

Star TEACHER

DECEMBER 2006

Help Students with Learning Disorders

PEACE
Can & Should
Be Taught

LESSON PLANS INSIDE

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KAAKBAY
UPDATE:**
Batch 2 Grads
share lessons
learned

**Unleash
The Power
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To Teach
Concepts**

**This Filipina is a US
Library Commissioner!**

Helen Marte Bautista tells us her story



EDITOR'S NOTE

PHOTO BY MARC YAO. MAKEUP BY BARBI CHAN



The invitation to join our e-group for teachers still stands! Please log on to <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/starteacher> to join and communicate with passionate Filipino teachers just like you.

DEAR STAR TEACHER

As a partner school of Sa Aklat Sisikat, we are very grateful indeed to receive copies of your magazine. Once, my principal asked me to facilitate a discussion at our school-based In-service Training for Teachers (INSET), and I didn't know where I would find a good, informative topic. I browsed through past issues of *Star Teacher* magazine and realized, I've got it! The article I found is all about instructional leadership [June 2006, by Lourdes Yogore]. What a lively discussion we had among teachers! *Star Teacher* saved my day!

—Josephine Aranas
Teacher III, Payatas B
Elementary School
SAS Gurong Kaakbay Batch 2



Addendum:

In the September 2006 issue of *Star Teacher*, the photo on page 14 shows the former principal of Alabang Elementary School, Dr. Rosita Espina. The current principal is Ms. Carmelita C. Rongavilla, pictured here with students enjoying the READiscovery Center at their school.

I RECENTLY SAW an episode of *Oprah* that exposed the sorry state of some public schools in America. In one school, there were badly-leaking ceilings, bathrooms that had been closed down instead of fixed, scum and peeling paint on walls. Requests to fix conditions had been ignored since 2002. The worst part? This school was minutes away from the White House!

I've been to a number of public schools in the Philippines, both in Metro Manila and in provinces, but I haven't seen a single school that looks as dismal as those on *Oprah*. No matter how poor a school is, *mukhang pa ring alagang-alagaa*.

How can this be? Our public school system is so under-resourced. Students have to attend classes in gyms or under trees. Then I remembered stories I'd heard of parents and teachers alike contributing to the school: sewing curtains, building fences, organizing weekend cleanups, working on school gardens and starting feeding programs. Students clean windows, pick up litter, sweep yards, etc. I realized that we have something very unique that these crumbling American schools don't: our *bayanihan* spirit.

Most Filipinos don't think twice about helping one another. Despite (or perhaps because of) our lack of resources, we find ways around problems instead of complaining. We are willing to roll up our sleeves and contribute whatever we can. That thought keeps me rooting for the Philippines.

So here's to the *bayanihan* spirit—long may it live in our schools and communities!

Therese

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WRITE TO US

Tell us what you think of *Star Teacher*, because it's YOUR magazine. If your letter is featured in a future issue, you'll receive a **FREE HAIR TREATMENT WORTH P1,000** from Salon Paradiso! You will also get a special gift from National Book Store and OMF Literature: **THE RIGHT WORDS AT THE RIGHT TIME** by Marlo Thomas and Friends. This warm little book talks about fostering a happy relationship with a perfect love. Please include your land line or cell phone number in your letter so we can get in touch with you.



Star TEACHER

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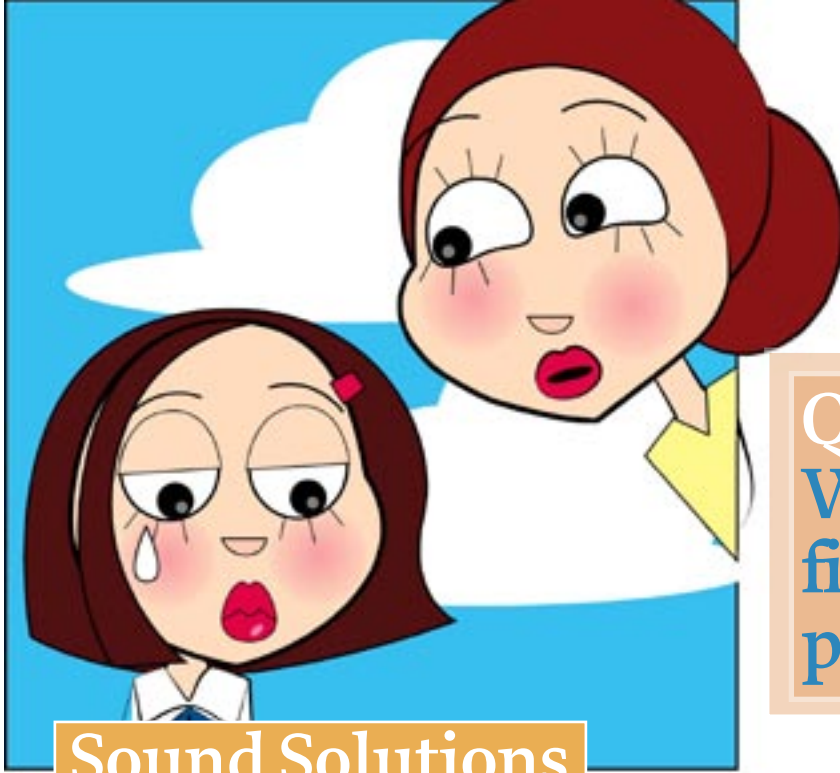
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Do you have your own stories to tell? Tips to share? Concerns to air? Or perhaps you'd like to be the next featured makeover! Whatever your reason, we'd love to hear from you! Please write to us at:

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Teachers from all over share their real-life solutions to classroom dilemmas and education questions.



Sound Solutions

Quick Query: What will you do if you find out a student has problems at home?

Teachers are providers, perhaps not of materials things, but of the ‘freebies’ of this world: care, concern and a big, big heart. This means going the extra mile in terms of patience and understanding. Understand that their performance in school might be affected by the situation. But more importantly, let the students feel that they are important in school, that they are accepted and loved, that the classroom is a home and a big happy family where they are nurtured. It is also good to help them realize that we are not living in a world of perfection. Problems are part of life that challenge our strength and push our weaknesses.

—Norie P. Balatbat

I have a grade three student who displayed disturbing behavior in school. She had this “bad girl” image, in other words. One day before our monthly tests, I always make sure to conduct a “Get out negative... Get in positive” activity with my class, which involves sharing. The students were all crying except for her. When it was her turn, she said that she didn’t have a problem. I asked the class to close their eyes and I played the song “The Prayer”. When I told them to slowly open their eyes, she burst into tears and started talking nonstop. She shared that she just gets to see her mom and dad once a month and has been living with her uncle for three years now. And whenever she sees her parents, they are always fighting in front of her.

Indeed, you need a heart, head, and hands to be a real teacher. I set aside all the things I had heard about her and all her *kasalanan* to

me. I used my heart to understand her, my head to condition her in everything, and my hands to let her feel that she’s not alone. After the activity, we hugged each other. And the next day, I received pastillas from her with a piece of art paper stapled to its wrapper. The note said: “Cher Rhina, *masarap yan.*” I thought I was going to read something like “thank you” or “I love you.” But what she wrote will always be one of the sweetest moments in my life.

This student is now improving in academics and character education. She used to have low scores in quizzes and tests, even though she has a tutor. I am just so thankful to God that she’s not just improving in my subject but also in other subjects, too.

—Rhina H. Reyes

Talk to the child. This does not necessarily mean you’re going to solve his problem at home, but it’s a way of letting the child know that somebody cares for him. Moreover, the child will have someone to communicate his feelings with, and you will have the chance to guide him on the right things to do. Remember that aside from being teachers, we are also guidance counselors.

—April Malecda

Making friends with your pupils is one way to help them open up and relate their family problem. After that, a home visit can be very effective. Talk to the family with a sincere heart so that they can pour out the problem, and tell them you can be a shoulder to cry on.

—Teresita J. Zamora

During my first year of teaching, I had problems with a student whose parents were separated. She lived with her mother and didn’t want to go to school anymore. I talked to her and advised her to continue her studies so that she could show her parents how lucky they are to have her as their only child. She followed my advice and became my brightest pupil!

—Gemma Bautista

Teachers should observe their pupils well. Once, one of my pupils just stood near my table. It turned out he wanted to talk to me about his parents’ quarrel. I spent time talking to him like a friend. He opened up and soon, I discovered what was bothering him.

Schools can also schedule a family day with activities like sports and family presentations that will lead families to mend long-lost parent-child relationships.

—Gloria P. Ague

DO YOU HAVE A SOUND SOLUTION TO THIS QUICK QUERY?

What’s the best thing you’ve learned as a teacher?

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win!

If we pick your Sound Solution, you’ll receive free copies of Good Housekeeping Philippines courtesy of Summit Media and the book The 10 Basic Principles of Good Parenting from National Book Store. Submit your answer now!



Stories can Teach

How to turn lesson plans into narratives that engage students

by Aileen S. Santos

Once Upon A Time, In A Classroom Much Like Yours . . .

. . . a teacher discovered that she could easily command her students' attention by using these six simple words: "Let me tell you a story."

You've probably made this same discovery yourself. And you might even admit that during your own days as a student, you reacted the same way to these words.

Think about it. Do you remember the lesson that your favorite English teacher talked about on November 4 of the school year when you were in fourth grade? No? But do you still remember the fairy tales that you heard when you were a child?

Storytelling = Creating Meaning

Our brains were made for stories. We never truly learn isolated facts; instead, we learn everything in context. Our brains are arranged in such a way that the "apple" file is right next to the "color red" file, the "Snow White" file, and the "poison" file. In our brains, the "FRUITS file cabinet" never stands alone in one corner, it's always connected to all the other cabinets, and these connections are present because they mean something.

Stories are the chains that link the facts together and make them hard to forget. When you give facts an exciting context, they suddenly become stories, meaningful and memorable. The good news is the ability to tell stories is a gift all good teachers already have.

Teaching Is Storytelling

Good educators and good storytellers are alike on one crucial aspect. They haven't just



memorized the information they will impart, they know it backwards and forwards, inside out. Because of this, they can tailor the information to fit their audience, such as including more or less information, changing the sequence, explaining certain parts in greater detail, and so on.

Award-winning textbook author Joy Hakim says, "It is the storyteller's job to make the world around us understandable. Think of teaching and storytelling as entwined disciplines and you will bring coherence and inspiration to your classrooms. Finding the story in a subject is to discover its essence. If we can train our students to pattern the world into stories we can turn them into powerful, analytical learners."

How To Find (Or Create) Stories For Your Subjects

Learning objectives are important, but they

can turn your lessons into a race. Reaching the finish line means you were able to deliver the lesson, but it's never an assurance that the lesson was actually learned. Here's how to turn lessons into stories.

Step 1: REFRAME LEARNING OBJECTIVES INTO "CONFLICTS."

This is a technique that is regularly used by scriptwriters for educational television shows. They take the learning objective, then ask themselves two questions:

- Can not knowing the lesson objective (for example the scientific method) prevent someone from getting what he wants? Or
- Can knowing the lesson objective (the scientific method) help someone get what he wants?

Whenever someone (a character) wants something that he can't seem to acquire right now... that is conflict.

PHOTOS COURTESY OF SMART PARENTING PHOTOS BY JUN PINZON

**STEP 2:
DELVE INTO YOUR RICH
STOREHOUSES OF STORIES**

There are four sources that you can always look to for stories:

1. Existing Stories

These are stories from books, from the Internet, or even stories you've heard others tell. Now that you know your conflict, find out if it matches with a story you've heard/read before.

For example: For a lesson on "the scientific method," you could use the story of how Thomas Alva Edison worked on inventing the light bulb.

2. Your Own Memories

Look back to when you were about as young as your students, and try to remember the things you were interested in – you were so interested, in fact, that you ended up using the scientific method to learn more about it (even when you didn't know it!).

Did you use the scientific method to find out the best way to attract your crush? Or how about the most effective way to make sure your parents allowed you to go to the party?

3. Your Own Imagination

This territory is free for all! Even if you have no ready-made stories to use, you can always invent one (or develop one from a mixture of fact and fiction). Just always make sure that your story's lead character is someone your students can relate to.

For example: You can invent a story about a teenage boy who is shipwrecked on an island, and he has to find ways to survive and be rescued. His existing resources include objects from the ship, as well as the plants and trees on the island.

4. Your Own Analogies

Stories don't have to be directly related to the topic in order to be relevant. You can use the power of analogies to create stories where animals are the main characters (fables), where the scientific method is compared to looking for friends on Friendster.com, or where predicting which contestant wins on *Pinoy Idol* is akin to forming and testing hypotheses.

**STEP 3:
STRUCTURE YOUR STORY**

Now that you have their attention ("Let me begin this lesson by telling a story..."), make sure that you keep it.

A useful technique used for creating

movies, comic strips, and commercials is called "the sequence treatment." Also known as "the sentence outline," the sequence treatment breaks down the entire story into bullet points that say exactly what's going to happen next. A two-hour movie will most likely have an average of 60 sequences; a short story will most likely have five. To make your story as simple and precise as possible (and easier for you to remember), use the five-sequence plot as your structure:

Sequence 1: Begin with your character. Say something about the character that will help your audience like him and root for him.

Sequence 2: Tell them what your character wants or wants to happen. Again, this should be something the audience could easily relate with.

Sequence 3: Introduce the conflict. This is the meat of your learning objective. What is preventing the lead character from getting what he wants? Will he be able to save the day?

Sequence 4: Show your character trying to resolve the conflict. Make him struggle a little, keeping your students wondering "What will happen next?"

Sequence 5: Everything turns out for the best. Maybe the character "wins," and gets what he wants. Or maybe he realizes that he already has something better. Either way, it's a moment when the character has grown a little wiser, a little stronger... and you can end your story with a positive note and a happy ending.

**STEP 4:
PRACTICE TELLING YOUR STORY
OUT LOUD**

You could practice telling your stories in front of a mirror, or even in front of your dog, but the best way to become better at storytelling is to actually tell your stories to as many live audiences as possible.

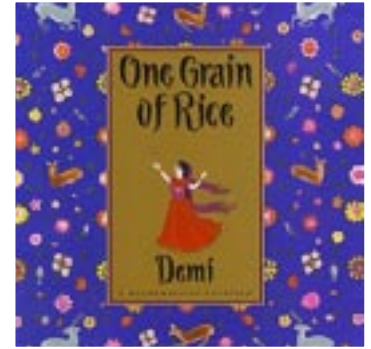
The way live listeners react will give you great insights into improving your stories: they might be entranced during those parts you can still add more drama to, they might yawn a little during those parts that need more humor. Best of all, their reactions will show you which stories work best. •

Aileen Santos is a former high school journalism teacher and television scriptwriter for children's educational programs (*Hiraya Manawari*, *Sineskwela*, *Bayani*). Currently, she is a corporate trainer for the creative people of Summit Media and practices oral tradition storytelling in their residential community's organizations.

**Stories and Books
To Get You Started**

As you begin to use more stories to engage your students, remember that you don't need additional acting abilities in order to make sure your story is a success. The most important thing about being a storyteller is the same with being an educator: You can only give them what you already have.

"No tears in the writer, no tears in the reader," said Robert Frost. Although you don't always need stories that make them cry, always try to use those stories that have made you care.



● **One Grain Of Rice: A Mathematical Folktale
Written & Illustrated by Demi**

This book tells the story of Rani, a clever girl in India who saves her village from hunger by outsmarting their greedy raja. How does she do this? By being good at math! When the raja rewards her for a good deed she has done, the only prize she asks for is "One grain of rice, doubled each day for 30 days." How much rice does this all add up to? Find out in this story, as you teach your students all about exponents!

● **How Do You Use A Barometer?
www.lhup.edu/~DSIMANEK/angelpin.htm**

A classic story about a physics student who comes up with a multitude of answers to their final exam question: "Show how it is possible to determine the height of a tall building with the aid of a barometer." Although none of his answers comply with "conventional physics," the student shows that not only does he actually know how to use a barometer (as well as other physics formulas), he knows how to use his mind as well.

There are other versions of this story online, but the URL above will give you the most complete account that's best for teaching physics and critical thinking.

● **Sadako and the 1,000 Paper Cranes
pages.zdnet.com/storysocks/library/id49.html**

The real story of Sadako is not as horrifying as in *The Ring*. Sadako was actually a little girl who wanted to be able to do the things all little girls do, so she tries to fold 1,000 paper cranes from her hospital bed, believing in the legend that whoever can do this can get well. But are paper cranes enough to combat the effects of atomic radiation on her body?

This story is useful for teaching science (atomic energy & radiation), biology (effects of radiation on cells), geometry (creating paper cranes), crafts (origami), mathematical problem solving (how much time does it take to make 1,000 paper cranes?), and of course, history.

Dealing with Learning Disorders

Do you have an extremely difficult student? He or she may have a learning disorder. You don't have to be an expert to help! Here's how.

by Pia Alpapara-Pulido

The first year I taught children with special needs, I met Rina. She was seven years old. She did not know her letters and numbers, could not count, had difficulty understanding concepts, and did not know how to write—not even her name. When I started to work with her, there were days when she would seem shy and hesitant about participating in activities. There were also days when I would ask her to do something and she would seem upset and simply refuse to work. I had many mixed emotions each day I worked with her. I felt frustration, helplessness, anger, and exhaustion. One feeling was certain though—I always felt sorry for her. I knew she had a learning disorder, but I did not know how to help her. I read books, current literature, and reports from psychologists and doctors. They helped me understand learning disorders, but none gave me specific answers on to how to help Rina.

Rina's case did not have a specific diagnosis. Findings about her condition by a number of professionals differed, so I felt like I was on my own in discovering ways to help her. I experimented to see what would work. I changed my perspective and focused on what she could do instead of what she could not do.

After three years of working with her, I felt like we were making progress. Since I was teaching her math and science, I was happy that she was learning how to count. She knew numbers one to 20 and was able to



write some of those numbers, and understand some concepts. Though this was not a lot for a girl her age, the fact that she showed progress was the most important thing for me. Her progress was not only limited to academics. Rina also showed more confidence when doing tasks in school. Plus, she learned to celebrate her own little victories, such as when she was able to write her name correctly on paper. She had her good days and her bad, but what mattered at the end of the day was that she tried and learned.

There are many children like Rina in school, and it is easy for teachers like us to overlook children with learning disorders like hers. If we have 40 or 50 other children in a classroom, it is indeed a challenge to help children like Rina. The reality is that students with special needs are under our care and are our responsibility. So we need to make the most of the resources we have.

Learning Disorders have become known as the “hidden handicap.” Children with LD usually go unrecognized and are instead labeled as lazy or underachievers.

What is a Learning Disorder?

According to Joan Harwell, a special education teacher for students with learning disabilities and author of *Complete Learning Disabilities Handbook*, a learning disability is a term currently used to describe a group of conditions that interfere with a person’s learning and, consequently, his or her functioning throughout life. Under this category, there are disorders related to listening, speaking, reading, reasoning, and mathematical calculations. Harwell points out that people with learning disabilities (LD) do not appear physically different. Also, they may have intelligence in the near average, average, or above average range. It is because of these characteristics that LD has also become known as the “hidden handicap.” Children with LD usually go unrecognized and are instead labeled as lazy or underachievers.

POSSIBLE SIGNS OF A LEARNING DISORDER

One of the primary characteristics of a learning disorder is the presence of perceptual deficits. This refers to the child having difficulty interpreting information received through the senses. The table below enumerates different kinds of perceptual deficits.

VISUAL PERCEPTUAL DEFICITS

- Reverses, inverts letters or numerals
- Loses place, skips lines, rereads lines, omits words
- Yawns, has blurry vision or itchy eyes during reading
- Cannot copy accurately
- Forms letters poorly
- Slow, laborious handwriting
- Messy papers

AUDITORY PROCESSING DEFICITS

- Cannot understand conversation delivered at normal speed
- Not able to distinguish between different spoken sounds
- Not able to filter out extraneous noises (gets easily distracted)
- Does not benefit from auditory input

SPATIAL AWARENESS DEFICITS

- Gets lost in ordinary surroundings
- Cannot remember left to right sequencing
- Cannot write in a given amount of space or writes with no space between words
- Disorganized

CONCEPTUAL DEFICITS

- Cannot read social situations or body language
- Cannot see relationships between similar objects or has poor inferential thinking
- Does not understand the concept of “hurry”
- Reads words but does not convert them to mental images

MEMORY DEFICITS

- Cannot remember what was just seen
- Cannot remember what was just heard
- Cannot remember to capitalize, punctuate, indent or has trouble spelling
- Does not attend to directions

The Child with LD in the Classroom

Children with LD may also exhibit poor work habits. Due to constant academic failure, problems with self-esteem and motivation are also present. Poor coping skills such as withdrawal, pretending to be sick, frequent absences, anxiety, and overdependence on others may also be observed.

In a class of 40 or more children, spotting a child with LD can be a challenge. Here are some steps to make it easier:

1. Make a list of students who are not doing well in class based on class participation, tests, and home work.
2. Prepare an activity that will allow you to divide the class into groups.
3. Once you have your groups, observe the child in each group and record your observations. Answering the following questions may be helpful:
 - a. What part of the content is the child having difficulty with?
 - b. What skills does the child need or concepts the child must understand in order to do the task at hand?
 - c. What skills or concepts does the child possess or understand to do the work?
 - d. What skills or concepts does the child lack or does not understand to do the work?
4. Record the data and refer to it when you are trying to determine how best to help the child.

Helping the Child with LD in the Classroom

Helping the child with LD can be done in many ways. Here are steps a teacher can take that will not require expertise in LD, just first-hand knowledge of the child's difficulties.

- **Seating arrangement.** If a child has difficulty paying attention, copying from the board, and is easily distracted by classmates, make sure he or she sits in the first row of the classroom.
- **Provide visual cues.** For children who reverse or invert letters and numerals, tape a piece of paper on their desk that contains the letters and the numbers that they usually reverse or invert so that they have something to refer to without having to call for your help.
- **Left and right and arrows.** Since children with LD are easily confused by directions and forget their left and right, labels and arrows can be helpful. Marking the left or right



side of a table, book, or paper can help them remember where to start. Also, asking them what hand they use to write with can serve as a cue in remembering left from right.

- **Words and instructions.** For children who have difficulty understanding what you say, keep your words simple. Give instructions in a step-by-step manner so that it will be easier for your students to follow. This will not only benefit the child with LD, but every student in the classroom.

- **Slow is the way to go.** When in conversation with a child with LD, speak slowly. This gives the child more time to process and understand what you are saying.

- **Play.** To help improve memory, create a memory game related to your topic. It's fun, motivating, and something everyone in the classroom will enjoy.

- **Individual attention.** Though the previously mentioned ideas to help the child with LD do not require your individual attention, there will be times when the child with LD will need YOU. When the class is doing individual work, go around and check on these kids. Knowing that you are around to help can give them a sense of reassurance and make them more confident in doing their work.

Learning disorders are not easy for both the student and the teacher. When things get tough and your patience seems to run out, it may help to remember that in teaching chil-

If a child has difficulty paying attention, copying from the board, and is easily distracted by classmates, make sure he or she sits in the first row of the classroom.

dren with LD, you are not only giving them the skills they need in the classroom, you are also playing a crucial role in helping these children believe in themselves and in their capability to fulfill their own dreams. •

Pia Alpapara-Pulido is a teacher for children with and without disabilities. She started work as a preschool teacher in a private school and moved on to working with special needs children in Therabilities, a center for children with disabilities. Pia holds a master's degree in Psychology from Ateneo de Manila University and is currently working on her second master's degree in Early Childhood General and Special Education in Bank Street College, New York.



EDUCATION as the Key to Peace

Chiqui Escareal-Go shares what she learned from an education forum on peace in Mindanao.

When terms such as *conflict resolution*, *ancestral domains*, and *peace process* were bunched together, I used to think of a different world out there—maybe down south, maybe up in the boondocks, or maybe even halfway around the globe. I imagined this world to be distant and very different, far removed from me. It was only after I had the opportunity to take part in a forum that involved and concerned my fellow Filipinos from Mindanao that I was able to understand that the words conflict and peace in my world actually have the same meaning as in theirs.

The Forum

From July 20 -22, 2006, the United States Institute of Peace (USIP) sponsored a forum-

What is the USIP?

The United States Institute of Peace is an independent, nonpartisan national institution established and funded by the US Congress. It intends to empower others through transmission of knowledge, skills, and resources, and direct involvement in peace-building efforts around the globe. Of particular interest to educators are programs on conflict prevention, management, and post conflict transformation via research and practitioner training. (www.usip.org)

Education may actually play a role in creating conflict—from stereotyping, inaccuracies and one-sided viewpoints in textbooks and teaching approaches.

workshop entitled “Education Reform in Divided Societies: Lessons for the Philippines” at the AIM Conference Center in Makati. Organized by the Foundation for Communication Initiatives (FOCI) for the USIP, over 40 policymakers, administrators and educators from various offices and departments of the Department of Education (DepEd) including DepEd Secretary Jesli Lapus, major universities both from Luzon and Mindanao, and international foundations took part in an opportunity to process the role of education in resolving conflict and peace building. USIP Executive Director for the Philippine Facilitation Project Eugene Martin led the pool of both local and foreign resource speakers who shared their expertise on the subject matter.

What I Learned from the Education Forum

The forum brought together many key educators in Mindanao whose experiences and backgrounds provided much of the perspective that we, who live in Manila, needed to understand. Much of the conflict is a result of not just years of misunderstanding or lack of political resolutions, but of how education may actually have played a role in it—from stereotyping, inaccuracies, and one-sided viewpoints in textbooks to the apathetic approach to developing curricula that could be more inclusive of the different ethnicities in our country.

As the workshop progressed, I realized that the education situation in Mindanao was directly related to our country's political and economic situation. We all face issues of lack of funds or access to resources, but the

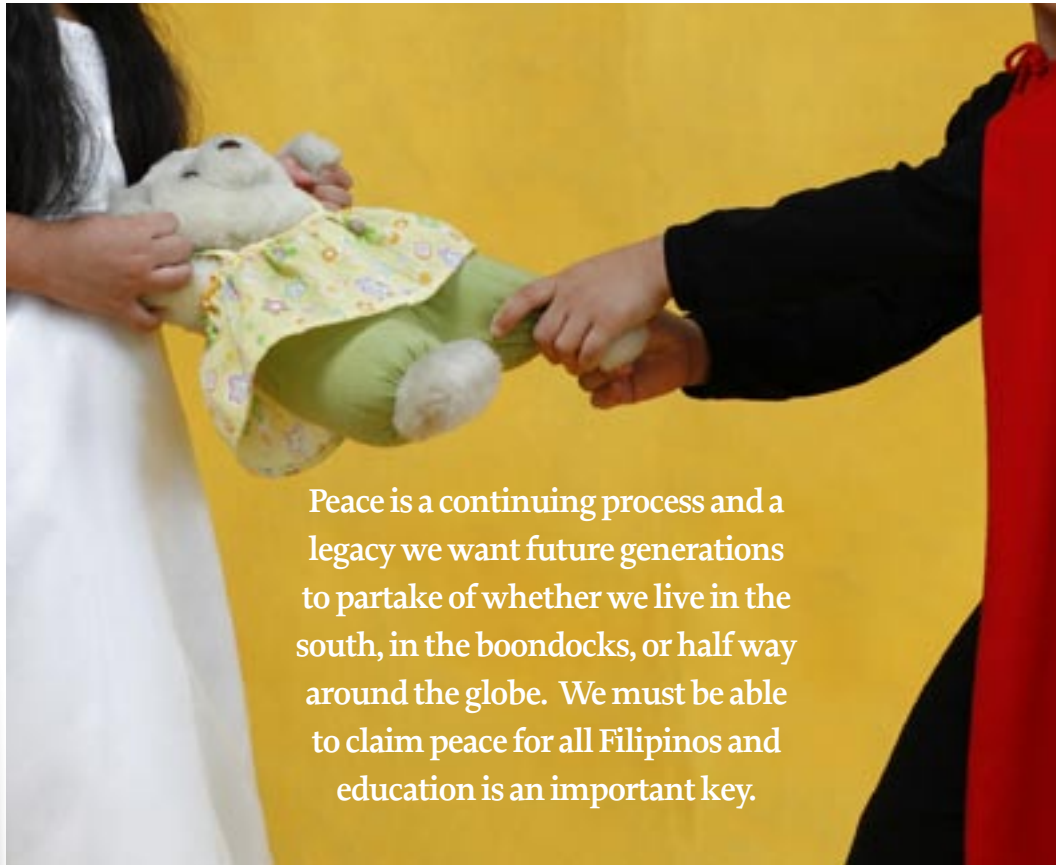


Here I am (second from left) with fellow participants at the education forum.

Terms to Learn

Ancestral domain: the territory, economic resources, and governance of minority ethnic groups and indigenous peoples. The domain isn't limited to land or environment but also encompasses the people's culture. The problems occur if the land is snatched away by government or private entities. This is sometimes legal, sometimes not—and some lands are holy or sacred, some are their homes or land they till.

Religious diversity: the existence of several religions that promote different principles and beliefs.



Peace is a continuing process and a legacy we want future generations to partake of whether we live in the south, in the boon-docks, or half way around the globe. We must be able to claim peace for all Filipinos and education is an important key.

situation in Mindanao is more aggravated and also involves equally important issues that we don't necessarily face, such as ancestral domains and religious diversity.

After various topics were presented, the participants were divided into groups to work on different concerns of Filipinos in Mindanao that affected peace and stability, and to recommend possible solutions and action plans by indicating what the education sector could do and by identifying decision makers and stakeholders.

Common Discussion Points

University of the Philippines Vice-chancellor for Student Affairs Dr. Elizabeth Enriquez, a participant at the forum, noted that "the common ideas across all the groups were in the areas of teacher training (where the cooperation of teacher education institutions should be enlisted), curriculum reform and design (beginning at the basic education level, curricula should build tolerance and understanding between different ethnic groups by incorporating the different stories for the attainment of peace), the

rewriting of history books and the publication of new ones (that are inclusive of the perspectives, experiences and worldviews of largely-ignored groups), and on the level of the national government, the re-alignment of a greater share of the budget to education."

The role of education in peace building and reconciliation among different ethnic and religious groups cannot be overemphasized, especially in a divided society such as ours. Peace is a continuing process and a legacy we want future generations to partake of whether we live in the south, in the boon-docks, or half way around the globe. We must be able to claim peace for all Filipinos and education is an important key. •

Chiqui Escareal-Go is President of Mansmith and Fielders, Inc., a leading marketing and sales training company in the Philippines. She is also a candidate for MA English and Literature Teaching at the Ateneo de Manila University and has delivered papers in Singapore and Japan on her work on the use of Appreciative Inquiry (AI) in the English Language classroom in public high schools. She is a certified AI facilitator and offers free workshops on AI to public schools. She may be reached at gochiqui@pltdsl.net.

TRY THESE CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES

Teach peace and conflict resolution in your own school.

Remember the song "let there be peace on earth, and let it begin with me"? That's what peace education is about. Kids need to be taught how to build and nurture relationships as well as forgive others and resolve conflicts. This kind of education will empower them to create safe environments for themselves and each other, which can then translate to communities, countries, and a world based on justice and human rights.

Here are some exercises to try:

COMMON GROUND

This activity provides participants with the opportunity to explore differences and similarities in identity.



Kids need to be taught how to build and nurture relationships as well as forgive others and resolve conflicts.

Directions:

1. Tell students that this activity will allow them to get to know one another.
2. Explain to students that you will read a series of statements. If the statement is true for them, they should stand up.
3. Once you have read all of the statements, lead a discussion with the group using some or all of the questions that follow.

Alternative: This activity can be set up in many different ways depending on the size of the room, the amount of open space and the mobility of the students. Students can make a large circle, taking a step toward the center when a statement is true for them and then returning to their original place, or simply raise their hand or stand up from their chairs.

Sample Statements:

Please stand if you...

- Like math (sports, horses, cats, dogs, etc...)
- Speak more than one language (more than two, more than three, etc...)
- Have lived in more than two provinces
- Have had someone mispronounce your name.
- Have raised your hand in class and then forgotten what you wanted to say.
- Have said something to someone and then immediately wished you could take it back.
- Have traveled to more than five provinces.
- Have friends who are mostly the same gender as you.
- Have friends who are a different gender than you.

Note: Add or change categories based on the dynamics of your class.

Discussion:

1. What did you notice as you and others were standing up?
2. What surprised you?
3. What was comfortable for you?
4. What was uncomfortable for you?
5. What is the value of exploring commonalities and differences?
6. What did you learn about other students?

CONFLICT EXERCISE: What Do You Do When...?

Peace education teaches how to find non-violent, creative ways to deal with conflicts, how to build better relationships and how not to be afraid of the unknown. A conflict may be divided into three successive phases: before violence, during violence, and after violence. A conflict has its own life cycle. It appears, often reaches an emotional, even violent climax, then tapers off, disappears—and often reappears.

Directions: Write the letter of the response that most closely matches what you would do in each situation.

- A. Try to convince someone of your point or stand up for what you believe.
- B. Walk away from the situation, ignore the situation, or deny that there is a problem.
- C. Do what others want even if you disagree or if it's not what you want.
- D. Make a quick compromise.
- E. Find a solution that makes everyone happy.
- F. Other

____ 1. Your mother wants you to help her clean the house on Saturday night and you want to go out with your friends.

____ 2. Your best friend always borrows your things and never gives them back.

____ 3. Someone is saying bad things about your friend. You're angry because you know what they are saying isn't true.

____ 4. You think your teacher has been unfair in grading your test. You think your grade should be higher.

____ 5. Your friend always wants to copy your homework and it bothers you because it takes you a very long time to do your assignments.

____ 6. Your friends want to skip school and you don't know what to do. You want to go to school but you don't want your friends to make fun of you.

Discuss your students' answers in class, focusing on the consequences that their choices may have.

For The Love Of Libraries

The Filipina Commissioner of the San Francisco Public Library tells us why a library is not just a place to read books.

by Angel Constantino

If you come to our libraries in San Francisco, you see thousands of people. It's as if they are lining up to go to a sale!" exclaims Helen Marte Bautista, a former teacher who is now Commissioner of the San Francisco Public Library. "We have one main library, 28 neighborhood libraries, and a building for auxiliary services."

The San Francisco Public Library Commission is composed of seven members, specifically appointed by the Mayor of San Francisco. As part of the Commission, Helen's job is to set policies and take charge of the library budget for the San Francisco Public Library system. "Our staff would prepare the budget and we would either approve it or recommend more expenditure depending on what we're doing," Helen explains, emphasizing that being a Commissioner is a tough yet crucial job since they have to make sure the money is used for the right purposes.

A Creative Background

"I actually started out as a singer," says Helen, when asked about her educational background. "I studied high school in La Consolacion College in Mendiola where I was a soloist. At the same time, I was studying music in Centro Escolar University. When I graduated from La Consolacion, I moved to Philippine Women's University for my freshman year of college, where I was recruited into the Bayanihan dance group.

"At the time, my dad was about to retire from the US Navy and he wanted me to have a US education. I decided to close my records in PWU by taking an Associate in Arts degree, and in 1959, I moved to San Francisco. Since I already had a degree, all my units were credited and I became a senior in San Francisco State. I continued my studies in English, drama, and dance, then I took my Masters in Creative Arts.

"While I was taking my Masters degree, I became the community's performing arts teacher. Since I was the only Bayanihan member in San Francisco, I was recruited at the local YWCA to teach young Filipino children whose parents had been in the States for years and who didn't know much about Philippine culture. Since I could speak Tagalog and I knew all



about Philippine history, dancing, and music, I took the job. We had a very big Filipino community with all these children.”

From Dancer to English Teacher

“From teaching dance, I was hired by the San Francisco Unified School District in 1968. I ended up teaching science, social studies, English, art, and music to elementary school students. Later on, I became a staff development specialist for language, culture, and the arts. At the time, we had about 68,000 elementary and high school students in San Francisco.

“Reading opens your eyes to the world in which other people live—you realize that you are not alone.

“A few years later, there was an opening in the English department of a technological high school. I accepted it and in that school, I only taught five classes of English. I really liked the high school because there was a whole different context in discipline and teaching. It was also a lot easier and more convenient for me. That sums up the rest of my career until the time I retired from teaching in 1998.”

From Teacher to Commissioner

“When Willy Brown, the mayor of San Francisco at the time, found out I had retired, he convinced me to take the post of commissioner. Since one of the current commissioners was going to be promoted, everyone looked to me to replace him. That was in 2000.” But as Helen found out, the job was not exactly easy. “I had to learn by trial and error. I try to visit all our libraries and check what we’re doing. But I’m happy now because in my six years as a commissioner, we’ve done a lot of things to improve our libraries. We’ve made them wheelchair accessible, installed better lighting and bigger fixtures, added earthquake reinforcements, and expanded the electrical current for the Internet.

“Because it is a neighborhood, everybody goes to the library. In fact they want the library to be open from Monday to Sun-

day!” says Helen proudly. “We have some branches open on Sundays because families really need to bring their children to the library. All of our public libraries are now going wireless and we raised our budget for book buying to \$10 million a year. We also have a great collection of DVDs and other research materials.”

The Importance of Reading

“Reading opens your eyes to the world in which other people live—you realize that you are not alone. Reading about the lives of other people can inspire you and give you valuable lessons on how to lead your own life,” Helen shares. “But as a teacher, I always encourage my students to write, because it is the writing part that sticks to them. I always make sure that at the end of the reading, they don’t just summarize the story but they also find a connection to it.

“I believe what we’re doing in the 4th grade should be done as early as kindergarten. If we teach reading earlier, the kids would learn better. I’ve noticed that the recent graduates from the Philippines don’t have a good command of English. It is such a pity because we are losing valuable economic resources. Since we now have a population of more than 80 million, it just means we have more children to teach.”

Helen believes that the public school really has to be supported by the public. Whatever jurisdiction they are, that should be the priority of government. She says, “Unless you have an educated group of people, you will never be able to rise above your status.”

After visiting a few elementary schools in Manila, Helen finds that though teachers are putting a lot of effort in encouraging their students to read, much more can still be done. She says, “I think Sa Aklat Sisikat Foundation is doing an excellent job in supporting education and helping the children. But of course, it is only a small organization and I hope that by featuring me, you could get more civic minded people to support your cause.” •

Angel Constantino graduated from the Ateneo de Manila University with a degree in BS Communications Technology Management. She is currently the assistant features editor of *Candy*, the leading teen magazine in the country. She is a voracious reader and a passionate writer. When she’s not writing articles or conducting interviews, she satisfies her craving for adventure by climbing mountains and exploring the great outdoors.

MAKING A BETTER LIBRARY

Helen gives tips on how to improve your school libraries.

1. CREATE A STRONG ALUMNI BASE.

“In the last school I taught, we enlisted the help of the alumni,” explains Helen. “On the 50th anniversary of the school, I created an analysis of the school building and the theater. Because I was doing video and drama, I had my kids do a documentary of the school building. We presented it to the alumni and we asked them if they would like to help the school. Because of that, the alumni refurbished the auditorium, and they provided us with sound and lighting equipment. Every year, they fix different rooms in the school. It’s important to get the alumni involved. A lot of them will surely be interested to help because they were students who also benefited from the high school.”

2. CHALLENGE THE STUDENTS TO READ MORE.

“Every summer, we conduct a Reading Challenge for the children. At the beginning of the summer, the librarians would post a summer reading list. For every book the kids read, they get a sticker. A certain number of stickers will give them a corresponding prize, such as books, food, or certificates. The number of stickers you need to claim each prize is posted on a chart in the library so the kids know exactly how many books to read to get the prize they want. Sometimes, we ask different business groups to sponsor the prizes,” says Helen. The program runs for about six to eight weeks in the summer. However, this can be implemented within the school year and incorporated into the lesson plan as well to encourage students to read more during the school year.

3. MAKE THE LIBRARY AN INTERACTIVE EXPERIENCE.

Helen stresses the fact that a library is not just a place to read, but a place where you can literally bring the students to different worlds. “We have a lot of reading programs in the library itself,” she shares. “Every year, there’s a theme that the librarians prepare and they bring in lecturers who come to talk about different topics. For instance, we had a marine biologist from our marine center in Sausalito who came to talk about sea creatures.

“We have so many things going on in the library. We have folk musicians, dancers, calligraphers, origami people—it’s a whole cultural and arts experience! I visited one of our libraries when they had a children’s reading program and as I entered, I saw almost 200 carriages parked outside! All the kids were there with their mothers or yayas. I was so shocked! But it also made me happy because they are making use of what is available and I think that is very important. I’m glad we’re providing the service. This is what libraries should be doing. It should be live—there should be activities going on and there should be other things they can do apart from borrowing books.”

Visit www.sfpl.org for more information on the San Francisco Public Library, their reading programs, and events.



1

When asked what my favorite book is, *The Giving Tree* by Shel Silverstein comes into my mind. Even though it's a fable for children, I came to love it because it is not only inspiring but can also be integrated as a teaching tool into different subjects like Science, EKAWP, English, Sibika and the like. It is a story of a tree, a little boy, and the boy's journey through life. As the boy grew, he needed things from the tree like its fruits, branches and trunk. When the little boy grew to be a man, he went back to greet his friend, the tree, who by this time had nothing left to give. How this story ends makes it an unforgettable learning experience.

Ma. Suzette B. Comillas
Teacher I and Grade II adviser
Delfin M. Germaldez Elementary School

Teachers Recommend...

Five educators share books they think you should read.

3

I would like to recommend the book, *To Live, To Love, To Learn* written by my professor, Dr. Grace S. Koo. It is a collection of articles from her column in the *Inquirer*. It's a must for all teachers, as well as parents, for not only is it very informative but also very entertaining. Grace Koo enriches each article with ample wit and humor. She also makes the reader feel at ease, and most importantly, empowered after each reading. This book makes me want to try to be the best teacher and parent I can be.

Kachela Albert-Mariano
Educational Psychology student
UP Diliman

I highly recommend the book *Education* by Ellen G. White, published by Philippine Publishing House. The book provides practical advice that teachers and parents alike should consider, especially when it comes to discipline and those aspects that children should cultivate while still young. It has inspired me to deal with my students with love, for children are gifts that God has entrusted to our care.

Fritzie C. Lagardia
Teacher I
Villacaneja Elementary School

2

I highly recommend the *Chicken Soup for the Soul* series. I have been buying *Chicken Soup* books since 1999, and now I have seven servings of this series, with heartwarming stories that give overflowing inspiration to readers. Teachers need to read these books to broaden their minds on good parenting, teaching and learning, and basically, loving. Teachers and school administrators should own even just one copy of this series to experience the joys and challenges it brings.



The Long Road Home by Danielle Steele is a story of a child abused by her parents yet showed courage in facing it and freeing herself from the past. From beginning to end, it touched my heart because in our everyday lives, we encounter children with similar problems. From the book, I learned that we must be careful not to hurt the feelings of children. We must do our part to love, trust, and encourage children to do things the right way and to let us be their guide.

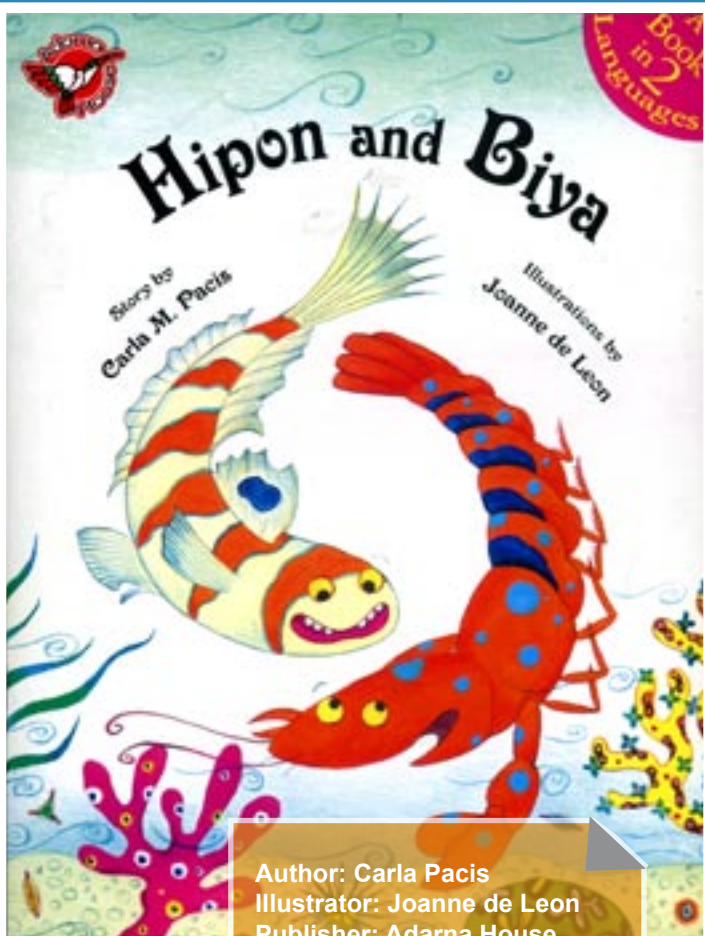
Rosemarie B. Labonete
Laurel Elementary School
Baguio City



5

Fredeswinda A. Carillo
Master Teacher II
Tayabas East Central School 1
Quezon

4



Author: Carla Pacis
Illustrator: Joanne de Leon
Publisher: Adarna House

TEACHERS' RESOURCE BOX:

Hipon and Biya

Teach children about symbiosis, helpfulness, and the different roles people play with this underwater tale of friendship.

by Marla Miniano

Hipon and Biya are two sea creatures living happily together. They look out for each other all the time—Hipon finds food and keeps their burrow clean while Biya protects Hipon from dangerous predators. One stormy day, Hipon gets tired of working and starts yelling orders at Biya, who can't do any of the things Hipon is asking him to do. They have a big fight, and when the storm blows over, Biya leaves the burrow. The two friends soon discover that life isn't so easy when they are apart—Hipon has nobody to protect him from being eaten by bigger creatures while Biya has nobody to find food for him. Realizing how much they need each other, they reconcile and go back to living happily together.

Ideas for Discussion:

A. SCIENCE CONCEPTS: SYMBIOSIS

Symbiosis is the term for a close interaction between two organisms of different species. There are various forms:

1. **Parasitism:** the interaction is disadvantageous to one of the organisms and beneficial to the other

Examples: fleas sucking blood from mammals and spreading diseases, tapeworms living in another animal's digestive tract and absorbing nutrition

2. **Commensalism:** the interaction is beneficial to one of the organisms while the other is not affected

Examples: mites using dung bugs for transportation, orchids growing on trees

3. **Amensalism:** the interaction is disadvantageous to one of the organisms while the other is not affected

Example: the black walnut tree, whose roots harm neighboring plants

4. **Competition:** both organisms are harmed
Examples: birds competing for nesting sites, predators such as lions and hyenas competing for prey such as gazelles and wildebeest

5. **Mutualism:** both organisms benefit from the interaction

Examples: the Egyptian Plover bird feeding off the crocodile's parasites

Hipon and Biya's partnership falls under mutualism. Shrimp (Hipon) are almost blind and cannot tell when predators are near, so they need the watchman gobies



There are many different species of Gobies who all live together with their particular species of shrimp. This goby is *Amblyeotris randalli*. The shrimp is *Alpheus Sp.*

Before the shrimp dares to come out of the burrow, he uses his antennae to contact the Goby, who then signals with his fins whether or not it is safe to come out. The goby in the photo is *Cryptocentrus fasciatus* and the shrimp is *Alpheus bellulus*.



(a species in the family Gobiidae, one of the largest families of fish) to warn them (Biya). In case of danger, the goby flicks its tail several times and the shrimp rushes into the burrow for safety. The shrimp, on the other hand, digs up the burrow where they live and keeps it clean. It also finds food for both of them. Thus, the shrimp provides the watchman goby with food and shelter while the watchman goby provides the shrimp with protection against dangerous creatures.

Another kind of goby fish, the cleaner goby, removes and eats parasites from the

skin, fins, mouth, and gills of large fish. Scientists marvel at the fact that the large fish who visit the gobies' "cleaning stations" treat small fish as prey but leave the cleaner gobies unharmed—even allowing them to enter their gills and mouth without eating them. This relationship is often referred to as "cleaning symbiosis."

Another popular example of mutualism is the interaction between sea anemone and clownfish (remember Nemo and his anemone home in the hit animated movie *Finding Nemo?*). The clownfish lives among the anemone's tentacles, protecting it from anemone-eating fish, while the anemone's stinging tentacles protect the clownfish from predators.

B. PEOPLE IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD

Hipon and Biya both have important roles to play. When Hipon doesn't do his job, Biya is directly affected, and vice versa.

People in the neighborhood, such as janitors, policemen, and vendors, have certain responsibilities to the community. It is essential that students understand the roles they have to play themselves. They must understand that the things they do affect not just themselves, but other people within the community too. Therefore, they must work with the people in the neighborhood to ensure that everyone lives as peacefully and harmoniously together as possible.

Present the following to them:

The Janitor

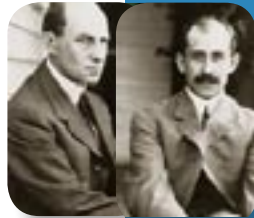
What he does for you: helps you stay healthy by making sure your school surroundings are clean

What you can do for him: do your share in keeping your school clean. Throw your trash in the proper place. Pick up pieces of paper inside the classroom and throw them in the wastebasket. Remind your classmates not to litter. And it never hurts to say hello to him when you pass each other in the corridors!

PAIRING UP

Despite major twists and turns, these tandems have managed to hurdle the obstacles thrown their way.

● **MARIE AND PIERRE CURIE**
Chemist and physicist Marie Curie and her husband Pierre were awarded the Nobel Prize in 1903 for discovering radioactivity.



● **THE WRIGHT BROTHERS**
Aviation pioneers Orville and Wilbur Wright are well-known for constructing and flying the world's first airplane, the Flyer I, in 1903.

● **BATMAN AND ROBIN FROM THE ADVENTURES OF BATMAN AND ROBIN**

The day is saved as long as the Caped Crusader and Boy Wonder stick together to battle it out against Gotham City's evil forces.

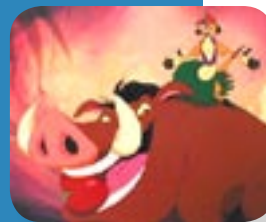


● **HARRY POTTER AND RON WEASLEY FROM THE HARRY POTTER SERIES**

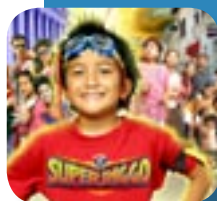
Harry and Ron get into all sorts of scrapes on an almost daily basis—and help each other get through the wizarding world's woes just as often.

● **TIMON AND PUMBA FROM THE LION KING**

This hilarious meerkat-warthog duo prove that jungle survival is a piece of cake when someone's got your back.



● **BUDONG AND JOMAR FROM SUPER INGGO**



The lives of these two boys are definitely far from simple, but they're all set to make each other's problems a bit easier to solve by being there for each other no matter what.

The Policeman / Traffic Enforcer

What he does for you: maintains peace and order within the community

What you can do for him: follow traffic rules and regulations—cross only at pedestrian lanes and get off at the proper stops when riding the bus or jeepney. Smile at him as you cross the street—it's bound to make his day.

The Vendor

What she does for you: gives you easier access to food and other necessities

What you can do for her: be honest when buying from her. Return extra change, or better yet, pay the exact amount to save her from the trouble of coming up with your change. Be polite—say "please" and remember to use *po* and *opo* when speaking to her.

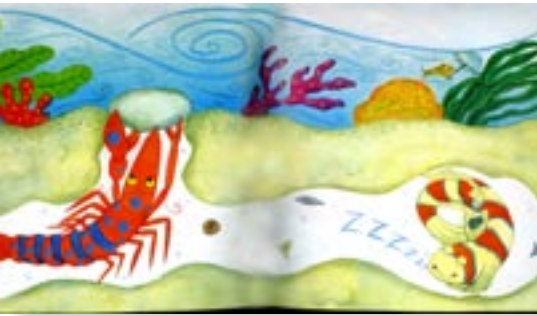
Suggested classroom activity:

Make students understand that although the people in the neighborhood have a responsibility to fulfill their duties, we must still thank them for doing their jobs well. Instruct them to write a thank-you letter to at least one person in their neighborhood. Remind them to practice correct grammar, punctuation, and sentence construction.

Ask them to give the letter to the person they wrote it for at the end of the day. You may also ask for a volunteer to read his letter to the rest of the class.

C. LENDING A HELPING HAND

Hipon and Biya, like other organisms in mutually symbiotic relationships, have to cooperate with each other in order to survive. This also holds true for all human beings. As the famous saying goes, "No man is an island." We cannot live without the help of other people, and it is important that children realize this despite the constant encouragement we give them to become more independent and self-sufficient. It is also important to teach them that in the same way they need other people's



assistance, other people need theirs as well, and it is their responsibility to offer a helping hand.

Suggested project:

To teach students the value of helpfulness—and to show them how good it feels to lend a helping hand—instruct them to write down all the helpful things they do every day. Tell them to specify whom they helped, what they did to help, and what they felt afterwards. Remind them that their helpful acts need not be grand—they can be as simple as lending a pen to a classmate or offering to carry a teacher's books. Tell them to be as creative as they want to be—they can jot down their thoughts, draw pictures, or even cut and paste photos. Instruct them to do this for a week. The following week, tell them to write down all the things other people do to help them every day. This time, ask them to specify who helped them, what the other person did to help, and what they think would have happened if the other person hadn't been there to help. Ask them to do this for another week. Afterwards, divide them into groups of five and tell them to share their experiences with one another. •

Marla Miniano graduated from the Ateneo de Manila University with a degree in Interdisciplinary Studies, Psychology and Education tracks. She engaged in Practice Teaching for one semester at the Ateneo Grade School, and she helps out at her family's Montessori school in San Jose, Nueva Ecija. She is now working as an Editorial Assistant for *Candy* magazine.

Strengthen your word power

How well do you know how to walk?

by Ma. Luz C. Vilches

Instead of using the same word over and over again, try these synonyms to make your sentence more creative and to give it more impact.

WALK: To walk means to move along by putting one foot in front of the other on the ground. In English, specific 'walking' words can aptly describe the 'feel' of the 'walking experience.'

Type of Walking	Walking style or characteristics	Context of Meaning
STROLL or WANDER or RAMBLE	Slowly and leisurely, without a particular direction	<u>Strolling</u> in the park is my Sunday afternoon routine. In my hometown, I like to <u>wander</u> through familiar streets. The children <u>rambled</u> by the river while they waited for the picnic to begin.
AMBLE or SAUNTER	Careless and unhurried pace	After a very filling lunch, I <u>ambled</u> back to my desk. When exams are over, students <u>saunter</u> around the mall without feeling guilty about it.
PACE	Slow steps of normal, equal length	The anxious husband <u>paces</u> the hospital corridor near the delivery room.
SWAGGER	In a proud or arrogant manner	After the singer won the contest, he <u>swaggered</u> around town like a big celebrity.
TODDLE	Short, unsteady steps	My one-year-old niece <u>toddles</u> around in the garden, chasing butterflies.
STAGGER	Very unsteadily and with difficulty	During the storm, I <u>staggered</u> my way to a huge tree to avoid being swept away by the strong wind.
MARCH	Steady, deliberate and usually moving forward	I was worried when the rallying crowd <u>marched</u> towards the soldiers' camp in defiance of government rule.
STRIDE	Long steps over or across something; in a hurry	The police had to <u>stride</u> quickly across the ditch to catch the running thief.
HIKE	A long-distance walk, usually for pleasure or exercise	During the long break, my friends and I will <u>hike</u> around the Cordillera for a month.
TRUDGE	Slowly or wearily; with heavy steps	Farmers, carrying their harvest for the day, <u>trudge</u> down the hillside towards the comforts of home.

So the next time you feel like grabbing a sandwich at the nearby canteen before your next class, don't just walk. Sprint!

Ma. Luz C. Vilches holds a PH D. in Applied Linguistics from Lancaster University, UK. She is the chair of the English Department at Ateneo de Manila University. Before this, she was Executive of the Ateneo Center for English Language Teaching.

CHRISTMAS MISSION:

No Overspending!


The holidays can be the most wonderful time of the year—and the most stressful. Here's how you can still have a merry Christmas without worrying about your cashflow.




It's that time of year when spending is unavoidable. Regardless of the size of your family or how many friends and godchildren you have, you can't escape it—you have to do a fair amount of shopping.


It doesn't help that gift-giving has become a strong Filipino tradition. You are expected to exchange gifts with your family, neighbors, co-workers from the office, friends from church—the list can be endless.


So how do you survive the festivities without waking up in January with so many bills you'll spend the rest of the new year paying? Here are some tips that might help.

 **MAKE A LIST, AND CHECK IT TWICE.** Believe it or not, Santa does know what he is doing. Write down all the names of the people you'd LIKE to give gifts to, and the ones you HAVE to give gifts to. When you feel you've covered everyone you know, start cutting back. Instead of giving several gifts to friends who are all part of one family, why not send one gift they can all enjoy like a special ham?

The early shopper catches the (best) bargains. Ever notice all those huge SALE signs around July to August? This is the time when most shop owners are trying to refresh their inventory and hold the most generous sales—some with discounts up to 70%. Rina and her husband have close to two dozen godchildren, so always starts her holiday shopping in July. "Bookstores drop their prices to make room for new stocks and because we are a family of readers, we not only shop for ourselves but also get books for everyone on our list."

 **IT IS THE THOUGHT THAT COUNTS.** If you're shopping for gifts to impress the receiver, expect to spend beyond your budget. Instead, be creative and look for practical gifts that suggest to the recipient that you thought of him or her when shopping. Susan always looks for a stapler or a roll of tape in the school parking lot to make final touches on her daughters' assignments. Last Christmas, a friend surprised her with a stapler that fit in her palm and three rolls of tape in neon dispensers the size of one-peso coins. "I'm not exaggerating when I say it was the best gift I got last year. I felt that my friend went out of her way to get me just what I needed—now, I never leave home without them."

 **PERSONAL TOUCHES CAN MAKE THE DIFFERENCE.** If you're on a tight budget and your list can't be trimmed down any further, why not give away something you can make with your bare hands? Maybe you have a really good super secret family recipe for leche flan? Or instead of buying greeting cards, get your kids to unleash their creativity by piling them with art paper.

TRY THE GIFT OF GIVING. Missed the sales? No time to shop? Why  don't you pick your favorite charity and donate your entire gift budget? Cecilia was tired of getting all these trinkets she couldn't use—and her pile at home was growing. One year, she told all her close friends and family that she chose to spend her shopping budget on scholarships instead. "To my surprise, my budget could pay for one year schooling of five students. I felt good and even better, some of my family and friends followed suit."

Of course, all these tips are only designed to help you cut back on your spending. But if you have no budget to spend at all—admit it. You could be surprised at how your family and friends will understand.

"My husband lost his job and now the whole family is dependent on my small income. I don't even know if we can have a proper noche buena. Instead of keeping quiet about it, I opened up to my co-teachers so they won't give me gifts anymore. That way, I won't feel bad because I can't give them any. I was relieved that all of them understood. Some are even in the same boat as I am," relates Myrna.

As we hurry from one shop to another, from one party to the next, we sometimes forget the true reason for the season. On Christmas day, we celebrate the birth of a Savior and exchange gifts in His name. It's not about wearing new clothes or getting the biggest presents. So before you get caught up in all the festivities, do remember the true reason for all the rejoicing.



Based on the belief that knowledge is your greatest asset, the Citigroup Financial Education Program is a global, company-wide effort to identify, support and implement initiatives that help give individuals, families, and communities the tools needed to make sound financial decisions.

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Dear Tita Lita,

I'm not close to anybody in my school and feel like I don't have any close friends. I am quite shy and am afraid that I will fail if I try new things. I think that I have low self esteem. Please help me.

There is in every man and woman a ceaseless longing to become whole. We all feel the deep need to develop our full and authentic selves. However, there are times when even just understanding ourselves is difficult. One day, a teacher approached me and confessed, "I have a lot of trouble liking myself for who I am. I wonder why I can't be like so and so. Instead, I am me, the person who always says too much, or doesn't go with the right crowd. I don't have the answers, but I know I'll like myself better when I accept who I am."

Surely this person, just like you, is in conflict with herself. Your problem must be solved. You need to undergo inner healing, discover who you really are, what you can do, and how you can relate to others. Teachers, especially, need high self esteem in order to help children with their own personal development. Wholeness is never fully attained in life, but is an ongoing process of transformation and growth.

Here are some strategies for gaining self-esteem that I hope will lead you to your purpose: gaining self esteem and having a better outlook in life.

Strategy #1: Start Now

The first step is to want to change and improve with all your heart. You know you want to grow, so make the commitment now. There may be temptations and failures ahead, but let this be your new beginning.

Strategy #2: Reach Out to Others

In his book *Growth Counseling*, pastor and counselor Howard Clinebell writes that it is important for us to be goal-oriented and growth-oriented. One of the dimensions of growth that can add to your self-esteem is enhancing your relationship with co-workers, as well as helping to improve those institutions that can sustain your growth: family, church, school, government, the community



in which you live. The only way you can gain anything is to share what you have and direct your resources for the service of others. As Dr. Donal Curtis writes, "When we so enrich the lives of others, we find our own greatest fulfillment. If we are willing to surrender the false ego—the little self—and lose ourselves in a dream, a goal, an ambition, in love and service to others—then increased self-support and self-esteem will be opened to you."

Strategy #3: Work with God

God is the author of all reality and the originator of human personality. Cooperate with Him, because each human being is His child and He always wants what is best for us. Don't hinder your own growth or personal development with negative thoughts and actions. You may experience inner conflict, but let your spiritual side win over the negative emotions you have. Open yourself to the spirit that produces love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, humility, and self-control.

Think of yourself as capable of doing, achieving, and being somebody. Believe in your potential. Self-esteem comes from loving ourselves for who we are, as unique individuals made by God.

The Self-esteem Creed

Let your Tita Lita offer you this self-esteem creed. Ponder every line and become the best you can be. Remember, no matter where you go, you can't get away from yourself!

God made me—I was no accident
I was in God's plan
And He doesn't make junk, ever.
I was born to be
A successful human being.
I am somebody special, unique,
Definitely one of a kind,
And I love me.
That is essential so that
I might love you, too.
I have talents, potentials, yes.
There is greatness in me, and
If I harness that specialness,
Then I will write my name with my deeds...
I was born in God's image
And likeness
And I will strive to do
God's will.
—Art Fettig



Angelita L. Sta. Ana, Ed.D. is the English Schools Division Supervisor of the City of Marikina. She has been an educator for the past 30 years and also does editorial consulting. Through the years, she has inspired and helped many young teachers to grow professionally and personally.

Do you have an educational problem for Tita Lita? Write to us at teachers@readerstransform.com or text 0927-9133712! We will keep your identity confidential. See the staff box for additional contact info.

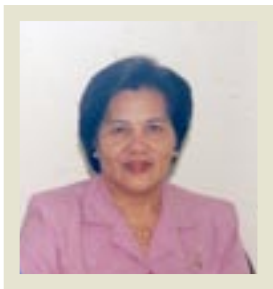


Feel Like a Natural Woman

For that gandang professional look,
try brushing on some earth tones.

Photos by Marc Yao
Makeup by Barbi Chan
Hair by Eric and Letty of Salon Paradiso
Styling by Sharlene Tan

Mrs. Serafia Vargas (or Serry as she is more commonly known), principal of Libis Elementary School, has much reason to be proud. In schoolyear 2005-06, her school ranked number one in the division achievement test for elementary level, and number five in the national achievement test for Grade 6 students. She credits the success of the school to hardworking teachers, the students' use of their library—the READiscovery Center donated by HSBC, and different innovative programs, such as free Kumon and remedial classes, that have been instituted to improve academic achievement.



Although she was feeling under the weather, Ma'am Serry didn't turn her back on her commitment to Star Teacher and came ready for her makeover. Will her sacrifice be worth it?

Ma'am Serry was accompanied by her daughter Quinser, who is taking Social Work at UP Diliman, and Libis ES administrative aid Gary Manlolo.

The Look



Shar's tips:

1 Ma'am Serry's usual outfit is a top and blazer over slacks. We updated her look by picking an inner top with a draped collar to elongate her neck and we paired it with a dark maroon blazer with a very interesting collar. The V-neck blazer slims down and draws attention to the face. The silver drop earrings lend her outfit a dressier yet professional look. **Maroon blazer, P1,195, black cowlneck top, P925, pink large flower, P155, silver drop earrings, P245, all from Ensembles.**

2 An oversized pearl necklace can jazz up an outfit. **Blue long sleeved polo, P975, oversized pearl necklace, P275, earrings, P195, all from Ensembles.**



3 When wearing prints, keep them simple and small. This shirtdress is long enough to wear over jeans or slacks and can be worn buttoned or unbuttoned, depending on the occasion. A thin belt can add curves to your frame. **Blue and yellow floral shirtdress, P895, Ensembles.**

4 Pinning a floral brooch on a blazer will add a feminine touch to your look. **Pink large flower, P155, Ensembles.**



Barbi's tips:

Barbi used earth tones on Ma'am Serry's eyes to enhance her morena complexion. She also applied coral blush on her cheeks and coral lipstick on her lips. She trimmed her eyebrows to give them shape and to brighten up her face. "When lines and creases begin to appear on your skin, make sure to put less makeup. You don't want the makeup to settle in the creases. Also, as our skin ages, remember to put less makeup. Be conservative with the colors and lessen application," Barbi advises.



Eric & Letty's tips:

Eric and Letty of Salon Paradiso texturized Ma'am Serry's hair and evened out her hair color by matching it with her natural shade. They thinned her hair out a bit to lessen its thickness.



WISH MO BA?

Be our next makeover! Do you want a new look, or know someone who might be the perfect candidate? Write us a letter explaining why and send in a photo. We just might choose you!

Mail entries to:
Sa Akiat Sisikat Foundation Inc.
35/F Petron Mega Plaza
Sen. Gil Puyat Ave. Makati City

Please include your contact information such as a landline, email address, or cellphone number.

FIND BARBI CHAN AT: SALON PARADISO

**450 Gen Vicente Lim St.
San Juan, M.M.
Tel. 7051467 / 09178460738**



Find ENSEMBLES at:
SM Megamall Tel. 6353231 •
SM Bicutan Tel. 8239490 • SM
Marilao Tel. 044-2388015 •
Robinson's Galleria Tel. 6355117
• Ayala Center, Glorietta 1 Tel.
8941121 • Alabang Town Center
Tel. 7750254 • Festival Super-
mall Tel. 8095636 • Eastwood
Citywalk 2 Tel. 6872762





"Kuya" Bodge Pascua awakened the storyteller each teacher. "I learned that the story teller should go out to become effective," concluded Rosemarie Visaya.

We are Gurong Kaakbay!

By Ma. Suzette B. Comillas

"I felt blessed to be part of this seminar," was my reply to my principal, Mrs. Cristina O. Garvida, when she texted me to ask how the first day of the Gurong Kaakbay workshop was going. In fact, my heart was overwhelmed as I learned many things from the speakers and sessions. They really inspired me to be an advocate of reading. I won't forget how Karen Davila defined being a teacher: "Being a teacher is a privilege; the privilege to change the life of another person." Wow, those words made me feel wonderful. Boy Abunda, who was another speaker, also said, "reading will make you a better person." I didn't realize how powerful reading is until I heard that. And finally, Barbi Chan conducted a teacher makeover, which was inspiring with her beauty tips and the way she convinced us to be the best we can be.

With the blessing of my ever-supportive principal, I will now be conducting a reading program in our school, Delfin M. Germaldez ES in Novaliches, Quezon City. The objective of the program is to enable children to develop a passion for reading, with a focus on comprehension. I plan to integrate all the learnings I acquired at the Gurong Kaakbay workshop. What inspires me to conduct this program? I want to take part in building a nation of readers!

Gurong Kaakbay Fast Facts:

What is it?

Gurong Kaakbay is a yearly workshop conducted by Sa Aklat Sisikat Foundation to empower teachers in their partner public schools to build a nation of readers. In 2006, it was held at Xavier School in San Juan, Metro Manila from October 27-30.

Who attended?

The workshop was attended by 155 educators from the National Capital Region, 54 from the Gurong Kaakbay Batch 2005 and 101 new participants for 2006. Thirty-six speakers came to share, inspire, educate, and discuss a variety of topics especially developed for elementary public school teachers.

How can I take part?

For more information, please contact Sa Aklat Sisikat Foundation
35/F Petron Mega Plaza
358 Sen. Gil Puyat Ave. Makati City

Telefax: 889-8135

Cellphones: Lauren Reyes, 0926-4623096
Kris Hernandez, 0916-3451520

Watch for Karen Davila's article on media and education, inspired by her talk at the Gurong Kaakbay Workshop. It will be published in a future issue of Star Teacher!

About Us

SA AKLAT SISIKAT FOUNDATION

INC. aims to build a nation of readers. We believe that to read is every child's right. We seek to deepen the Filipino child's love and



habit of reading. We advocate that through the Sa Aklat Sisikat Reading Program, we can nurture the Filipino child's intellectual, ethical, and social development. Sa Aklat Sisikat has partnerships with the following groups: Petron Foundation, Coca Cola Foundation, United Parcel Services, Jollibee Foods Corporation, The Asia Foundation, Summit Media, Adidas Philippines Inc., Growth with Equity in Mindanao (GEM), Citigroup, Convergys, Hongkong and Shanghai Banking Corporation (HSBC), Children's Hour, EON, Delbros, Inc., Philippines-Australia Community Assistance Program (PACAP).

For more information, please visit: www.readerstransform.com

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What Teachers Learned:

I really came to a deep awakening that as a teacher, I can't give what I don't have. It's not because I don't love to read but it's more of the lack of time to read. But after the session "Read to Teach, Read to Lead" with Dr. Marjorie Evasco, I felt that I should strive to seize every opportunity to read if I want my children to develop a love for it. With my strong desire to help my pupils develop a love for reading, I will provide more time for them to read, read and read during our English period.

--Catalina T. Lorenzo
Bacood Elementary School

I will encourage my pupils to read books by providing them with reading materials, making a mini library in my classroom (even displaying old books), and talking to parents sincerely to have them follow up on children's reading at home.

-- Emmalyn D. Gomez
Andres Bonifacio Integrated School

Napukaw muli ng pagsasalita ni Dr. Bienvenido Lumbera ang aking damdaming makabayan. Nanumbalik sa akin ang pagmamahal sa sining. Ipapakilala ko sa mga bata ang dakilang kabayanihan ng mga tulad ni Andres Bonifacio. Bibigyang diin ang pagiging makabayan sa pamamagitan ng drama o pangbatang gawain, atbp.

-- Rexie M. Castro
G. Santiago Elementary School

I learned from Dr. Ricky Abad that as a teacher, I'm the superstar in the class, and my students are my audience. I'm a stunning teacher--a whole package, as he emphasized. I can now teach without apprehension and use myself as a visual aid, to lessen burden of making visual aids.

-- Jenny B. Navigar
Bignay Elementary School

As always, Mr. Onofre "Pagsi" Pagsanghan is simply the best! When we dream, we've got to give it everything we've got and we've got to fuel it with passion. We have to have focus. I can tell my children to dream and aim high. I can be a very good model of someone who is fired with the burning desire to teach my pupils to love reading.

--C. T. Lorenzo

Dr. Ricky Abad's talk "Star Teacher: Now Showing" was a big hit with the participants. "Dr. Abad awakened the actress in me, which I can use in teaching reading to my slow-learners," commented Susana S. Magpantay of Nicanor Garcia Elementary School



SAS President Margarita Delgado (second from left), speaker Karen Davila (second from right) and SAS Vice-President Lizzie Zobel (right-most) with Gurong Kaakbay participants.



Ms. Neni Sta. Romana-Cruz's session on book-making is always in great demand. "Great! Great! Great! It's my first time to do this," Elvira A. Castro of Silanganan Elementary School shared.

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Make Reading fun at home

Build your students' love for reading—*outside* the classroom. Photocopy this page and share these reading tips with your students' parents. (Tip: you can also do try some of these ideas in the classroom.)

by Ines Bautista-Yao

1 Complete the story

Make up a story together with your child and take turns completing what happens next. You can begin the story then stop at an exciting point. Have your child continue the story. When he or she reaches an exciting turning point, you continue the story and so on. Be as creative as possible. Make your story funny or a little scary.



2 Ask them to read to you

This can be done in two ways:
a) Whenever your child has written anything in class, be enthusiastic and ask him or her to read it to you. Don't treat this as a chore or a way to correct him or her. Treat it as a way to build your child's confidence in him or herself.



b) Instead of you reading the bedtime story, ask your child to read to you. If you feel he or she is getting sleepy, you can take over and finish it.



3 Hold kwentuhan sessions about your family

Every family has legendary tales that go down in family history. Your kids will love to hear them. This is a great way to start their love for stories early!



4 Bring a book wherever you go

If you're waiting in line at the doctor's office or at the grocery, entertain your child with a book or a children's magazine. Make reading a priority no matter where you are.



5 Ask, ask, ask

Read a book together with your child and ask them questions about the story such as, "Why do you think the prince fought the dragon?" or "What do you think the frog should have done?"



6 Over and over again

Children don't get tired of reading the same books over and over. Encourage your child to re-read his or her favorite books. This way, he or she will learn to read faster and with more accuracy.

Good luck!