

CERTAINTY IN UNCERTAINTY

by:

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“Kapag ‘di ka na masaya, umalis ka.”

These are the words of my principal every time he would talk to us in random conversations in random areas in the school.

Yes, he is right, and that is true which is why I ask these questions to myself. “Why am I still teaching? Why am I not resigning from my post as I seemed uninterested anymore?”

Some may say that the job of us, teachers is as light as a feather, but I beg to disagree. Most of the time, we are given ancillary tasks outside the classrooms where we serve as the school paper advisers, or the department coordinators, or club advisers, or chairpersons of various events and programs in the school. Sometimes, we extend hours in school just so we can assure the promptness and organization of their service. Being parts of the school, it has become our social responsibility to act and deliver in times of need. However, all these are just secondary to our teaching job.

Imagine interacting with five to six classes with each class having an estimate of 50 students in one class discussion for 45 minutes—everyday, not mentioning their various individual differences in performances, and behaviors and attitudes we have to deal with. Some may perform slower than their classmates. Some cannot read well; some can. Some of them, in some cases, may have disruptive behaviors; some may not have. Some may disrespect us; some may not. Some may give us headache; some may not. Some may cause us to question our skills as teachers; some may prove it. Some may not

appreciate what we do, some may not. Some give us reasons to choose to leave – but many become our reasons to choose to stay. Truly the decision to stay committed to teaching is challenging; however, despite these challenges, we remain committed to our purpose – not for ourselves, but for them, our students.

For many of us, we stay on our ground as we strongly believe in our desire to make a positive impact on the lives of these students. We are not just there delivering our lessons, but we are there to become instruments to make them better individuals at heart and mind and develop them as productive and literate members of the society.

Just recently, in the article released by The Philippine Star Global, the result of the Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) 2022 revealed that less than one fourth of those Filipinos who took the exam reached the basic proficiency level in Mathematics, Reading, and Science, which meant that the country remained the weakest in the same subjects in comparison to the country's performance PISA 2018. Locally, in Luakan National High School-Annex in Dinalupihan, the result of the Phil-Iri Pre Reading Assessment for School Year 2024-2025 showed that there were 508 frustrated readers and 12 non-readers from the total of 1, 108 actual readers. This is a big number as almost half of the population struggle in reading which is one of the most critical skills students should develop. Although there is an improvement compared to the result of the same assessment conducted in 2023 where there were 72% of the population who could not read well, this does not mean that there is significant improvement. This just goes to show that our service to these young minds is significantly needed especially these times of uncertainty and challenges. Admittedly, at the back of our minds, we cannot afford to see them in the future trying so hard in life just to survive each day of their lives. This is our vision which erases our frustrations.

Also, the disruptive behaviors these students show consciously and unconsciously are also our realizations that we should determinately be catalysts of change. In Engania's et al. (1999) study, it appeared that clowning, cheating, disrespect and bullying are some of the most common problems of students in terms of behavior. Being human, sometimes, we respond negatively towards these, but later we realize that the students need our power to guide and direct them to things which are right to do. These are the times they are most vulnerable, and they need understanding from us. At the end of the day, we know that students behave the way they do for reasons. When we take time to identify their reasons, and understand them for their behavior, we can talk to them empathetically. In this effort to build ties with them, we are actually strategically improving their behavior leading to success.

Ultimately, that is our core – and that is what make us stay in our profession – to see these students become the better versions of themselves despite the challenges and disruptions in the journey. This is what makes our heart feel fulfilled and accomplished.

How happy is it to see them read well? How fulfilling is it to see them aware and conscious of their behavior and behave appropriately? How rewarding is it to see them doing well in their jobs? How gratifying is it that we stay true to our commitment and purpose?

In conclusion, staying in our profession is ignited by our sense of purpose for these students. With our belief that each of them has potential to thrive, we teachers are driven to transform these uncertainties into certainties – not for ourselves, but for our students.

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