

Continuous Teaching and Learning for the Love of Writing Amidst COVID-19 Pandemic

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Abstract: *This paper presents the author's ideas, thoughts, and experiences as a writing enthusiast and teacher of writing at the elementary school level. Through this sharing, the fire for the love of writing despite the COVID-19 pandemic is expected to spark, thus create a continuous light of passion and perseverance in putting on paper what is playing around on our minds.*

Keywords — *Teaching and Learning; Writing; COVID-19 Pandemic*

1. INTRODUCTION

My love for writing started to sparkle when I was assigned as the school paper adviser of our school in Filipino. In such capacity, I discovered the other side of myself, a version of me who has the passion for putting into print my ideas, thoughts, and experiences as an elementary school teacher, as a mother, and as an ordinary citizen of this nation.

2. SO, HOW SHALL I BEGIN TO WRITE?

My previous experiences in writing enabled me to familiarize myself with how to write an article within the acceptable standards, and I share those experiences of mine with my learners by giving them the assistance I need during those days when I was struggling to write well. The best way to guide my learners to write is to communicate with them the expectations of the teachers on their written outputs, and this is made possible by the use of rubrics. I have read a study in Filipino and was translated to English and published in an international journal, entitled *Development and Validation of A Proposed Model Rubric in Rating Written Outputs at the Graduate School Level* (Cabigao, 2021; Cabigao, 2021).^{[1][2]}

The study stressed that before the actual writing session, learners must be informed on how will the teacher rate their outputs based on established standards. Though the locale of the study is the Graduate School level, the thoughts and ideas from it are highly acceptable and worthy of replication in the lower level of studies.

3. HOW SHALL I ASSESS THE WRITTEN OUTPUTS?

Cabigao (2021) presented another paper entitled *School-Based Assessment Framework Version 2.0 (The New Normal)* to give educators a new perspective in learning assessment. His crafted assessment framework is a triadic representation of three groups of dimensions in assessment with learners as the center of the assessment process. According to him, all assessment initiatives, including of course the writing exercises, shall consider multi-faceted factors. The three dimensions enumerated in the study are (1) the DepEd's

Vision, Mission, and Core Values, (2) the equally important contribution of school, home, and community in the education of our learners, and (3) the forms of testing which include assessment FOR learning, AS learning, and OF learning. A holistic assessment of learners' masterpieces can be done if those dimensions are religiously adhered to by the teacher-raters.^[3]

Class observations on writing classes can never be dull if the learning tasks given by teachers are challenging and exciting, thus assessment of the products and performance will always be light and easy. Aside from teachers' confidence, lesson delivery will be fluid and realistic through the school heads' initiative of making class observations friendly and accommodating. This premise is noted in the article *Class Observation Post-Conference Framework for Teachers of Cabigao (2021)* as part of their *School-Based Management (SBM) practices*.^[4]

4. WHAT IF I HAVE PHOBIA IN WRITING?

Have you ever feel writing a fearful and tiring activity? Just like the subject Mathematics, several individuals, not just our schoolchildren, feel hostile towards writing. I cannot force anyone to flip their thoughts about it, but having read the article *Tackling the Fear of Writing* (Cabigao, 2020), I got more inspired in teaching writing to my elementary grade learners and my adult friend. The text says, "It is never to be late than sorry. If we could just start today, we still have the luxury of time to start learning how to write quality documents, or should we say, to write much better issuances. Nothing is impossible to those who believe they could. Don't ever be afraid to be ridiculed for our writings. Nobody is perfect that's why no one is expecting that we are infallible. We should always remember that perfection is not our goal, but continuous improvement."^[5]

I agree with the premise of that article, there will always be a time for us to grow in any endeavor if we just have the interest and perseverance to enhance it. As a teacher, I have to model the skills to my learners and my colleagues. And for the

school heads, I strongly recommend improving their writing skills especially that voluminous written communications are always passing through each day on their office table. Good written communication skills will help them communicate well their thoughts and ideas as competent leaders equipped with professional competencies as school leaders. It is noted that school heads' professional competencies affect school outcomes in some way or another in a study conducted by Cabigao (2019) in a city in the province of Bulacan. [6]

Teachers, too, will be more inspired in teaching if they feel comfortable and accepted in school. No matter how challenging the teaching of various life skills including writing, their commitment to the organization as teachers will inspire them to become better teachers, as the organizational commitment of teachers posed positive effects on instructional competence in some way or another in a study entitled *Teachers' Organizational Commitment and Its Correlation on Instructional Competence* of Cabigao (2016). [7]

5. BEATING THE DEADLINE AND EXPECTATIONS

If you want to write, start now. Procrastination is the best enemy of an aspiring writer and a negative mind is the culprit of the future known writer. As Cabigao (2019) recollected in his paper *Getting Rid of Rush Works*, he says, "We should find joy among ourselves and enjoy our moments while doing all these end reports. Loving things we do will lessen the pressures of time and expectations from all the people around us. Investing our interests in what we are doing will likely produce positive and fruitful outputs. Doing things against our freewill will only lead to frustrations, thus compromising the quality of our services and/or outputs. As the old dictum says, *Love our work and for sure, our work will love us*. We will surely receive positive things at work if we sow positivism in it." This inspires us to put our hearts always in everything we do. [8]

Being inspired is not just the key to becoming a good writer, familiarizing ourselves with the technicalities is always a good investment. Knowing and living within the rules of writing is a must to become prolific in the field. As aspiring writers, so do with seasoned writers, being updated on the orthography or the rules of writing is a must, to save one's work from a neverending series of editing. This familiarization on the orthography was stressed by Cabigao (2012) in his master's paper entitled *Saloobin at Mungkahing Pagbabago sa Nilalaman ng 2009 Gabay sa Ortograpiyang Filipino [Perception and Proposed Change on the Content of the 2009 Manual of Orthography in Filipino]*. [9]

As adult writer wannabees try to perfect the orthography, our schoolchildren need, too, to familiarize themselves with it. As teachers, we have the responsibility to expose them to various learning tasks that will help them master the do's and don'ts in writing. A school-based study was conducted by Cabigao (2012) in *Improving Basic Writing Skills of Grade 7 Students in Filipino* and concluded that by giving them

appropriate written exercises and proper guidance, our learners will surely master the writing competencies expected from them based on their grade level. [10]

6. IS THERE ANY SECRET TO ACHIEVE SUCCESS IN TEACHING AND LEARNING THE WRITING SKILL?

Of course, there is! To achieve success in teaching our learners the writing skills, and other target competencies in school, the best way is to build a strong rapport with parents of our learners. The positive effects of assistance from parents at home in monitoring and assisting their respective children to prepare homework to pose higher performance in school. This premise is supported by Cabigao (2014) in his school-based study entitled *Improving Pupils' Academic Performance Through Strengthened School-Home Partnership*. [11]

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