

## MAKING A DIFFERENCE: TEACHERS DRIVING INNOVATIONS IN EDUCATION

*by:*

**LORNA V. GALAPON**

*Teacher II, Mariveles National High School - Poblacion*

In the latest 2022 Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) test, the Philippines found itself once again in the bottom 10 out of 81 countries in reading comprehension, mathematics, and science. This marks the second consecutive assessment where the nation showed minimal improvement, echoing the dismal performance observed in 2018 (OneNews, 2023).

Research suggests that poverty plays a pivotal role in the Philippines' struggle with reading comprehension. Students from low-income families often prioritize work over formal schooling, impacting their cognitive development and hindering their integration into academic circles (Meron, 2014). A staggering 43% of adults with low reading comprehension and literacy levels are reported to live in poverty, according to the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES). Moreover, the prevailing focus on basic word definition in the Filipino education system raises concerns among academics. While fundamental, this approach falls short in developing comprehensive reading skills (Caraig & Quimbo, 2022). Reading comprehension goes beyond knowing the definitions, but involves extracting ideas and connecting with the material - crucial for a holistic education.

To address this crisis, the Department of Education has initiated Brigada Pagbasa, an after-school reading program, as a response to the DepEd 3B Initiative outlined in DM 173, s. 2019 (Philippine Information Agency, 2023). Additionally, efforts are being made to integrate reading comprehension, including the subjects "Reading and Writing Skills"

and "Pagbasa at Pagsusuri ng Iba't Ibang Teksto Tungo sa Pananaliksik," into the Senior High School curriculum.

The significance of elevating reading comprehension skills cannot be overstated. Proficiency in reading comprehension serves as more than an academic achievement; it acts as a gateway to economic progress. A strong foundation in reading comprehension opens doors to new opportunities, enabling individuals to access higher levels of education, securing better employment prospects, be globally competitive, and enhancing their overall skill set. As the world advances, the ability to comprehend complex information becomes increasingly vital for personal and societal growth. It implies also in critical thinking to what extent we should believe in.

In conclusion, addressing the Filipino Reading Comprehension Crisis demands concerted efforts from diverse stakeholders. It is not the public nor the private schools to do such efforts. It is importantly should develop and exercise in the home. By comprehending the root causes and implementing targeted interventions, the nation can unleash the potential of its youth, charting a course for a brighter future and contributing significantly to the economic advancement of the Philippines.

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