

OVERCOMING LANGUAGE BARRIERS IN NURTURING LEARNER'S LITERACY

by:

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Literacy is the ability to use printed and written resources connected with various situations to recognize, comprehend, interpret, create, communicate, and compute. The development of one's knowledge and potential through literacy involves a continuum of learning, allowing one to fully engage in one's community and the larger society as well as to attain one's goals. The four skills – reading, writing, listening, and speaking – as well as language (being attentive to the conventions of the language, using increasingly precise vocabulary, and understanding how language functions) makeup literacy (Ignaz, 2021).

The worldwide literacy rate is high as a whole. All males and females who are at least 15 years old have a literacy rate of 86.3 percent. 90 percent of men over the age of 15 are literate, compared to 82.7 percent of women in that same age group. However, there are significant variations between countries. In the Philippines, the functional literacy rate was projected to be 91.6 percent in 2019 according to a survey done by the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA) (Talavera, 2020). The results showed a persistent decline in the country's ranking since 2016. In 2018, the Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) reported that the Philippines ranked last among 79 countries in reading comprehension. Furthermore, the Philippine Department of Education stated that many students are still having difficulty meeting the requirements for mastering early language literacy (DepEd Memo No. 173 series 2019).

There are still several challenges to overcome despite significant progress in expanding access to basic education and reducing educational disparities. Since literacy is the foundation of everything, it is one of the most crucial skills one should possess. Literacy, however, is still undervalued despite being the cornerstone of success, particularly among students. In addition, there are "barriers" that prohibit two or more individuals from understanding one another when they speak different languages. Language barriers arise from the inability to communicate in a common language. It alludes to the difficulties faced by individuals or organizations who speak several languages and dialects. Language barriers are significant because they frequently impede progress (McConville, 2019). Here are four ways to get beyond language barriers and encourage literacy among learners.

Increasing students' awareness of the value of literacy

The learners require assistance from teachers and parents to increase their level of awareness about a reading or literacy topic. This can be achieved by allowing them to read their preferred language works and to regularly view language instruction videos. One of the finest ways for learners to increase their vocabulary and comfort level with the language is to read. Additionally, the internet is full of excellent tools for learning languages. One of them is YouTube, the biggest video-sharing website in the world. They will not come across a better or more accessible resource for real-world language.

Enhancing reading activities in schools and optimizing the school library's role and purpose

It is possible to foster reading habits in schools. Literacy-based learning can be implemented in schools by all teachers working collaboratively. The school's literacy programs are appropriate for use during language lessons as it covers core competencies such as reading, writing, speaking, listening, and viewing. Further, the library's contribution to creating a culture of literacy in schools must be improved and maximized.

To make the library look more presentable and appealing, schools must ensure that the school library is welcoming and accommodating for all learners.

Stepping outside the comfort zone of the learner and allowing them to learn from their mistakes

A common mistake that learners make is failing to push themselves to use the language they're learning in real-world circumstances. However, keep in mind that learning is a process. Let them simply step outside of their comfort zone since that is where growth takes place. One of the best things they can do to quicken their learning process is to allow them to ask for feedback and teach them to value criticism. Give learners the chance to remember that they are not defined by their mistakes; rather, they are a necessary part of the growing process.

Believing in the power of learning

It can be motivating to keep learners focused on the ultimate result, but placing too much emphasis on the future can interfere with their experience of the present. Learning a new language is a wonderful way to improve their literacy. Every day, learners have the potential to improve. Instead of getting caught up in the goals themselves, concentrate on what they are doing right now to achieve them.

Through literacy, children can go on a journey to learn more about themselves and the world they live in. It's a necessary step in a journey to improve as individuals, as a society, and as a global community. Literacy brings up new worlds of opportunity and paths for empowerment. It brings forth new energies and expands the boundaries of life. Women and men who are literate can establish the groundwork for new lines of inquiry and unlock doorways to deeper levels of existence.

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