



Featured Teacher: Jovan B. Alitagtag, Ph.D

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Cast of Characters

11th & 12th-grade students in Rosamond, CA.

Background and Setting

Alitagtag has been a teacher for 13 years, 11 in the Philippines and two in the United States.

Memorable Learning

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A Global Perspective in the Classroom

Alitagtag brings a unique lens to his students' learning experience. He spent 11 years teaching as a university instructor in the Philippines and two years in the United States as a high-school teacher. His passion for publishing stems from his own academic background.

"Because of that background, I wanted my students to experience what it feels like to be published authors," said Alitagtag.

Bigger Than a Book Report

Creating a classbook can be integrated into an existing lesson plan. Alitagtag and his class used their ELA lesson, inspired by Clint Smith's poem "There Is a Lake Here," to explore identity, memory and voice as they wrote their book.

"My students truly enjoyed the process - especially once they realized the book was real and not just another classroom assignment," he said.

Alitagtag explained that a highlight of their classbook was the brainstorming sessions.

"We discussed the themes we wanted to focus on, identified our target audience and clarified what we wanted our book to communicate as a collective voice," he said.

Taking Ownership

Involving each student was an integral part of creating their classbook. Alitagtag felt it was important to show his class that they can take ownership throughout the publishing process.

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The Power of Publishing

Helping students build confidence in their writing is an important goal for teachers, and Alitagtag aims to do just that with each class. For example, one of his students struggled with writing mechanics and conventions



while working on their pages for the classbook. Alitagtag explained that while writing their first draft, the student had noticeable spelling and grammatical errors. This caused them to become anxious as they tried to make their handwriting and story perfect for the book.

Through peer feedback and one-on-one revisions, the student began to improve their writing presentation in addition to clarity and correctness.

“They became more attentive to editing, asked thoughtful questions about grammar and took ownership of improving their draft,” said Alitagtag. “By the final submission, their writing was not only cleaner mechanically but also more confident in voice and structure.”

“What started as anxiety over handwriting turned into growth in writing skills, attention to detail and self-belief as an author,” he said.

Watching Students Become Published Authors

After reading the completed classbook, Alitagtag said publishing became a boost of confidence for his students. Reading their work in print and seeing their name is in a real, published book made his class’ experience feel real and meaningful. He shared that publishing encouraged his students to want to write more!

“When I later encouraged them to join a writing contest, they did not hesitate,” said Alitagtag. “Publishing helped them see themselves not just as students, but as capable writers with something valuable to say. Seeing them recognize themselves as

real authors has been one of the most rewarding experiences of my teaching journey.”

Trust the Process And Your Students

Alitagtag’s advice to teachers when creating their classbook is simple: “trust the publishing process and your students.”

“In this era of AI and instant answers, students need opportunities to clearly hear their own voice,” said Alitagtag. “A classbook gives them that space. It teaches them that their ideas are not just assignments, they are contributions.”



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