

# Faculty and Student Teachers 'Voices' in Developing a Multicultural Teacher Education Curriculum Using a Collaborative- Participatory Approach

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**Abstract** The innovative process of curriculum development reported in this paper entailed reversing the usual approach, from top down to bottom up; an approach consistent with decentralisation initiatives and programs presently being implemented in Philippine education particularly the localisation and indigenisation of curricular programmes. Important curriculum developers such as faculty and student teachers were actively involved in the successful creation of a multicultural teacher education curriculum through a collaborative participatory process. Multicultural content, pedagogy and assessment strategies were identified for infusion in the three components of the teacher education programme. The indigenous student teachers contributed much to the multicultural content. Faculty members contributed to the content, pedagogy and assessment. The administrators contributed to curriculum decisions for policy making and took other non-traditional roles.

**Keywords:** collaborative-participatory approach; multicultural curriculum; teacher education

## **Introduction**

The purpose of the larger study on which this paper on stakeholders' voices draws, was to introduce an innovative approach to how curriculum is developed in teacher education programmes in the Philippines. Using a collaborative participatory approach, the aim of the curriculum development process was to reverse the prevailing top-down model of curriculum making to a bottom-up approach that would directly involve and give 'voice' to faculty and student teachers in the development of the multicultural teacher education curriculum.

### **Giving Voices to Faculty and Student Teachers as Curriculum Stakeholders**

In the review of relevant curriculum development literature (Henson, 2006; Kelly, 2009; McNeil, 2006; Oliva, 2009; Wiles, 2009; Wiles & Bondi, 2007) it was noted that stakeholders' voices should be a significant part of the curriculum planning process. Stakeholders' voices in making curriculum decisions helped to achieve the desired curriculum outcomes. However, in actual practice, more often than not, it is the dominant administrators' voice that feeds the important decisions to every curriculum in higher education. This reality is shared across different countries where a top-down approach in curriculum making has always been a practice for educational institutions (Kelly, 2009). However, in the real sense of how the curriculum in school actually works, it would be the faculty and student teachers who should have the stronger voice being the implementers, and end users respectively of the curriculum. It was one aim of this research to give more emphasis to the voices of the faculty and student teachers in curriculum development without disregarding the significant contribution of the administrators in the process.

Providing opportunities for faculty to get directly involved in curriculum decision-making does not always

happen. In the Philippine context, selected faculty involvement usually comes from the main universities in the Philippines but rarely involves teachers in the local campuses. However, for faculty members to implement a curriculum effectively at the classroom level they must be committed to it. One way of getting their commitment is to become part of the curriculum development process. Despite strong literature recognising ‘teacher as leader’ (Fullan, Bennet & Rolheiser-Bennet, 1990; Goodlad Soder & Sirotnik, 1990; Darling-Hammond, 1999 in Wiles, 2007), support for teachers as curriculum makers has been minimal. Research has consistently shown that when teachers believe they have influence over instructional decisions they consider significant, they try to show their ability to implement those decisions and harvest positive outcomes from them (Henson, 2006; Oliva, 2005; Wiles, 2007).

Student teachers are direct recipients and future implementers of the school curriculum at the classroom level in their local schools. In reality, they are participating both directly and indirectly in the curriculum process. However, generally their participation is mostly limited to answering survey questionnaires. According to Haas (2010, p. 276), students are the ‘major untapped resources’ in curriculum planning. In the case of the Philippines, student teachers’ direct participation in curriculum development has not previously occurred. In this study, student teachers were given a pro-active role. As Wood (Oliva, 2005, p. 92) stated ‘a curriculum for democratic empowerment engages students in choices about the control over the most central element of their school experience – the curriculum itself’.

### **The Need for a Multicultural Curriculum in the Philippines Teacher Education Programme**

No teacher education institution in the Philippines offers a programme on multicultural education. The Department of Education, which is taking care of the Basic Education

curriculum in the country, seems to give it an importance by including the education of the indigenous peoples as part of the objectives of the Basic Education program. However, its implementation has not been given a place in the set-up of the curriculum. There are isolated efforts or projects for the education of multicultural groups like the indigenous peoples. Most of these projects are funded by international agencies such as the Australian Agency for International Education (AusAID), which funded the BEAM (Basic Education Assistance for Mindanao) project. In spite of this, the problem lies in the sustainability of the project when the funding agency finished the contract and the project has not been institutionalised in the Philippine educational programmes and structures.

The Philippine Normal University takes its leadership role as the national centre for teacher education in the Philippines. Creating a multicultural curriculum as a product of research will be a significant move for strengthening the teacher education programme in the Philippines. The Philippine Normal University offers curricular programs in response to market needs. It considers also the curriculum reforms made by the Department of Education in the Basic Education Curriculum. The realisation of the mission of any teacher education institution like the Philippine Normal University depends on the quality of the curricular programmes. The desired attributes of the expected graduates as the pivot for organising the curriculum often remains in the conceptual realm, if the institution does not translate this to actual product, processes or operations (De Guzman, 2006). Thus, creating a multicultural curriculum programme would be opportune in the process of intensifying the new teacher education curriculum. The need for creating a multicultural curriculum stems from the assumption that the role of the university is to educate as well as to address the needs of its local community.

Education is not only the transfer of knowledge or information, but also the major agent for transforming culture

(Taba, 1962). In other words, education is the preserver and transmitter of cultural heritage. The content and process of what is taught reflect the cultural orientations of the socializing agent. From Dewey's notion of education, (Dewey, 1938; Taba, 1962) the role of the school is not only to shape individuals but to shape culture as well. Therefore, education has an important role as an agent for social reconstruction. In the case of teacher education in the Philippines, specifically the Philippine Normal University Agusan campus now renamed as PNU Mindanao which enrolls ethnic students and caters to indigenous communities, education can take its role of educating people to respect cultural diversity for different ethnic groups (Jocano, 1998). The respect for cultural diversity is protected by the provisions in the Philippine constitution, which recognizes and promotes the rights of indigenous cultural communities within the framework of national unity and development (Art. IX, Sec.2 (4)).

There are many different ethnic groups in the Philippines that should be given attention in the educational system. They are dispersed in the 7,107 islands in the Philippines located in the different provinces and regions of the three main islands: Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao. They speak diverse vernacular languages. Filipinos are multilingual. Filipino and English are considered the official languages. There are eight major languages and 76 indigenous languages in the Philippines (Jocano, 1998). In a previous study, it was noted that the indigenous language, such as the Manobo, is disappearing because the students who are assimilated in the mainstream do not anymore use their local language (Reyes, 2004). Language is a vehicle of culture. If the language dies, culture dies with it. Thus, the importance of a multicultural curriculum would also be a response to this problem. Lynch (1986) attested to this in saying that the task of multicultural education is for the students to achieve a higher stage of ethnic and cultural existence through liberating curricular and educational pedagogies. Consequently,

the role of the teacher is to enable the students to attain a higher stage of cultural competence and sensitivity so that the positive value of cultural diversity may grow.

Literature suggests that multicultural education is not only intended for schools with ethnic minority groups and it is not aimed at educating teachers to work exclusively with ethnic minority students (Rodriguez, 1984). It is equally beneficial to mainstream students and prospective teachers (Banks, 2008; Nieto, 2004). The construction of multicultural education in the curriculum depends on the nature and needs of the society which it serves. For example, US, Canada, Australia and UK share the same experiences of constructing multicultural education in the curriculum as a response to the influx of migration in these countries making the society and schools multicultural (Banks, 2004; Gay, 1997; 2004; James, 2001; Lei & Grant, 2001). Special attention is given to the disparity between the students with different colour in the schools and the teachers whose professional education is mono-cultural. Thus, contemporary advocates of multicultural education, (e.g. Banks, 2004; Gay, 2004; Grant & Sleeter, 2005; Nieto 2004), initiated a reform movement in education to restructure schools, colleges and universities so that all students will have an equal opportunity to acquire the knowledge and skills so that they can function in an ethnically diverse nation and world. Institutionalization of multicultural education programmes has become increasingly popular in the design of curriculum, special projects, and programmes. For instance, Banks (2005) proposed different dimensions of multicultural education to serve as a guide to school reforms when practising educators try to implement multicultural education. These dimensions (Banks, 2005; p.23) are 1) content integration, which deals with the content and examples that teachers can use to illustrate key concepts of the subject matter; 2) knowledge construction process which describes the extent to which teachers help students understand, investigate and determine how the implicit cultural assumptions,

frame of reference, perspectives and biases within a discipline influence the ways in which knowledge is constructed; 3) prejudice reduction, which focuses on the characteristics of students' racial attitudes and how they can be modified by teaching methods and materials; 4) an equity pedagogy when teachers modify their teaching in ways that will facilitate the academic achievement of students from diverse, racial, cultural, gender and social class groups; and 5) an empowering school culture that focuses on grouping and practices that support participation, disproportionality in achievement, and the interaction of the teachers and students across ethnic and racial lines. The promotion of multicultural education as a field of study depends on the needs of the country's educational system and its implementation in varying dimensions.

In the teacher education sector, as the world is becoming more globalised, there is a growing expectation that pre-service teachers become competently prepared to handle diverse types of students, embracing multiculturalism, universal standards and literacy in global issues and concerns. Teachers in the Philippines are one of the four types of professionals, other than engineers, nurses and computer professionals, who joined other Filipinos working abroad in different locations in the US, Oceania, Middle East, Asia and Africa on temporary migration (Albuero, 2002). Many teachers in the Philippines were recruited to teach abroad. Common problems encountered are related to teaching students with diverse backgrounds. Stories from teachers overseas would perceive students to be naughty, bullying teachers, especially if they come from a different colour (personal communication). They would experience more difficulty if they do not have the multicultural perspective in teaching these diverse types of students in other countries. Although the creation of multicultural education in the teacher education curriculum in this research assumes to serve the needs of the local communities in the Philippines,

it may also be relevant to those pre-service teachers who may opt to work outside the country. The challenge is for the pre-service teachers to be empowered by the multicultural curriculum to be able to understand the cultural, ethnic, racial and language diversity that exist in their own community and the world at large. According to Banks (2008), alienation from community cultures and mainstream society results in marginalisation.

In the Philippine setting, the model that guides curriculum development usually uses the top-down approach. More often than not, school administrators are the key people involved in curriculum decisions. The Central government ‘taps the heads’ of the universities to become committee members in curriculum revisions or crafting new programmes. However, the proposition guiding this study was that curriculum outcomes could be achieved when the curriculum has been contextualized to the needs of its beneficiaries. The development of the curriculum should involve all the stakeholders, including the teachers, and students (Henson, 2006; Kelly, 2009; McNeil, 2006; Oliva, 2009; Wiles, 2009).

### **Research Aim and Question**

This research aimed to explore a collaborative participatory process in the development of a multicultural curriculum that would be suitable to its local context. The main feature of the collaborative participatory process was to directly involve faculty and student teachers alongside the administrators in curriculum decision making to give them ‘voice’ and a sense of empowerment. This paper will address the question: What are the significant contributions of the stakeholders particularly faculty and student teachers which give them ‘voice’ in achieving the desired multicultural curriculum outcome?



## **Principles of Collaborative-Participatory Approach**

The curriculum development process was guided by the following collaborative participatory action research (CPAR) principles:

**Collaborative** – Collaborative research encourages the commitment and dedication of the target participants to achieve the common goal, i.e. to create a multicultural curriculum for the social improvement of the local community. All efforts for the development of the multicultural curriculum are geared towards that vision (Gaventa, 2001; Kemmis & McTaggart, 2003; Reason & Bradbury, 2001; Stringer 2004).

**Participatory** – Participatory research involves the full and active participation of the local university campus (teachers, students, administrators) in the entire research process as curriculum developers and learners as well. In curriculum planning and implementation those who are affected by curriculum changes must be involved in the process (Oliva, 2005). The teachers, students, and administrators are normally the people who are directly affected (Creswell, 2005). Thus, the exploration of the collaborative-participatory approach in curriculum development identified three groups of participants that needed to be represented on the curriculum team.

**Action-Oriented** – Action-oriented research requires that members of the team put their institutional vision into practice, such as the practice or advocacy for multicultural education in the classroom and the implementation of the multicultural curriculum in the whole school system. In this study, it is part of the institutional vision of PNU Mindanao campus to cater to the multicultural needs of the students in the local community particularly the marginalised (indigenous)

group of people. In order to translate this vision into practice, the pre-service teachers should acquire the necessary multicultural perspectives they need for teaching students in the local schools. A concrete action to do this is to infuse multicultural education in the teacher education curriculum.

**Empowering** – CPAR processes can create a greater awareness among the participants involved of their own problems and conditions and mobilise them to make their own initiatives for their own local community development (Kemmis & McTaggart, 2003). The strong involvement of participants (teachers, students, administrators) in the curriculum decision-making process may lead to the successful creation of the desired curriculum outcomes.

CPAR emphasises the processes and meanings that are examined in the natural setting as experienced and created by participants. In this way, the participants in their local setting such as an educational institution design and implement the project in order to make recommendations for a change in practice.

### **Participants**

Three groups of participants were selected through purposive sampling in this research to form a curriculum development team. Four PNU Mindanao school administrators (Academic Director, Heads of Education, Arts and Sciences and Languages and Linguistics Departments) were selected to represent the administrators group. Five experienced faculty members (four from the Education Department and one from Social Sciences) were selected to represent the faculty group. Four student teachers (one indigenous and three with knowledge of indigenous communities) were selected to represent the student teachers group.

The curriculum development team originally comprised 14 members. However, at some stage of curriculum development one faculty member and one student teacher withdrew due to inability to attend all the meetings. Finally, it was a 12-person team that collaboratively initiated the bottom-up (Taba, 1962; Wiles & Bondi, 2007) approach of curriculum development at the Philippine Normal University Mindanao campus.

### **Sources of Data**

Curriculum meetings were the primary source of data. The team members participated in ten (10) such sessions over the five months of the curriculum making process. Meetings of between three to four hours were combined in some stages with focus groups and workshops to achieve the multicultural curriculum outcome. The researcher in consultation with the Academic Director drafted the initial timetable of the meetings. It was provided to the curriculum team as a working plan during the first meeting. The team members suggested revision in terms of content/topic and time schedules. Further changes to meetings occurred following the outputs of the preceding meeting.

Curriculum meetings were audio and videotaped with consent of participants. Two additional members of staff served as process observers; one to undertake the videotaping and the other to record meeting notes. Another member of staff served as a local language translator and transcriber. The process observers' meeting notes were supplemented with researcher's memos to keep track of the development of the process as well as the curriculum content.

Other sources of data were the focused interviews that were conducted after the curriculum development process. Three students, three administrators and four teachers were interviewed. They were the participants who attended all the curriculum meetings. The following areas were covered in the

interview with questions slightly modified to suit their position as an administrator, faculty or student teacher: Personal, professional background and organisational culture, thoughts and feelings about the curriculum development experience and the collaborative participatory process, including benefits and difficulties as a team member.

Individual interviews were conducted in English although interviewees were able to express their views using Filipino (national language) and Cebuano (dialect) when it related to their personal background. Interviews were audio taped and later transcribed with the help of the local faculty translator. Interviews usually lasted for an hour.

### **Data Analysis**

NVivo qualitative data analysis software (qsrinternational.com) was used to code the transcribed texts gathered from the curriculum meetings, and individual interviews. Grounded theory (Charmaz, 2006; Corbin & Strauss, 2008) procedures were applied to the analysis of data which proceeded according to stages of open, axial and selective coding. Each curriculum meeting transcript was first coded. Axial coding was employed by way of conceptual mapping of the concepts and categories. Each conceptual map was used as a mini-framework to guide further analysis. Selective coding for each conceptual map was aided by writing the analytic memo for interpreting the data. Results of these analyses led to the building up of themes, sub-themes and several indicators of these themes. Participants' empowerment as a result of being given 'voice' through the collaborative participatory process emerged from the analysis as a particularly strong theme. It is the 'voice' of curriculum stakeholders which will be discussed in the next section.

## **Results and Discussion**

### **Administrators' Voice**

The administrators' voice in the curriculum development is obviously an indicator of individual empowerment by virtue of their legitimate power and position being administrators of a certain university. Given the designation in the organisational structure of a university system, for example, as an academic director in the Agusan campus, this administrator usually takes the leadership role of crafting the curriculum for the local campus. She is supposed to take the responsibility to coordinate and move teacher subordinates as a collective body. In a hierarchical and bureaucratic system of education in the local campuses of a university, it was the academic director who led the way for the feasibility of revisiting their curriculum and making a revision in order to accommodate the needs of the local communities.

It was the leadership effort of the academic director to recommend people to compose the curriculum development team and it was also her coordination to find a way by which the curriculum team could regularly meet. I noticed during the first few meetings that the curriculum team members were attending only because the academic director requested them to do so. Initially, I did not have the authoritative influence as a researcher for the administrator and faculty participants to follow me. I would say that the visionary leadership of the academic director was an official instrument for the members of the curriculum team who decided to be part of the collaborative project.

The exposure, training and experience in the field inside and outside the local campus are important sources of the administrators' voice to curriculum planning and development. It enhances their individual capability to share information, to exercise professional judgment about the content and

pedagogy, as well as assessment of the curriculum. In most of the curriculum meetings where the content and technical knowledge, such as policy making, is the much-needed input, it was the administrator who did the greater and final share of decision-making. Analysing the proceedings of the curriculum meetings revealed that the administrator contributed most in terms of sharing ideas and information throughout the process of curriculum development. One valuable response taken from curriculum meeting transcripts is cited below to indicate the empowerment of the administrator to decide over the academic matters of curriculum planning. This was part of the discussion regarding the critiquing of topic for inclusion and exclusion in the proposed syllabus with multicultural infusion:

*I would like to ask about the infusion of the topic letter C regarding parent-teacher in students' learning. Because it's already part of curriculum development, there is a separate topic for that, yes, I think that can also be found in the models of curriculum development, parent-teacher involvement in students' learning, yes, so, I don't think we have to include that, it's already a part of the existing syllabus. (Excerpt from CDM 6)*

*Yes, I agree with Prof. X in the sense that there is no separate course for BEE (Bachelor of Elementary Education) as regards preparation and evaluation of instructional materials so there's no other course where you are going to have this topic except for PED [Professional Education] 4 which is educational technology. (Excerpt from CDM 6)*

Aside from the voice of the administrators in terms of mastery of content and professional experience as policy makers, the administrators acted out their role as mediators specifically when there were clashes of opinions in curriculum making. In one of the curriculum meetings, it was the administrator who took the mediating role when emotional

tensions were building up amongst the participants. No one had the courage to mediate except for the administrator with a higher position in the campus. The realisation of this mediating role for an administrator that was triggered by the incident was encapsulated during the interview:

*Even if we have clashes in opinions and ideas, I still believe that our colleagues are knowledgeable about diplomacy, what to do under these difficult circumstances because it has never happened in my experience in the meetings because of clashes of opinions. I think the administrator really should have a hand when things like this occur. So that even if there are clashes of opinions there should be somebody who is going to mediate, who is going to let them feel that something should be done. And resolve the issue rather than left the issue hanging. It is what we did during our session. When we get out of the session room, we did not have any question unanswered. Even if we have questions during discussions, but with the proper way of dealing these things, we were able to go out of the session room with no questions left unanswered. I mean, that is speaking for me. (A3, Interview)*

Apart from the mediating role of the administrators, they also contributed to facilitation. Although every member of the curriculum team was given an equal opportunity to facilitate a meeting, all the administrators accepted the opportunity to facilitate. It was an administrator who served as a facilitator at the presentation of the multicultural curriculum to the general faculty, nominated by the team members for this task.

### **Faculty Voice**

The faculty voice in terms of decision-making was clearly evident as an important aspect of the curriculum development process. Empowerment is integral in the decision

making process (Lieberman, 1989). This study shows that when curriculum decisions are made at the local level involving the faculty in the university and the teachers from the field, they can become more empowered. According to one faculty participant (T1), the teachers should be at the 'front line' in designing the curriculum. Since they will be the ones to utilise and implement it then they should be given the primary decision making role in the curriculum content, pedagogy and assessment. Feedback from the faculty members confirmed that they were not previously involved in designing the curriculum. This collaborative project gave them a real experience of being heard in making curriculum decisions through their involvement in the collaborative process. This is emphasised by one faculty member:

*It made me realize that there are things in my life as a teacher that for me it was very impossible to accomplish. But then with this activity it has happened unexpectedly, just like making multicultural education as part of the curriculum. I don't know what to do. I am happy with the accomplishment, with this experience.*  
(T3, Interview)

The expression of sense of accomplishment as a curriculum team member formed a 'ripple effect' (Atweh, 2007) to the prospective teachers, in-service teachers and faculty members in higher learning who are teaching outside the PNU Mindanao campus when the Agusan faculty would be invited as guest lecturers. This is a very strong indication of the empowered voice of the faculty as a result of an unexpected experience. These thoughts were further revealed by one faculty member:

*From time to time some faculty members from the university are invited as lecturers so if they are given freedom to present topics, they can always fall back on this new idea and in a sense enlightening other*



*members of the teaching profession to give attention to these people who are members of our society who had probably been left out in terms of the culture that they have. (T3, Interview)*

The faculty members' confidence through being heard could be gleaned from their expertise in the areas of specialisation and pedagogy. All the faculty participants contributed and shared ideas and opinions when the topic was concerned about the content of their discipline. Faculty members also shared when it came to the pedagogy where they could contribute according to the specific courses they teach:

*There is a certain topic studying the culture of the specific ethnic groups in the local community. So, for example, culture...ahh...of course, we are going to have first the history of the **Manobo**. After the history, then culture. The culture that is really specific to the **Manobo**. The question is, "Is it only the **Manobos** who reside in Prosperidad? (T1, Excerpt from CDM 4)*

Faculty participants also did a lot of sharing when it came to pedagogy or other technical courses where they could contribute according to the specific courses that they teach:

*I would like to suggest before we go to the details of infusion, can the group suggest also models as to how to infuse? We are now in the details of competencies but we do not have something like models for infusion. What are we going to follow? What model? I mean, how are we going to infuse multicultural content? Can we create models first? (T1, Excerpt from CDM4)*

The competencies of faculty in the course content and pedagogy are associated with their professional experiences outside the local campus. As a matter of fact, the faculty members who did most of the sharing of ideas were those who had exposure to some training, and conferences outside

the local campus. These faculty members were also selected to represent the local campus at meetings in the main campus. Their professional background also indicates that they were achievers in their area of specialisation.

The competency of the faculty to make teaching materials such as modules to teach a specific course gave them voice to curriculum making. The development of their teaching materials also made the faculty participants feel empowered. As one faculty member emphatically put it during the workshop on syllabus making:

*For me, it's still necessary Ma'am because in Professional Education, there are areas which are very important. For example, developing and using instructional materials is a very important topic in curriculum development. (T1, Excerpt from CDM6)*

Another faculty also had a similar experience of having the feeling of empowerment in terms of material making related to multiculturalism that she introduced to her students in research. This is in fact one measure of empowerment that she expressed during the interview:

*....so the time of empowerment that I felt is when we enjoyed working with trying to give a sort of spotlight with one of the cultures of Filipinos. So when my students and I were looking for topics in research, I told them, we can do material making. I introduced or enlightened them about multiculturalism so they are also convinced of the importance of giving equal recognition of their co-tribe and they got excited with having identified or having familiarised themselves with inputs or inventions of other cultures. (T3, Interview)*

The ability to give critical comments during discussions on curriculum content is also indicative of teachers' voice in curriculum making. For instance, the comments and reactions

provided by the faculty in the discussion about curriculum standards, syllabus making, and pedagogy were relevant inputs to the successful achievement of a multicultural curriculum. Faculty members demonstrated empowerment through their direct, critical verbal comments even in the presence of all the team members, exemplified by one faculty member who showed courage in sharing course content and asserting personal beliefs during the small group workshops. This result could be attested by Haas (2010) who cited the important role of teachers to stand for what they believe and be able to present recommendations for curriculum improvement.

Hearing a previously ‘silent’ faculty voice was noted by the administrators. Her voice figuratively was not “too loud” to be heard by the members of the team because she rarely verbalised her ideas with confidence. The opportunity given to her to be part of this collaborative project made her ‘stick her neck out’ in order to contribute something to the group. She felt shy sitting there as a team member without contributing something to the team. She gained a little confidence towards the end of the curriculum process when she made a point to share and fight for her ideas in her small group. When she was able to do it, she contributed further by deciding to change a part of the syllabus outside the small group session. She felt elated when her ideas during the syllabus making were accepted as part of the syllabus output of her group. She narrated her experience during the interview:

*In our group, Ma’am (T3), she likes to dominate her ideas. If you give questions, she gets angry. But one time, I told her, Maám wait, it should be like this, I will explain to her. Maybe this is what we should use. She said, ok, ok, thanks (laughing), she accepted my suggestion. It only happened that she accepted because it’s Economics, and that is my area of specialisation. (T4, Interview translated)*

As a whole, the faculty voice in the curriculum could be summed up in their competency and expertise in the area of specialisation, pedagogy and assessment that gave them confidence and contributed to the successful creation of a multicultural curriculum. Current studies in US could support this study giving importance to the preparation of teachers' in having expertise on multicultural content and pedagogies to foster multicultural awareness in response to the growing cultural and linguistic diversity in US schools (Assaf, 2010; Yuan, 2018). A similar study by (Hahl, 2016) in Finland pointed out the importance of teacher educators having provided with content of interculturality to guide the student teachers in reflecting on theirs. Giving the faculty members a voice to curriculum decisions such as expressing their critical reactions further enhanced their competence and skills and provided an opportunity for the previously less involved to be heard and experience empowerment through the CPAR process.

### **Student Teachers Voice**

Student teachers should be given an opportunity to be heard in curriculum development. This innovation was explored in the collaborative participatory process of curriculum development. The students are the end users of the curriculum so they should really be involved in curricular decisions that will affect them; in this context, curriculum issues that would affect them as future teachers. More importantly, the curriculum should be tailored to fit their needs and the needs of the community that they will serve when they teach the children in the local communities. The results of this research show positive outcomes in terms of student teachers' involvement. Although there were limitations to the extent of their participation, nonetheless, the student teachers' participation contributed in significant ways to the collaborative curriculum process.

In common with the faculty, the student teachers shared more about the curriculum content than the technical knowledge of the courses. They also contributed ideas particularly related to their experiences from their local community culture. They were observed (in video recording) to be more confident when talking about their beliefs, values and rituals. The indigenous student teacher was the most active, especially talking about her beliefs and rituals in her community. She held beliefs and had experienced rituals she shared with the team which contributed to the assessment of local community needs and the infusion of multicultural content in selected courses:

*Yes, when my grandma gets sick, she told me, The diwatas are angry with me because I do not give what they want. We will make offer to the diwatas such as killing pig, white hen, or white rooster...like that. (S2, Excerpt from CDM2, translated)*

*...because that **buya** system could not be abolished as a tradition to preserve the culture of the **Manobos**. **Buya** System is a marriage practice where the parents of both parties arrange the marriage of their children. A minor or a woman as young as 11 or 12 years of age can marry as approved by the parents. Marriage can be tribal, civil, or church wedding. Church marriage is to be officiated by a priest or pastor. Civil can be done through a licensed datu [tribe chieftain], meaning, authorised by the Supreme to conduct the wedding ceremony. Tribal marriage is also through a datu. It is a very lengthy ceremony with the purpose of developing several values like patience, understanding, cooperation, respect, and loyalty. (S2, Excerpt from CDM5, translated)*

Similarly, the other student teachers shared their views on personally experienced events in their own

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local community. For instance, they talked about family clannishness, celebration of festivals or fiestas in their *barangays*, [smallest unit of community or political organisation in the Philippines] or indigenous issues such as land grabbing and family feuds.

*I can cite some examples, ma'am. Ahm...in our community, there is a land grabbing because... ahm...the **dumuduong** [settlers] of that place will exchange the land with just one bottle of Kulafu or Tanduy [beer]. (S2, Excerpt from CDM2, translated)*

*In addition to what Ma'am (T4) said, it is really true in our barangay that **Manobos** are fond of asking for food because I observed that whenever there is a fiesta, [feast in celebration of patron or saint] they always go there and they are fond of bringing food from the fiesta to their house or 'bring house'. (S4, Excerpt from CDM2, translated)*

***Manobos**...ahh...the natives are fond of asking something. This is very true in our community also but as what I've observed, though it's negative, but they are very family-oriented. (S3, Excerpt from CDM2)*

This sharing of experiences from their local culture and the local community provided useful feedback for the faculty and administrators in thinking about the curriculum content. In fact, the faculty and administrators during the interviews appreciated the involvement of the student teachers because they validated the perceptions of the faculty members and administrators towards the indigenous peoples. The student teachers' experiences confirmed the right perspectives and corrected misconceptions especially for the faculty members who had not experienced mingling with the indigenous groups. The articulation of voices of

student teachers about their views and concerns were worthy of consideration. One administrator commented:

*Even the students have a part in expressing themselves about the content and example of the activity. (A1, Interview)*

Another faculty participant commented on the participation of the student teachers. This empowered faculty member was observed to work well independently and yet appreciated even the contribution of the student participants in the curriculum team. She verbalised this insightful learning from the process during the interview:

*... And then they took initiative in interpreting instructions given to them and then the others also even the student members stood up and express their opinion or become a part of the whole process since they got involved. (T3, Interview)*

The appreciation of the faculty as well as the administrators about student teachers' views supported the need to make students' involvement a significant part of the curriculum making process. Student teachers are capable of sharing ideas about their local culture and identity. In the process of the collaborative project, one student teacher indicated her sense of empowerment through courage to make reactions during syllabus making in the context of cultural biases to the indigenous community. Again, this is related to the experiences of her cultural community and speaks about her cultural identity. However, the reaction came out of her learning from the discussion and the collaborative process:

*It is not really like that, Ma'am (responding to the facilitator), because my concept is that when the syllabus is read by the mainstream (students), they would say that in course goals as if there is specification. (Student 2, Excerpt from Curriculum Meeting 9)*

However, there were also limitations in terms of the capacities of the student teachers. They had not been afforded the technical-know-how of curriculum making. They did not have the technical skills that faculty members have in developing the syllabus or critiquing the content, objectives and pedagogy of the teacher education programmes. When the meetings had something to do with these topics, the students were quiet and listening most of the time. In later meetings, some faculty members also asked the student teachers about their opinions.

Overall, the contribution of the student teachers might not be seen as equal to the work of the faculty and administrators; however, they played their part to make the curriculum useful and realistic for them. Their perspectives provided a good instrument for validating what should be the content of the curriculum and how it should be workable for their utilisation. The positive side of the results is the confidence that they were building for themselves as a result of the process. This confidence could be a starting point to spread their wings of empowerment when they become teachers.

*I am so overwhelmed being a part of this curriculum development because I know that I should be equipped with different ideas, and I can use it in the real classroom setting. Now I became aware that as a teacher, I should have a thorough understanding with regards to becoming an effective teacher of different individuals. So this curriculum development activity is a worthy experience I should treasure as a future multicultural teacher. (S1, Interview)*

In this research, the change for the curriculum using the collaborative participatory approach was locally and specifically intended for the PNU Mindanao campus. However, the study offers possibilities for future collaborative research arising from the collaborative participatory model.



Further examination of the usability and generalisability of the collaborative participatory process to other contexts is encouraged. It would be of particular interest for other researchers to test the collaborative participatory approach with other local higher education institutions where faculty and students are not directly involved in curriculum planning. Other higher education institutions might be challenged to initiate a curriculum reform giving ‘voices’ to their faculty and students.

### **Conclusion and Recommendation**

In this paper, we have presented the major contributions of the significant stakeholders involved in curriculum planning. The active participation of faculty, student teachers, and the administrators benefitted the creation of the multicultural curriculum for the local campus of Agusan. The collaborative participatory process gave voice to significant people, especially faculty and students in curriculum making. The impact of faculty, and student teacher’s voices showed that a bottom-up model in creating a curriculum for a local context is feasible and desirable. This could be a model for other higher education institutions with local campuses to the possibility of reversing the current curriculum model from top down to bottom up when addressing the needs of their own local community.

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