TO OUR COMMUNITY OF LEARNERS

by:
Ma. Luisa N. Catli

Just recently, we have witnessed the 2nd Virtual Graduation brought about by this ongoing pandemic.

For us teachers, it meant editing virtual Certificates of Recognition, reciting student names on PowerPoint narration, and rushing to complete year-end reports and printing student report cards. This is no easy feat as colleagues would agree, as beating deadlines with admittedly, an incomplete mastery of these new teaching and reporting technologies isn’t easy to navigate.

But going beyond our professional lives, we can’t help to wonder what it’s like to be a parent who’s about to witness their child’s graduation virtually. After all, I am a mother too, and some of the most heartfelt and surreal moments of my life as a parent are on witnessing my children go up the stage, take their diploma and smile for the cameras and us, the parents, as if saying, “we’ve made it”. I was also blessed to go up the stage too, share the honor with my children who has done well in school, be it in academics or sports.

I can’t help to wonder what was it replaced with, as those moments aren’t really easy to replicate, even with the technologies available for our perusal as of the moment. There have been discussions with relatives sharing that they did not even get to hear the sound of the names of their graduating children being mentioned on the slideshow. And this may sound trivial to some, but remembering how excited I was waiting for my children’s name to be called, I can’t help but to identify, to relate, or to feel for them.

Now as a parent, and a teacher, I begin to ask myself too, how it must feel to be a graduating student. It has been years since I had my own graduation, but I still remember
how it feels to prepare for the occasion, reminding myself that this has also been missed by the children graduating during this challenging time.

At the time when we are advised against making physical contact, we try to think of ways to reach out to each other and while it may seem troublesome, we recreate the moment, even in the slightest.

Suddenly, I have a new appreciation of the hours I spend staring into the computer screen. If only to make sure these parents and their children get to see the numbers, they have also worked in front of their computer screens and modules for. There’s also a different tone as to which I recite the names of these graduating students for the narration, if only to let them hear the same thing they would as they march onstage. I even found myself re-recording some names, making sure I did not mispronounce anything, if only to ensure that the parents would get to hear the names of their children loud and clear.

Maybe, this particular moment in history shall teach us something more, as a community of learners.

The children, continues to learn through a platform though familiar to them, isn’t what they’re used to working on. Perhaps after this, they’d have a better appreciation of what it’s like to learn on the field. For parents, perhaps they could embrace the task of ensuring their children continues to learn at home, fostering an environment that encourages them to do so.

Finally, for us, the teachers, perhaps we could learn what it finally means to be a teacher in this new age, to treat these technologies as friends of our profession. Perhaps after all this, we could learn how to blend together innovative teaching strategies with what has worked over the years to create a learning environment that is capable of surviving even the worst of environmental challenges. Perhaps we could start now.

References:
https://news.abs-cbn.com/spotlight/07/12/21/graduation-in-the-new-normal