
Educating for Conviviality in Basic Education: The Philippine Context

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I. Background

Three major provisions of the present Philippine Constitution (1987) highlight Filipinos' high aspiration and priority for education. First, it is concretely enunciated in Art. XIV Section 5, "The state shall assign the highest budgetary priority to education"; then in Section 1, "The state shall protect and promote the right of all citizens to quality education at all levels and shall take appropriate steps to make such education accessible to all." Third, Section 3 lists down the objectives of schools as "to inculcate patriotism and nationalism, foster love for humanity, respect for human rights, duties of citizenship, strengthen ethical and spiritual values, develop moral character and personal discipline, encourage critical and creative thinking, broaden scientific and technological knowledge, and promote vocational efficiency."

Comparably, Education for conviviality is implicit in Art. II Declaration of Principles and State Policies Section 2 which states that, "The Philippines renounces war as an instrument of national policy, adopts the generally accepted principles of international law as part of the law of the land and adheres to the policy of peace, equality, justice, freedom, cooperation, and humanity with all nations."

Such provisions in the fundamental law serve as the legal bases and guiding principles for the education sector in planning and implementing its program.

The Department of Education is the principal agency of the government responsible for education and manpower development. As embodied in Executive Order No. 117, s. 1987, the Department is primarily responsible for formulating, planning, implementing and coordinating the policies, plans, programs and projects in the areas of formal and non-formal education at the elementary and secondary levels, and non-formal. Equally the Department is mandated to supervise all educational institutions, both public and private; and provide for the complete, adequate and integrated system of education relevant to national development goals. At the Central Office of the Department are five service units namely: the Planning Service, Administrative Service, Human Resource Development Service and Technical Service. To assist the Secretary in initiating and formulating policies, standards and programs on curriculum development are the three bureaus: Elementary Education, Secondary Education, Alternative Learning System. Other offices include the Educational Development Project Implementing Task Force (EDPITAF) and the National Educators Academy of the Philippines (NEAP). There is a pending legislation in Congress for the trifocalization of the education sector: Department of Basic Education for elementary and secondary education level, Commission of Higher Education (CHED) for colleges and universities and Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA) for vocational-technical education.

The Department has 17 Regional Offices: the Ilocos regions (I), the Cagayan Valley Region (II), the Central Luzon Region (III), the Southern Tagalog Region (IV), Bicol Region (V), Western Visayan Region (VI), Central Visayas Region (VII), Western Visayas Region (VIII), Western Mindanao Region (IX), Northern Mindanao Region (X), Southern Mindanao Region (XI), Central Mindanao Region (XII), the Caraga Region, Cordillera Administrative Region (CAR), the National Capital Region (NCR), and the Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao (ARMM).

II. The Philippine Department of Education: Overview and Current Concerns

In the on-going review of DepEd's mandate under the incumbent Secretary Jesli Lapus, the following aspects are highlighted:

Mandate

1. The Department of Education shall protect and promote the right of all citizens to quality basic education and shall take appropriate steps to make such education accessible to all.
2. It shall establish, maintain, and support a complete, adequate and integrated system of basic education relevant to the needs of the people and society. It shall establish and maintain a system of free and compulsory public education in the elementary level and free public education in high school level.
3. All education institutions shall inculcate patriotism and nationalism, foster love of humanity, respect for human rights, appreciation of the role of national heroes in the historical development of the country, teach the rights and duties of citizenship, strengthen ethical and spiritual values, develop moral character and personal discipline, encourage critical and creative thinking, broaden scientific and technological knowledge, and promote vocational efficiency.
4. It shall take into account regional and sectoral needs and conditions and shall encourage local planning in the development of educational policies and programs.

Vision

A highly competent, civic-spirited, life-skilled and God-loving Filipino youth who actively participate in and contribute

towards the building of humane, healthy and productive society.

Mission

To provide quality education that is equitably accessible to all and to lay the foundation for life-long learning and service for the common good.

A. A Problem on Access

The Department of Education by its sheer size and organizational depth is the biggest bureaucracy. For example, the latest statistics for SY 2006-2007 shows that there are 458,102 teachers of whom 337, 592 are in the elementary levels and 120,510 are in the high school level catering to 19,556,471 million in the public and private schools nationwide. The DepEd has been managed for the past decades like a typical bureaucracy with policies and programs coming from the Central Office headed by an appointed Secretary and a management team overseeing 17 regions headed by directors. They, in turn, supervise 182 divisions headed by superintendents who supervise 4, 989 school heads or principals.

The student population from elementary and high school increases by about 275,000 students per year, but due to poverty and malnutrition there is a high drop out rate. Students finishing Grade I to VI (67 per cent) and of this group only 50 per cent finish high school. In the Philippine Development Report 2000, the Philippines prides itself in having an adult basic literacy rate of 94.6 per cent exceeding many countries in the Southeast Asia.

The DepEd budget for 2003 was P106.48B, for 2004 P109.52B, for 2005 P112.52B, and for 2006 P119B. The present budget is not enough to meet cumulative backlogs over the years, its resources shortage amounts to 57,930 classrooms, 34.7 million textbooks and about 50,000 school teachers. The

amount spent per child per year (\$150), one of the smallest in Southeast Asia, as compared to \$950 per child that Thailand spends. Such alarming statistics above show that Philippine education crisis, suffering both in quantity and quality.

B. A Problem on Quality

Records show a kind of deterioration in the quality of basic education these past few years, as shown on Scores in Tests administered nationally by the Department.

Grade/Year Level	NDT (June 2002)	NAT (March 2003)	HSRT (April 2004)
Grade 4, Overall	39.99%	43.55%	
English	42.14%	41.80%	
Science	39.38%	43.98%	
Math	38.45%	44.84%	
First Year, Overall	28.04%	36.13%	32.13%
English	29.67%	41.48%	23.47%
Science	27.75%	34.65%	33.46%
Math	26.71%	32.09%	33.46%

NDT – National Diagnostic Test

NAT – National Achievement Test

HSRT – High School Readiness Test

The dismal performance of graduating elementary students reveals that most of them are unprepared for high school education. Alarmingly, less than one percent (0.64%) of the students who took the High School Readiness Test (HSRT) in April 2004 obtained grades of 75% or better. Half of them actually scored below 30%.

The low quality of education delivered by the public school system can also be attributed to the poor performance of teachers in assessment tests. Some teachers scored no better than the students they teach. A mere 19 percent of the nation's 53,000 public high school teachers scored 75 percent or higher in the Self-Assessment Test for English (SATE) administered by the Department of Education (DepEd) in May 2003.

In a recent report of UNESCO (EFA Global Monitoring Report, 2003-2004), a new index was developed, the EFA Development Index – to gauge the overall accomplishment of countries in terms of meeting the EFA goals. Using this index called the EDI, the Philippines ranked 44th, falling below Thailand, Vietnam, Indonesia and China. The index is a composite measure based on: enrollment ratio, literacy rate, EFA gender-specific index and quality (survival rate up to grade 5). What appears most distressing is that, in terms of quality of education, as measured by survival rate, the Philippines fared no better than some of the poorest countries in Africa such as Burkina Faso and Ethiopia.

III. The Revised Basic Education Curriculum (RBEC)

A process of reviewing the curriculum of basic education started in 1997 and in 2002 the Philippine Department of Education demonstrated the political will to adopt and implement the revised basic education curriculum for public schools. The basic philosophy took into consideration both worldwide trends and Philippine realities. The following statements underscored the rationale and philosophy of basic education with the imperatives of global interdependence, the demands of the information age and the need to educate for international understanding.

“In a changing world, our philosophy of education, which should be ultimate basis of any curriculum design or reform, has to be relevant and responsive to our rapidly changing world. Because of instantaneous communication and mass transport today, a distant event can have an immediate impact on one’s community, whose response can influence also the further unfolding of that event. Our world has become inseparably global and local and “glocal” in that lives are being reshaped by multilateral interactions among global systems, local practices, international trends, and personal lifestyles. This interlocking of the global, the local and the personal factors can be smooth or rough for communities and individuals

to respond favorably or adversely to it, as much as makes local knowledge and events no longer purely local.

We are living more and more in a world in which we filter all kinds of information and news from far and near places and we act on the basis of that filtering process everyday. Our world is increasingly constituted by information, and is one in which we have to take many forward-orientated decisions. Contemporary Filipino learners are so confronted with an explosion of knowledge that they have to take of a daily barrage of data and commentaries from far and near sources.”

The ideal Filipino learner in our rapidly changing world more than empowered for lifelong learning, is an active maker of *meaning*, and can learn whatever she/he needs to know in any new context. Because of this empowerment he/she becomes competent in learning how to learn and has *life skills* to be a self-developed person who is *makabayan* (patriotic), *makatao* (mindful of humanity), *makakalikasan* (respectful of nature), and *maka-Diyos* (God-fearing). Such desiderata spell out the philosophic vision of the Philippine basic education, both formal and non-formal.

One of the major subjects of the Revised Basic Education Curriculum (RBECE) is *Makabayan* which literally means *love of country* or *nationalism*. This major learning area serves as an umbrella of other subjects clustered which include Social Studies, Values Education, Physical Education, Work Education, Music and the Arts.

IV. The Revised Basic Education Curriculum and Educating for Conviviality

The concept of conviviality covers a wide range of concepts and practices of education, including human rights and peace education, multi-cultural and ethnic education, education for international understanding and values

education, education for social integration, education for gender equality and even a large part of education for all and human sustainable development (A. Chiba, 2005).

Education for conviviality in the Philippine context is embedded in the subject *Makabayan*. The disciplines within *Makabayan* are represented by SIKAP: *sibika* (civics), *sining* (arts), information and communication technology, *kultura* (culture), *araling panlipunan* (social studies), *pangkalusugan* (health), *pangtahanan* (home) at *pangkabuhayan* (economics). Figures 1 and 2 show Social Studies Teaching in the 21st Century and Educating from a Global Perspective a framework for teaching Social Studies used in many laboratory schools of selected Teacher Institutions like the Philippine Normal University.

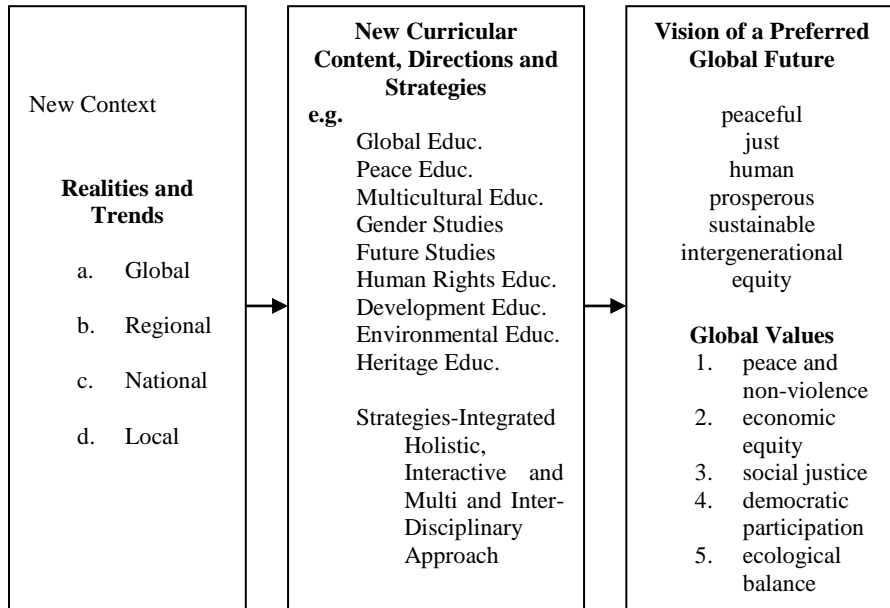


Figure 1
SOCIAL STUDIES TEACHING IN THE 21ST CENTURY

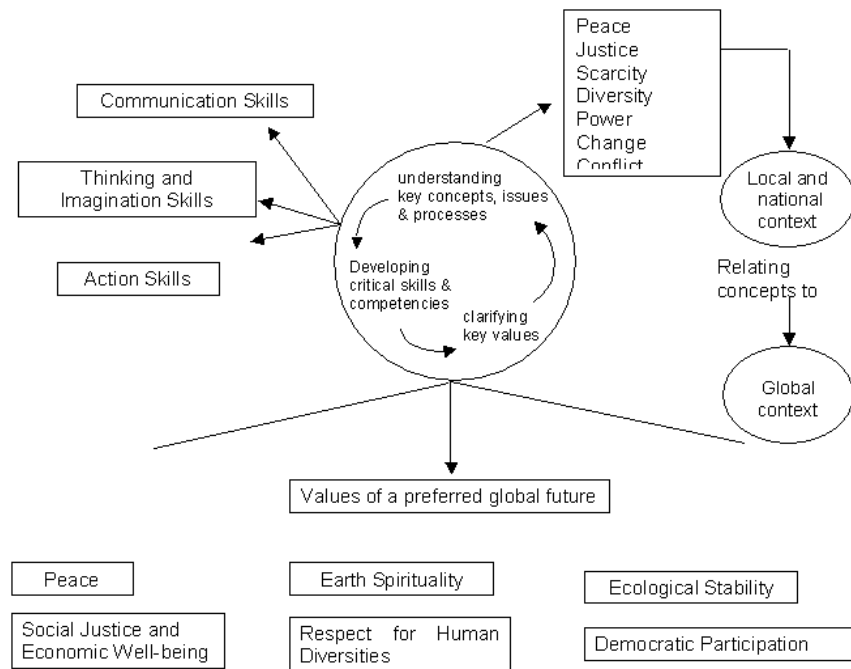


Figure 2
 EDUCATING FROM A GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE:
 AN OVERVIEW OF ESSENTIAL LEARNING

The components of *Makabayan* at the elementary level (grade 1 to 6) are the following:

- Grades 1 to 3. Social studies, consisting of civics and culture. Music, arts, and physical education are integrated into civics and culture.
- Grades 4 to 6
 - Social studies, consisting of geography, history and civics
 - Home economics and livelihood
 - Music, arts, and physical education
 - Good manners and right conduct are integrated into all learning areas.

The components of *Makabayan* at the secondary level (1st year to 4th year) are the following:

- Social studies
 - Philippine history and government (first year)
 - Asian studies (second year)
 - World history (third year)
 - Economics (fourth year)
- Technology and home economics and livelihood
- Music, arts and physical and health education
- Values education

Schools are allowed to design instruction for *Makabayan*. The subjects' overall objective is to develop self-reliant and patriotic citizens, conscious not only of their rights but also of their duties and responsibilities to the community, to the nation and to the world. Moreover, discussion on relating global issues and concerns to the national and local levels are given emphasis.

An illustrative example on educating for conviviality is to look at the content of second year high school social studies where Asian diversity in culture, religion, etc. is discussed and appreciated in order for people to live together in harmony.

Textbook Title: *Asian Civilization: History and Culture*

The book is divided into four units and 40 lessons. Each lesson focuses on one theme and several interrelated topics.

Unit I studies the concept of Asia, its geography and climate; its natural and human resources; the various ethnolinguistic groups; and current environmental concerns.

Unit II focuses on the ancient civilization of Asia and traces the biological and cultural evolution; the birth of civilizations; and the important events in the five geo-cultural

regions of Asia until the 16th century, with emphasis on the various Asian religions, cultures and societies.

Unit III's overall theme hinges on transitional and modern Asia. It explores Western imperialism; the birth of Asian nationalism; and the struggles of Asian women to claim their rights and improve their status in society.

Unit IV zeroes in on Asia in the contemporary period, as it examines the government and political system of selected Asian states; the society, cultures and religions of Asia in the face of global and regional changes; and the economies of Asia amidst an era of liberalization and globalization.

According to Ms. Thelma Cruz of the Curriculum Section of the Bureau of Secondary Education, the concepts and values of conviviality are best taught in Unit IV. The following is the DepEd listing of learning competencies expected for the unit:

- (1) Explain the major issues and concerns in the Philippines brought about by present political and socio-economic changes in Asia (e.g. terrorism, poverty, environmental degradation, human rights violation, population growth, etc.)
- (2) Analyze the continuous state of poverty and spread of epidemic diseases in Asia despite the high quality of scientific, technological and medical research
- (3) Analyze the participation of Asians in global trade, industrialization and globalization
- (4) Analyze the relationship between globalizing trends in economics, talents and culture and its effect on traditional and cultural identity
- (5) Explain the effect of population growth on the economic and social development of Asian Regions
- (6) Analyze the impact of urbanization on family, social life, economic relationship and ethnic identity
- (7) Analyze the reasons and effect of migration in the lives of Asians and outside of the region

- (8) Analyze the effect/relationship of transnational crimes in the social, political and economic status in Asia
- (9) Analyze the importance of the concepts of freedom, equality, justice and good citizenship in the lives of Asians
- (10) Justify/Evaluate the appropriateness of specific steps to solve religious and ethnic conflicts in Burma, Indonesia, Sri Lanka, etc.
- (11) Appreciate the role of ASEAN, APEC and other regional organizations in Asia's development
- (12) Promote regional interdependence and cooperation among Asians and identify issues and concerns that unite and divide Asian countries
- (13) Appreciate the unity in the midst of major cultural differences in the characteristics of Asians

The ideal teacher for the interactive curriculum of RBEC is not the authoritarian instructor, but the trustworthy facilitator or manager of the learning process. The teacher enables learners to become active constructors of knowledge and not passive recipients of information. He/She guides the students to develop multiple perspectives in analyzing historical events, controversial issues, or a story in the news. He/She provides opportunities for cross-cultural experiences. A holistic teaching-learning cycle, as the one suggested by Dr. Quisumbing (Figure 5), would be recommended.

V. Values Education in the Basic Education Curriculum

Implementation of the thrust educating for conviviality falls under the Values Education and Social Studies subject which is part of the learning area called MAKABAYAN. The other four major learning areas are: English, Filipino, Mathematics and Science. The new Revised Basic Education Curriculum (RBEC) was implemented in the public schools starting school year 2001-2002. Figure 3 shows the holistic dimension in educating the learner and Figure 4 shows the Core Values of the Philippine Values Education Program.

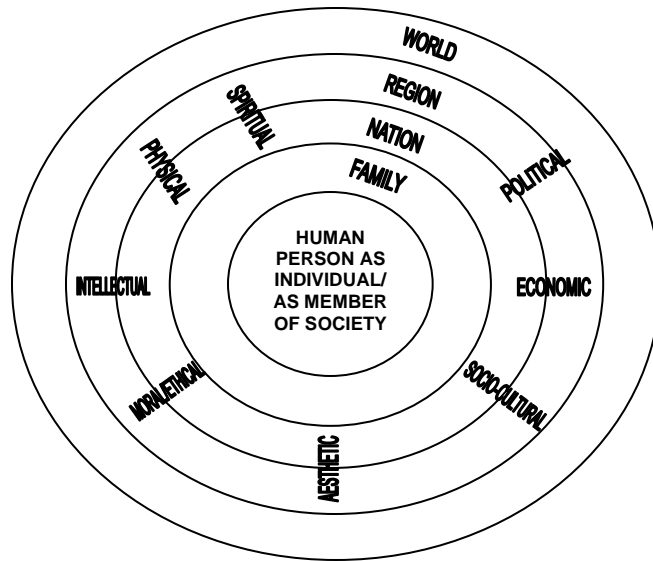


Figure 3
DIMENSIONS OF THE HUMAN PERSON AS INDIVIDUAL/
AS MEMBER OF SOCIETY

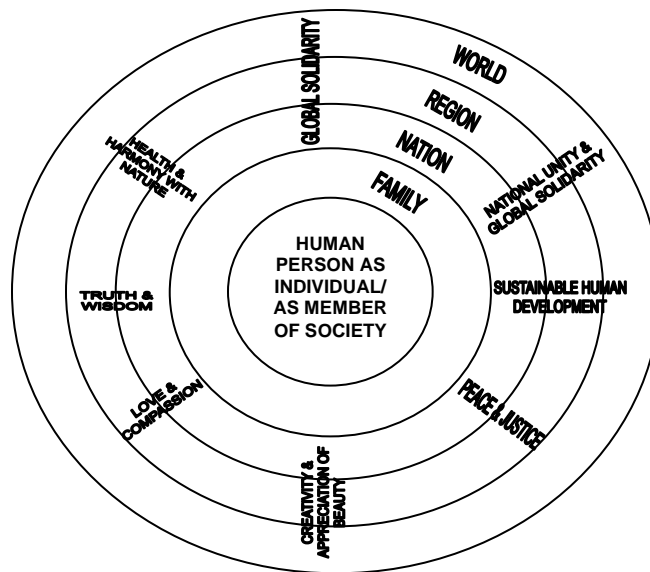
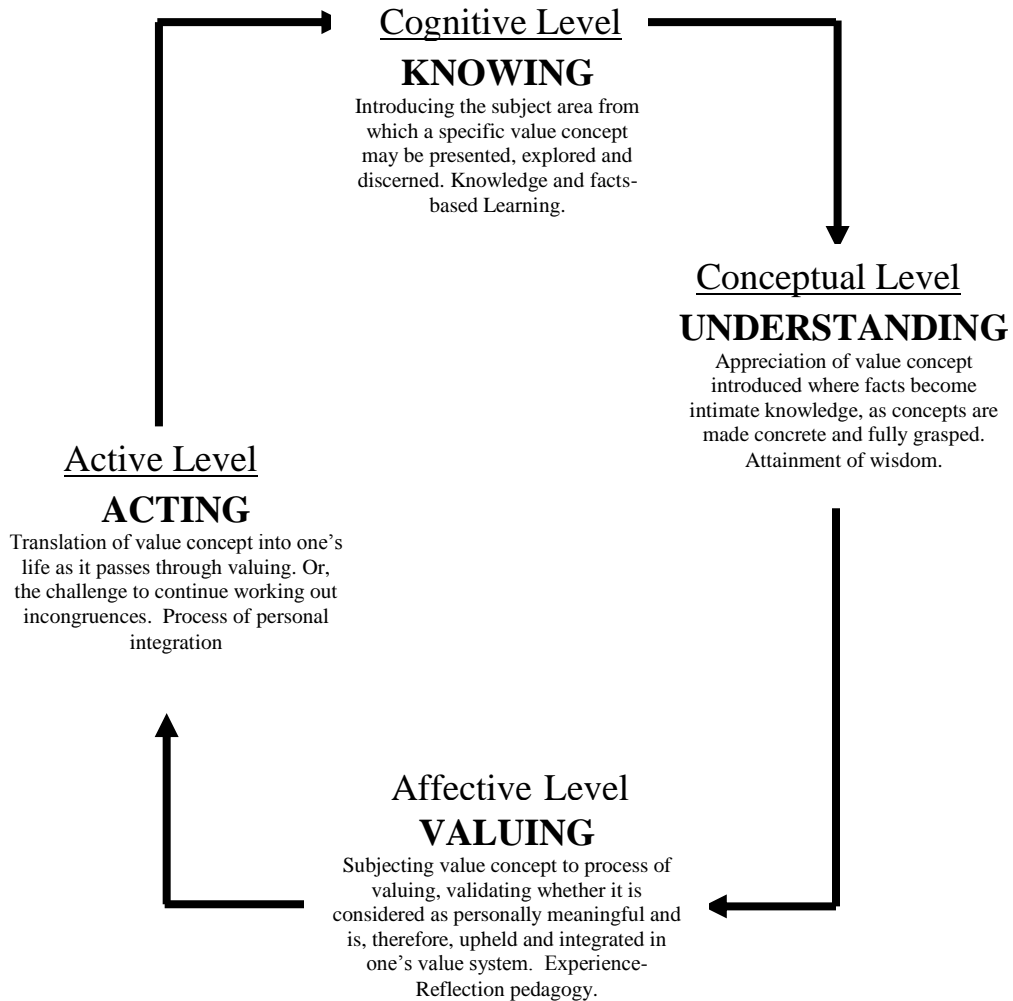


Figure 4
THE CORE VALUES

Figure 5
THE TEACHING AND LEARNING CYCLE
A MODEL FOR HOLISTIC AND INTEGRATED APPROACH
TO VALUES EDUCATION



Adapted from: L.R. Quisumbing, "A Framework for Teacher Education Programmes Towards International Understanding and a Culture of Peace." Presented in Kyongju, Korea on September, 1999.

An illustrative example of how educating for conviviality is integrated in the values education curriculum in the elementary and secondary level is shown below.

Under the political dimension of a human person for following are the objectives of the core value National and Global Unity. Education for International Understanding (EIU) is under Globalism.

DIMENSION	CORE AND RELATED VALUES	OBJECTIVES
	<p>Nationalism</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Love of Country • Heroism and Appreciation of Heroes • Appreciation of Cultural Heritage • Democracy • Freedom and Responsibility • Civic Consciousness and Active Participation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Show pride in the Filipino heritage • Demonstrate the behavior of a true Filipino who is nationalistic, patriotic and loyal to the nation • Show appreciation for the lives, struggles and heroic deeds of Filipino heroes and outstanding citizens • Show evidence of influence of heroes as role models • Show appreciation for and take pride in indigenous and contemporary Filipino arts and culture • Show understanding of the tenets/principles of a democratic society • Show an understanding of the basic freedoms and their corresponding responsibilities • Show loyalty in performing one's role, duties, and responsibilities as a Filipino citizen, i.e., paying taxes, obeying traffic rules and regulations, etc.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Committed Leadership • National Unity <p>Globalism</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • International Understanding and Solidarity • Interdependence • Appreciation of World Heritage • Cultural Freedom • Global Peace 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Perform one's responsibilities with dedication and integrity and inspire others to work hard and to reach their goals • Demonstrate loyalty, unity and pride in one's country regardless of diverse political and cultural beliefs, languages, religions, etc. • Show understanding that people of the world are in some ways dependent upon each other and must get along with each other • Realize the interdependence of humankind and all nations • Show appreciation of various cultural patterns and the contributions of other people to one's culture • Show respect for the right of a group of people to follow a way of life of its choice • Work harmoniously with others regardless of nationality and creed to achieve peace • Promote non-violence in resolving conflicts among nations • Show understanding of how global peace can be achieved through commitment to human rights, social justice and respect for cultural differences
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VI. Professional Empowerment of Teachers

Admittedly, teachers in the Philippines are overworked and underpaid. The minimum starting salary for a teacher is P9,500.00/month (US\$183), while a domestic helper in Hong Kong earns three times more. Recently, there is an exodus of

highly qualified teachers going to the United States. Despite the low compensation package and multiple tasks given to teachers, there are many dedicated public school teachers who, given the proper motivation and incentives, are open to change and are willing to try-out new and creative approaches and strategies in teaching. The Department of Education (DepEd), the Fund for Assistance to Private Education (FAPE), and many private foundations, corporations and companies have now taken the task of helping uplift the quality of education as part of their social and corporate responsibility. The continuing professional development of teachers is a good investment to assure quality education in the future.

For Social Studies and Values Education teachers to teach effectively the *Makabayan* subjects in both the elementary and secondary levels pre-service and in-service training of teachers on the emerging new curricular imperatives were undertaken. Before integrated and multidisciplinary approaches are tried out to teach the concepts, skills and values inherent in teaching the concepts, skills and values in educating for conviviality familiarity with the following new content areas/disciplines:

- ❖ *Global Education* – involves learning about those problems and issues which cut across national boundaries and deal with the interconnected systems – cultural, ecological, economic, political and technological.
- ❖ *Peace Education* – affirms personal and global responsibilities for the promotion of peace, cooperation, disarmament, justice, non-violent resolution of conflict, respect of human rights and environmental care.
- ❖ *Multicultural Education* – emphasizes oneself and others through the exploration of concepts of cultural diversity, similarities, prejudices and cultural understanding. Developing tolerance is a key value in learning to live together in harmony.

- ❖ *Human Rights Education* – promotes understanding of human rights concepts and values to enable learners to comprehend and transform conditions which give rise to human rights violations and exalts dignity and worth of the human person.
- ❖ *Development Education* – strives for quality of economic, social and political development in all countries; fairness in relationship between and within countries; equitable and meaningful linkages between developed and developing countries.
- ❖ *Population Education* – relates population growth, distribution and immigration patterns to issues of food, housing, transport and delivery of basic resources, sees the interconnection in the environment and development.
- ❖ *Civic/Citizenship Education* – focuses on the study of the basic concepts, beliefs and values underlying our democratic political community and constitutional order – draws its content chiefly from four disciplines: political science, jurisprudence, history and economics.
- ❖ *Environmental Education* – rethinks human-earth relationships, fosters a vision of education for sustainable development, promotes care for the environment and builds a global culture of ecological responsibility.
- ❖ *Gender Studies* – promotes gender equality and harnessing the role of women in development.
- ❖ *Future Studies* – anticipates the future to cope with its challenges and to imagine *possible* and *probable* futures. Students are encouraged to envision a *preferred future* that will help shape their present action.

Since the 1980s several professional organizations with individual and institutional networks here and abroad have

conducted professional training for teachers notably the following:

- a. Philippine Council for Peace and Global Education (PCPGE)
- b. UNESCO Associated Schools Project Network (ASPnet)
- c. World Council for Curriculum and Instruction (WCCI) Philippine Chapter
- d. UNESCO APNIEVE (Asia Pacific Network for International Education and Values Education)
- e. Peace Education Network (PEN)

VII. Innovative and Creative Practices in Educating for Conviviality

Selected institutions affiliated with the UNESCO Associated Schools Project Network program practice innovative and creative strategies. Some of the strategies in mobilizing teachers and students to promote educating for conviviality include: (1) Celebration of International Days; (2) Faculty and Student Exchange; (3) Youth Camps; (4) UNESCO Mondialogo (Cross-Cultural Dialogue Through the Internet via School-Twinning); (5) Network with Government Agencies and Non-governmental Organizations (NGO's). (See Appendix A for a model ASP school cited by UNESCO).

Concluding Remarks

Amid the crisis of the present state of basic education in the Philippines, the DepEd prioritizes to solve the problem of access and to bring back quality in basic education, but funding is needed to respond to the educational needs of the growing school population especially in the public schools. While emphasis is on mastery learning through the use of English on the three basic subjects: English, Mathematics and Science to

produce graduates who are globally competitive, many pioneering educators and classroom teachers are willing to try-out innovative and creative strategies to teach peace, human rights, democracy, sustainable development and international understanding. The presence of centers of innovations especially among the public schools “School of the Future Program” and the laboratory schools of selected teacher education institutions carry out this goal in particular.

Many institutions affiliated with UNESCO-ASPnet have integrated the humanistic, ethical, international and intercultural dimensions of education in their programs and projects. Similarly, several professional organizations and networks have over the past decades produced materials and trained teachers along the thrust of educating for conviviality. Still much remains to be done to have these efforts institutionalized through policies and directives in the DepEd Central Office. Future-oriented educators, however, take comfort in the statement given by our national hero Dr. Jose Rizal, the first global Filipino who thought aloud in his novel, **Noli Me Tangere** (1887), *“The school is the foundation of society; the school is the book where the future of nations is written. Show us the school of a people and we shall tell you what kind of a people that is.”*

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