, 1966)

As an educator, haven’t you experienced the same scenario that John Denver described in the abovementioned song? Don’t you feel exhausted? Or even thought of giving up?

I know a lot of you have considered quitting. Throw your diplomas in the corner or even disregard the hardships that you’ve encountered just to graduate in the tertiary and even post graduate level. You’ve felt that all your efforts were in vain! Despite different strategies and pedagogies, students seemed not to learn at all!

You decided to quit! Move out of the present educational system! Find a new job! But at the end of the day after a thorough reflection, you find yourself chained to the teaching force and still remained as part of the educational system.

You might be wondering why a Language Teacher like me, stayed on the job despite several greener pastures outside the system. As a teacher, the answers are very clear, we get tired but we never get tired of teaching our students. We want to go but we always look back and consider the fate of our students in the near future. We want to say No but ends up in giving them a chance, a room for improvement.
Language is life itself, if we give up on our students - we devoid them the privilege of a good life. According to Smith (2016) and as cited by Murray & Tran (2016), “A language sets you for corridors of life while two languages open every door along the way.” In their study, they found out the importance of language in developing the confidence and productivity of individuals which are necessary for the different facets of human life. Since the aim of K-12 is to develop globally competitive students, it is a must that language teachers should help their students in developing their communications skills in Filipino as well as in English.

In light of the recent PISA result, I was heartbroken with the ranking of Filipino students in reading and comprehension skills. Our country landed at the bottom of the 79 countries that participated in the said test. It turned out that we are the poorest among the poorest in terms of reading and comprehension skills (PISA Result, 2018).

An educational blight that posed a great challenge and a wakeup call to all the language teachers in the Philippine Islands. Secretary Briones stressed that the result served as an eyeopener on the present educational status in the Philippines. Due to this sad fact, the country launched a counter-measure campaign known as EDUKALIDAD that reviews the different components of the present educational system in the country. In EDUKALIDAD, the K-12 Curriculum will be revisited, improvement of facilities will be taken into consideration, teachers’ upskilling and reskilling will be implemented and stakeholders will be tapped for the promotion of quality education in the land.

In accordance with the current issues faced by the present educational system, language teachers should work hand in hand in eradicating illiteracy among the 21st century learners. We need to flap our wings, soar high so that the new batches of students will dream big dreams and climb greater heights.

Remember that it takes a village to educate a child.
References:

