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## EMPOWERED TEACHERS EMPOWER LEARNERS

**VIOLLY CHYRIL S. BUGTONG**

SHS - Teacher

Department of Education

[violy.bugtong@deped.gov.ph](mailto:violy.bugtong@deped.gov.ph)

In a small village where a remote school stood, chalk dust still floats like memories in the afternoon sun. A teacher once scribbled on the board:

***"If you give me tools, I will build minds. If you give me trust, I will spark futures. But if you give me nothing—I will still teach—with fire."***

I do feel that—yes. Because excellent educators create ideal circumstances rather than wait for them or request favors. We show up, suit up, and lift up. But here's the catch: we don't do it alone. Empowerment isn't a favor from the top. It's a shared responsibility—a ripple that starts with leadership and ends with lifelong learners (Ingersoll et al., 2018).

However, to some, the AuRA of school leaders has become a cliché; establishing Authority without including others in the process often leads to dominance rather than empowerment. Republic Act No. 9155 emphasizes school-based management where

**Authority** is delegated to school heads, but that should never overshadow collective participation (DepEd 2001).

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## What Policy Memos Don't Capture (But Teachers Feel Every Day)

You can launch reforms left and right, buzz with initiatives, and drown us in accomplishment and narrative reports. But if the teacher in the room doesn't feel heard, supported, or trusted—then let's be honest—that glossy binder is just a beautiful paperweight (Datnow & Park, 2019).

Let's make it plain: an empowered teacher doesn't just deliver the curriculum—we ignite it. We don't just teach—we inspire, stretch, and awaken. The magic is not in the modules, handouts, or MELCs/CGs but in the human connection behind them.

## The Often-Ignored Secret Sauce

Here's something we rarely say out loud (but should): empowered teachers create classrooms students actually want to return to. Not just because of a reward system, the psych-war, or teacher initiatives like feeding programs or free WiFi—but because learners feel that they belong. And when they sense that effort from a teacher, it's *transformative*!

A study by OECD (2021) found that when teachers feel supported, they are more likely to go beyond their job descriptions—building deeper relationships and crafting meaningful learning. So, let's reframe it:

- Disempowered teachers = disengaged learners
- Empowered teachers = learners lean in

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Like plants, learners bloom where light is present. Thus, it is the **Responsibility** of school leaders and administrators to provide equitable support, empathy, and recognition to teachers (Day & Gu, 2010).

## Beyond the Lesson Plan: What We Really Teach

Forget the modules. Here's what learners truly absorb when teachers feel empowered:

- Courage – to ask hard questions and make beautiful mistakes
- Voice – to speak truth, even when it trembles
- Ownership – to rise and take charge of their own learning

These aren't just competencies. These are values shaped by empowered educators, values that ripple far beyond the classroom walls (Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012).

## What Empowerment Actually Looks Like (No Sugarcoating)

School heads, district leads, and dear policymakers—hear this with care. Empowerment is not about giving permission. It's about believing in teachers enough to trust them. Especially those who are potential catalysts for change.

Some may appear to “know it all.” But they are not threats. They are opportunities. Discover their individual strengths—use them to benefit the organization. Like women, they are uncomplicated, given you appreciate them right.

- Let us dream—and sometimes fail—with purpose.

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- Include us not as token representatives but as co-authors of change.
- Don't just measure us. Mentor us. Fund us. Cheer for us (Danielson, 2007).

I'll take feedback, sure. But pair it with trust, and I'll give you transformation.

## Side Effects You'll Want More Of

When teachers are empowered, here's what might accidentally happen:

- Students stay after class—not for detention, but for ideas.
- Parents start praising the school—without a memo telling them to.
- Lessons begin and end with joy—and curiosity lingers past dismissal (Robinson, 2011).

## The Final Note (The Kind I'd Write on a Chalkboard)

When a teacher feels powerful, a learner begins to believe in their own power, too. So if you're sitting at a desk with the ability to make decisions with **Accountability** that shape schools, here's my humble suggestion:

Don't just ask what learners need —ask what teachers deserve. Because in this classroom economy, we—the teachers—are the frontliners, the builders, the quiet revolutionaries.

And when we're empowered? *The results affect generations.*

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