

LITERACY AS A KEY TO NATION'S PROGRESS

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Since the Philippines has two national languages – Filipino and English, and there is also a Mother Tongue, many Filipino learners struggle to master the said languages.

Even in high school, many learners struggle to learn English as a second language. More so, the Philippines' instruction and improvement in English proficiency have met quite some challenges in recent years. Mother-based instruction has been institutionalized, and yet there are still limitations and preparation for teachers to teach English among learners whose mother tongue is other than English. There is also a limitation on technological advances and instructional resources for some educators and learners (Wa-Mbaleka, 2014).

Such a problem can be effectively and efficiently addressed if English as a medium of instruction is done creatively and fun in most subjects. As Carabajo (2011) reiterated, teaching English becomes meaningful and fun when teachers effectively apply communicative activities, resulting in students' feeling of motivation. Such could make them participate and interact more with others enthusiastically. These activities can encourage learners' participation, contributing to improving their practice of the language. In this context, teachers must be empowered to use appropriate communicative activities that are well-designed and suited to develop the students' language skills.

One of the mandates of educational leaders in the DepEd is the improvement of the reading competence of the learners as part of the vision of making Filipino learners functionally literate. Educators recognize that for learners to be successful, they must become functionally literate individuals. This is the same objective of the ECARP (Every Child a Reader Program) of the DepEd adhering to the SDGs (Sustainable Development

Goals) of the 2030 agenda of the Philippines, otherwise known as the Global Goals, primarily in Goal No. 4 or Quality Education, wherein functional literacy is a critical concern to achieve EFA (Education for All).

Improving the students' reading competence will undoubtedly result in higher achievement and understanding. In that sense, students can gain more knowledge and establish higher competence, which is crucial as they transcend to higher grade levels. Literacy is a key to a nation's progress. To this end, the school and family, as the critical institutions tasked with educating the child, need to work together to make learners become functionally literate and able citizens.

References:

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