

Teaching Writing in Early Grades, A Meaningful Experience

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Abstract: *This article presents a personal story of a high school Biology teacher who happened to teach early grades the fundamentals of language, literacy, and numeracy. Her experiences in teaching the fundamentals of study skills tested her adaptability in the teaching profession, especially her own meaningful stories of empowering herself to become an effecting teacher of beginning writing among young schoolchildren.*

Keywords — *teaching writing; early grades; meaningful experience*

1. INTRODUCTION

Writing is such an important life skill that we learned and refined through formal schooling. It is a skill that can be improved through appropriate practice and not just a gift from heaven that came along upon our birth. Everyone goes through a tedious process of acquiring this skill, from a simple task to complicated ones as we go higher in the education ladder.

I and all my other siblings started learning how to write at home prior to our formal schooling. Our mother served as our first teacher, our dearest mentor who patiently introduced to us the fundamentals of colors, letters, and numbers at an early age. Our father religiously assisted our mother in the teaching-learning session whenever he is free from work. He used to supervise our writing exercises while our mother was busy in attending the reading sessions of my Ate and Kuya. I highly considered that moment as a humble and golden opportunity when I and my siblings started to love the world of pens and papers. Gone are those memorable days but we are presently enjoying the fruit of that great labor.

Learning to write well has never been too late for everyone, we do not need to be frightened, as we can improve our writing skills even at old ages but of course, early foundations are still critical which play a lot in learning to do it successfully at a much shorter span of time (Cabigao, 2020). [1]

2. UNEXPECTED EXPERIENCE

Becoming a dentist is my childhood dream but as I went nearer to my much-awaited college education, I realized that to become a tooth doctor was not really meant for me. My parents could never afford to send me in a medical school, so I decided to take education course, to become a high school teacher specializing in Biology [Biological Science]. Through God's grace and mercy, I earned my bachelor's degree in Secondary Education and started few years of my service in the teaching profession in private schools. I handled not only Biology classes but other subjects, too, and much more

beyond my expectations. From one private school to another, I landed handling early graders teaching fundamentals of language, literacy, and numeracy, which was absolutely bizarre to my education course preparation in college.

As Mahmoud (2019) said, and I quote: "Teaching by experience sharing is now said to be an effective teaching technique that include an active engagement of students in their learning process. However, in my opinion, this experience doesn't necessarily have to be undergone personally, but can be learnt through others as well." [2]

Indeed, she's ultimately right. Though I am now so ready to handle early grade classes, I get used to it with the assistance of my fellow teachers in school and upon hearing their own stories and anecdotes in handling young schoolchildren. My personal experiences and experiences of my colleagues equipped me to become a better version of myself as a teacher in the primary level.

3. HOLDING THE PENCIL RIGHT

I talked to my self my then that all my early grade learners deserve nothing but the best, so I accepted the challenge of teaching beginning learners to bring out the best in them. I am a Biology major, and I was certain that my specialization is far different from teaching language and literacy. Numeracy was just easy for me because numbers are universal or generic somehow, for everyone knows how to deal with numbers and play it along with children. The biggest challenge to me is to teach my learners how to read and write.

I thanked God that all my colleagues were very supportive for they know that I was originally a high school teacher. I easily learned the different strategies and techniques on how to let my learners recognize letters and make sounds out of it, thus preparing them to read little by little. But teaching writing was a different story to tell, it required a lot of pressure on me to teach writing in a very congenial manner with my learners who were just starting to learn on how to hold pencil the right way. I considered that a big question on me If I could hurdle that challenge in my teaching career.

4. SHARPENING MY PEN

My readings habits became serious as I need to catch up with the pedagogies of early education, and of course I must familiarize myself with the rules of writing the Filipino language. At that point, I consulted a confidante in the teaching profession and who eventually referred to me a local study in the Philippine Language Orthography, and it was happened that the study was done by a close friend of mine. On that study of Filipino orthography, one of the recommendations is indeed very true to me, which was to: “keep on updating oneself as an effective language teacher on the writing rules of the language he/she is teaching.” [3]

I got inspired, though somehow overwhelmed on the rules to be mastered upon reading his entire master’s paper. But the author’s persuasion on me to learn each day to become an effecting teacher of beginning writing gave me an assurance that I can beautifully handle those knowledge overloads, saying from his early study in 2012 that: “Teachers have significant role in arousing learners’ interest in writing and making them realize its importance.” [4]

5. MEANINGFUL EXPERIENCE

This humble experience of teaching young schoolchildren to round, read, and write made me become a teacher full of inspiration for my learners. I discovered the joy of involving parents in the education of their children. As Cabigao (2014) recommended in his study, teachers and schools should always maximize the participation of parents in monitoring the progress of their children’s studies, thus raising the possibility of their mastery of the required competencies in school. [5] And on the part of me as the teacher, I am embracing another thought of others to: “Always devote time in assisting the needs of learners with sincere intention of improving their skills in their appropriate grade levels. By giving the most each day, no children will surely be left behind.” [6]

May this humble sharing of experiences, borrowing and quoting pieces of wisdom from my mentor in the academe, my former fellow teacher and eventually became my school head for years, inspire fellow servants in the academe to continuously hone their crafts as molders of the future leaders of the land.

6. REFERENCES

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