THE ROLE OF THE SCHOOL LIBRARY IN DEVELOPING READING SKILLS OF PUPILS

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According to Webster’s Student Dictionary, a library is a room or building given over to a collection of books kept for use and not for sale; also, it is an institution for managing such a collection. On the other hand, the school library as defined by Prudencia C. Cruz, Director of the National Library, it is an indispensable unit of the school system; a vital instrument for quality education; a vital support system of instruction which provides materials that enrich the curriculum and enhance the teaching profession; the most important intellectual resource for men’s quest for excellence, and it is not just a room full of inanimate object, but it is more like that of a living organism because it is full of life activities.

Cruz (2006) further explained in her talk in the Reading Association of the Philippines (RAP) Annual Convention, that school libraries can make pupils to become independent users of information by giving them the skills to learn how to find information, select what is relevant, train them to discern what is the best information fitted to their needs; and let the pupils take responsibility for their own learning. In addition, school libraries can also help teachers to use boarder range of teaching strategies in a flexible way.

Although nowadays, students who are having an access to the library for reading and research are becoming fewer and fewer because of the use of modern technology like the internet wherein acquiring information and communication is a lot easier compare to the library use. Information is just a click away in surfing the internet,
so students prefer using their computers, laptop or netbook in searching for the information needed for their assignments.

However, many reading advocates through the school librarians launched different programs and projects to use the library in their assignments and research, like the Library Hub wherein we can borrow books for as long as one month.

Through reading we discover the lives and principles and discover different emotions. Books promote empathy, enhance citizenship, support, develop and improve the literary skills of students. We realize the true life experiences of our heroes, like what Ambeth Ocampo, a noted historian has written in his newspaper column about the aspirations, emotions and even foods that our heroes craved for.

Through the classroom teacher who tries to bring his/her pupils in the school library, the reading process can be transferred to the pupils; emergent literacy can be acquired by them. Teaching beginning reading will be facilitated and the basic comprehension skills will be acquired by pupils. Literacy and appreciation skills will be developed.

At present, not all schools have libraries, instead they have the Learning Centers or Mini libraries in every classroom, and however, there are Library Hubs wherein teachers can borrow for his/her pupils.

References: