

The teacher as a hero

[Profession](#), [Teacher](#)



The teacher as a hero LESSONS PLANNED from the teacher's pen (The Philippine Star) Updated October 01, 2009 There are heroes and heroines, national and local. Some of them are born, others are made. Many are still living while many others have long been gone. It is to the latter that monuments and museums were built to keep alive their memory in our hearts and mind. Public buildings, parks and plazas, streets and a few provinces have been named after them. Important dates and events are usually marked red in the calendar to remind us of their birth or death anniversary.

During the celebration of these events, program speakers take turns extolling to high heavens whatever good they had done for the country. Sad enough the hero who is apparently taken for granted and therefore unsung is the poor teacher. Not having a pedigreed name, she has no influence, no power. She is regarded as belonging to the marginalized sector of society. Tactless people look down on her with contempt saying, " She's only a teacher. " After all, unlike OFWs, teachers do not contribute to the national economy.

What many do not seem to realize is that a teacher is truly a hero in her own way. For a teacher is not only about her lesson plans, her teaching methods, strategies and techniques. A teacher is also about her personal character, her values and her attitude. And more importantly a teacher is also about her missionary work which entails a great deal of sacrifice on her part and her family. Indeed, the pro-bono services that she renders involve numerous risks to life and limb.

We have heard of teachers who were kidnapped for ransom, forced into marriage under pain of bodily harm, physically abused and the unfortunate, even beheaded. I remember a male teacher who reprimanded a student for provoking trouble in class. That afternoon the huffy father with fire in his eyes sought the teacher in school and mercilessly hacked him to death. I had a relative who was summoned to the Comelec office in Manila and made to explain her inadvertence to affix her signature on a pair of election forms.

The financially distressed teacher was forced to take a long-term loan which she used to pay for her transportation fare, board and lodging while in Manila. In the meantime her family had to be sparing and frugal in order to tide them over until such period that the loan was fully paid. While other government employees are off after five, the teacher spends long hours of work at home writing lesson plans, checking test papers or preparing visual aids and similar teaching devices.

Compared to those who work in the comfort of their office, thousands of our teachers go on long hours of journey to their far-flung stations over hill and dale, many times in harsh weather condition. It is no wonder that many of these teachers become decrepit long before their age or they get pitifully sick before retirement from the service. And yet their take-home pay is a mere pittance. Any increase in their starvation salary comes far apart and in trickles because this is dependent upon the members of Congress who remember the teachers only on election time.

Come May of next year teachers will again be called upon to man the electoral ramparts of our democracy. They will be there to help safeguard

the sanctity of the ballot, armed only with the nobility and integrity of their profession. Whatever people say to the contrary, the teacher as a hero is ready to lay down her life for the sake of country sans a loud flourish of trumpets. I salute our teachers as heroes, living or dead! ANTONIO A. MORAN of Camalig, Albay is a retired general education supervisor of the Department of Education.