



Teaching Students to Manage Their Own Learning

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I never wanted to become a teacher. In high school, my favourite subject was math. I only took up BS Physics for teachers in college because it had math and was the program supported by my scholarship. I finally surrendered to the teaching part of the course when I was in my third year. I had to make up my mind by then.

So I became a teacher. I have been a teacher for almost 13 years now. I taught at Concordia College for one year before transferring to Fort Bonifacio High School (FBHS).

In recent years, I became curious about how to better train my students. I wanted to equip them with knowledge they could use to survive college. I read up on metacognition. It emphasized the importance of monitoring the process of gaining knowledge while cognitive skills were being developed. When Ms. Genersol G. Monton introduced her Student Reflective Learning and Assessment Plan (SRLAP) to the FBHS faculty during a professional meeting, I thought to myself, *Hey! That's metacognition!*

I call Ms. Monton *Ate* (big sister) Gene. She is like a sister to me. When I was new at FBHS, Metrobank Foundation, Inc. had already recognised her as an Outstanding Teacher. I see how serious and hardworking she is despite her cheerful and warm personality. These are qualities worth emulating. I look up to her and consult her on things that are within her expertise. She is always welcoming and willing to share her knowledge. That is why after she shared her SRLAP at the professional meeting, I did not hesitate to talk to her about it and ask for a copy. She explained it to me and I used the knowledge she shared to create a similar tool.

In the beginning of school year 2014-2015, I introduced My Action Plan for Progress and Success (MyAPPS) to my students. I made it a requirement for the three physics sections I was handling. I gave them the forms and walked them through the process of filling them out. I wanted them to learn how to manage their own learning and MyAPPS was the tool that would enable them to do it.

The students were positive about it and submitted their MyAPPS at the end of the first grading period. However, I noticed that they did not follow their plans. They did it only to comply with the requirement. In the middle of the second grading period, I spoke to them again. I had them review their plans and explained the importance of applying the learning strategies they made

for themselves. I wanted them to make progress and be successful in planning their learning, but they also had to do the work.

After that talk, more students tried to apply what they put down in their MyAPPS. I saw marked improvement in periodical exam scores at the end of the second grading period.

I am still testing MyAPPS, actually. It is on its first year of implementation, and I have been asking my students to submit it every quarter. I would like to share it but I plan to do research and record my findings first. It is funny how I am thinking about studying it further for the purpose of improving it—I have become an educator!

I think that my role as a teacher is to facilitate learning and provide just enough freedom for my students to make their own discoveries. As Einstein has said, “I never teach my pupils, I only attempt to provide the conditions in which they can learn.” You see the true skill of a teacher when he is able to create these conditions and devise materials that open students’ minds to learning.

Christian R. Bincalo teaches physics to four sections of fourth year students in FBHS. He made My Action Plan for Progress and Success (MyAPPS) a requirement for 148 of his students.