

**Perspectives of Model Educators
on the
2002 Basic Education Curriculum**

A PROJECT OF THE
SOCIAL AND HUMAN SCIENCES COMMITTEE
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OPENING ADDRESS
Felice Prudente Sta. Maria

Good morning to all of you. Thank you very very much for spending your Saturday with us. I am familiar with the Avon and Metrobank awards programs, and have been involved with some of them. So when the UNESCO National Commission of the Philippines (UNACOM) realized that it really wanted to listen to representatives of teachers from the field, we on the UNACOM team remembered Metrobank and Avon. Both offer highly respected programs which we feel are so important to teachers in the field. We are only too happy that educators such as yourselves, who are so highly regarded, are willing to take time out this morning to share with UNACOM some of your candid, very candid ideas about the current curriculum and perhaps your own ideas of things that may not yet be in the curriculum or things that may have been removed that you feel are really important in the maturation of young learners. So we are hoping that you'll be very open about sharing with us.

We in UNESCO are not for or against any particular curriculum. This we would like you to know. This is not a politically motivated workshop. UNESCO is in many ways an apolitical body. UNESCO is, in many ways, above politics. It is an international body that works for forward thinking. In many ways, UNESCO has been ahead of itself. It is ahead of what the rest of the world has been doing, maybe in its philosophical goals and related concerns. We just feel that UNESCO has not had the opportunity to listen. And we would like very much to listen to you and what you have to say about basic education. This discussion is sponsored by the Social and Human Sciences Committee of the UNACOM, an agency for which we volunteer our time and abilities.

WELCOME REMARKS

Virginia A. Miralao

I would like to join Ms. Felice Sta. Maria in welcoming you to this roundtable discussion. The discussion is an initiative of the Social and Human Sciences Committee of the UNESCO National Commission of the Philippines, and enthusiastically supported by the Philippine Social Science Council.

In the field of social science, we recognize that any reform is always a work in progress. Certainly, we cannot expect the new basic education curriculum to be perfect right away. We do not arrive at solutions overnight. A highly effective curriculum is something that all stakeholders have to work for. It is in this context that we are pushing for further discussions on the new curriculum.

We recognize that there is a diversity of views on the ongoing reform. Social scientists and educators are not of one mind on the new curriculum and debate on its various aspects. All these opinions have to be aired precisely so that we can arrive at something that we all can be comfortable with, and we all might have a consensus about. Then, we can pursue the direction that we want to take for basic education.

I would like to thank you for sharing your time with us today. We look forward to a fruitful discussion with you.

A ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION ON THE 2002 BASIC EDUCATION CURRICULUM:

SYNTHESIS AND ASSESSMENT

Florentino H. Hornedo

The 2002 Basic Education Curriculum (BEC) has called much attention and concern from many sectors of civil society, and rightly so because basic education lays the intellectual, professional, civic, and moral foundations of the nation's future. What has made the issue even more challenging is what appears to be a precipitate hurry in implementing the new curriculum—despite the claim of the Department of Education (DepEd) that this has been long in the making, and is claimed to have been conceptualized way back in the Ramos presidency (1992–1997). In the hope of shedding some light on both the merits of and possible problems regarding the curriculum, a roundtable discussion was organized by the Social and Human Sciences Committee of the UNESCO National Commission of the Philippines and the Philippine Social Science Council. The idea was to get together a select group of teachers who had received national recognition for pedagogical excellence such as the Metrobank Outstanding Teacher Award and the Avon Gintong Ilawan Teodora Alonso Educator Award, and get their personal and professional opinion and reactions to the BEC and its implementation on a “pilot basis” nationally starting the opening of the school year 2002–2003. The result of that roundtable discussion is what we have on hand.

The general drift of reactions was that they think the new basic education curriculum was not the product of a spur of the moment decision and therefore deserves to be given a try. After all, it is, officially, being “piloted” nationally, and it is too early to judge its results. Nevertheless, a number of concerns were noted among which are the wisdom of the national piloting, the actual conduct of the so-called *Makabayan* component of the BEC, especially the competence of teachers who will be called to implement the new curriculum with a minimum or no meaningful preparation and pre-training.

Asked to react to the rationale, objectives, and features of the 2002 BEC, the participant teachers expressed the following:

Reactions to Rationale

Most of the teachers agreed that the old curriculum was overcrowded and needed “decongestion.” Overcrowding led to inefficient teaching through compartmentalized

information and mechanical learning, and teachers tended “to teach for tests.” The one representative from the private sector disagreed that the old curriculum was overcrowded, opens up more dynamic interaction between teachers and learners, and is an instance of curriculum evolution.

Reactions to Objectives

There is a clear, but cautious, welcoming attitude toward the intended innovations of the 2002 BEC. Decongestion is welcome. Education for analytical and critical thinking, and the fostering of lifelong learning skills are endorsed heartily. The aim of attaining “linguistic fluency and scientific-numerical competence” is also most welcome. But there is a deep misgiving regarding the readiness of teachers to implement efficiently and effectively the new curriculum.

Reactions to Features

Reactions to the key features of the BEC have also been positive, although to an extent, mixed. Integration and interactivity in the teaching-learning method are appreciated along with its being less prescriptive and more flexible. But some noted that, after all, integration is not new in the system. The learner-centered approach is welcome, too. The idea of “developing multiple intelligence” is welcome, but there are misgivings regarding the “grading system of Makabayan.” There is expressed hope that under the new basic curriculum, teaching will become “exciting and affirming,” and it probably should, given the emphasis on interactivity in the teaching-learning process and the “focus on in-depth learning.”

The freedom of local schools to design contextualized implementation of Makabayan is also noted with appreciation, although it is unclear how this can be done during the pilot year given the lack of time to prepare properly contextualized instructional materials, not to mention the possible lack of sufficient readiness of local educators to identify medium and long range needs of the local communities, awareness of which is essential to productive contextualized learning.

The mixed feelings are indicated in such statements as “no harm in giving the restructured BEC a try,” or “the restructured BEC is worth the trying.” Given the positive outlook of the participants on the new curriculum, this diffidence appears to be rooted in a gut feeling of the participants that although much of what the new curriculum is proposing or seems to present as new are in fact “no longer new to most teachers.” However, there is apprehension that the implementation requires actual teacher skills which may not yet be there. The implementation being on short notice, teachers have had little or no real preparation and acquisition of the very basic skills of efficient and effective facilitators, especially in the Makabayan learning area. True that there were training seminars in the summer of 2002 in preparation for the immediate implementation starting the opening of the new school year, but the trainers themselves appear not to

have been trained themselves, and the “training sessions” may have been mostly explanatory exercises by school officials without sufficient time nor space for teacher-trainees to internalize the pedagogical skills truly necessary to make them “role models” as the 2002 BEC document says. Thus some “confusions and problems” are expected in the initial implementation.

The relegation of Filipino as medium in Makabayan but not in Science and Mathematics is perceived as “anti-nationalist.” But more than that, it is shortsighted in that it does not favor building a scientific and mathematical lexicon for the National Language, for language does not develop in domains where it is not used! This is a continuation of the old objectionable understanding of bilingual education.

Assessment and Discussion

The participants in the roundtable discussion have been generally affirmative in their reactions and endorse it, with some reservations. This has already been well stated above. And having said that, it remains to be noted that much of the reactions are expressed in the very words of the document they have been asked to evaluate. And this is not helpful in assessing the probabilities of success nor in anticipating unintended consequences of the curricular innovations. Even the 2002 BEC document itself is not confident. Its tone, despite several supportive citations, is tentative. It refers to curriculum construction as “a dynamic process, and thus the restructured curriculum will continue to develop throughout the pilot year and after.” It is a hedge.

There is a very definite attribution of the low level of educational achievement of the Filipino learners to the crowded or congested curriculum, but nothing is mentioned regarding the even more problematic fact of overcrowded classrooms and teachers overworked not merely by more subjects to teach but especially by too many pupils to attend to. Every manager knows that there is a limit to everyone’s social and interactive effectivity. Beyond a certain number, effectivity no longer figures. This classroom congestion/overcrowding is true of a huge segment of the public schools system.

There is also this profound silence of the 2002 BEC document on the content of the Makabayan, except by indicating disciplinal areas. Does it assume that the contents of existing textbooks are sufficient? Does it assume the teachers already know the content? It does emphasize that HOW rather than WHAT is its preference. But good thinking, critical or creative, begins with WHAT. Problematic whats lead to problematic hows.

The “Foreword” of the Secretary of the DepEd is more an expression of aspirations rather than assurances of what the Department promises to deliver to the children of the nation and their parents at the end of schooling. Even the “Philosophy of the 2002 Curriculum” is more a psychology of the curriculum rather than a philosophy. The vision and mission statements indicate that the philosophical underpinning of this curriculum is Reconstructionism. It is not felicitous for top educational managers to fail

to make such distinctions, for unclear ideas do not usually help. They cast doubt as to whether matters have been well thought out. Even the number of foreign authors cited for studies whose contexts, naturally, are foreign do not speak too well of how much local thinking through and contextual reflection has been happening in the preparation of the new curriculum.

REACTION PAPERS

PATRICIA C. JOCSON
2000 Metrobank Outstanding Teacher

The implementation of the 2002 Basic Education Curriculum (BEC) has drawn varied reactions from both the government and nongovernment sectors. Many educators claim that the change is quite abrupt, putting both the school administrators and teachers in a bewildering situation. Is there really a need to restructure the curriculum?

One of the reasons given by the Department of Education (DepEd) for restructuring the curriculum is that it is congested or overcrowded. The New Secondary Education Curriculum offered too many subjects, which hindered the learning process of the students. The basic skills, which are important for good performance, had been neglected. Classroom teachers tended to give more emphasis on the subject matter rather than the important skills that need to be developed by the students. Teachers were in a hurry to finish the syllabus within the prescribed period of time. This is a reality because this is what is happening at present. Teachers are in a hurry to finish the syllabus because tests are departmentalized. In other words, teachers teach for the test. They teach what they expect will be given in the test. They are anxious about the students' score in the test because this will tell on their performance as a teacher. Low score means poor teacher performance. No teacher for that matter would like to be rated poorly. This results in the negligence of the development of students' higher learning skills such as critical thinking skills. Very little time is left for improving these important thinking skills, which are essential to the students' success and independence in the future.

BEC emphasizes the development of critical thinking skills and scientific skills of the students. This is really a problem because many teachers are not well adept on how such skills can be developed among the learners.

When the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing conducted a study of current knowledge and teaching practices regarding critical thinking, they found that 89 percent of the teachers interviewed claimed that critical teaching was a primary objective in their teaching; however, only 19 percent could give a clear definition of what critical thinking is (Browne, n.d.).

As a master teacher who is required to observe teachers in the classroom, I noticed that this is a perennial problem. Many teachers still lack the ability to harness the creative and critical thinking skills of their students. In the discussion of the lesson, most of them fail to probe deeper into the significance of the story, the motive of the character(s), author's intention, etc. They stick to the guide questions given in the textbook, which are mostly on the literal level. The students are not given the chance to think, reflect, ponder, and appreciate the story. One reason for this is the teacher's desire to finish the lesson, creating students who are finishers and not learners. This finishing attitude is evident in students' questions about what will be on the tests and the required length of papers. Moreover, teachers who are in a hurry to finish the lesson fail to spot the opportunity to develop the creative/critical thinking skills of the learners. For instance, when ideas presented in the text need greater analysis or probing, the teacher ignores them or sometimes fails to recognize them. The increase in the teaching hours, i.e., from forty minutes to sixty minutes will, therefore, give the teacher the chance to tackle optimum activities that will enhance the learners' higher thinking skills. However, a more intensive teacher-training on how to develop such skills on the students is needed.

Another good feature of the new curriculum is the development of the individual's multiple intelligences. The theory of multiple intelligences also promotes higher thinking skills among the learners, and this can be best done through the use of multimedia technology. However, at present, only a few of our schools have adequate media facilities. The lack or absence of media facilities can hamper decision-making efforts of the students. They should therefore be made easily accessible to our students. With the aid of technology, an individual is able to handle larger bodies of information, which may result in better decision-making for shorter periods of time.

If we are determined to be globally competitive, the schools should be provided with all the necessary media facilities and these, of course, include computer. Today, to be literate not only means knowing how to read and write, but being computer literate as well. Sad to say, this is still too far-fetched in our country because even the teachers themselves are computer illiterates. Can the government not do something about this problem? How can we expect to be at par with the rest of the world if the mentors themselves cannot meet the demands of this fast-changing world?

Portfolio assessment is another good feature of BEC. Although this is not new, only a few of the teachers in the secondary schools in Manila use it. There is really a need to emphasize its use because it is one way of discovering and understanding our students, their problems, desires, and ambitions in life. There are students who reveal in their writings their innermost feelings, their fears, worries and anxieties. It is a means of expressing themselves. Writing has become an outlet for their pent-up emotions.

Integrative teaching, thematic teaching and content-based instruction are not new to most teachers, especially to English teachers. In DCS, Manila, English textbooks are thematic and content-based. Many selections are science-based and history-based. There

is integration of competencies across the learning areas. Students seem to like it because it aids in better understanding of the subject matter.

On the other hand, collaborative teaching with peers from different disciplines needs more time, cooperation and preparation on the part of the teachers concerned, especially for the teaching of Makabayan. A thorough discussion on how it is done in the classroom is needed. It entails a concerted effort of everyone involved. Surely, indifferent teachers have no place in this system.

Another problem that we can foresee in Makabayan is in the grading system. There is a big possibility of delay in issuing the grade of the students since there are several teachers who are involved in giving their grade. This is one concern the school administrator should look into so that grades will be given on time.

How will DepEd monitor and evaluate the new curriculum? Will pretest and posttest be given to the students to determine its effectiveness? Will the test results also be the gauge for determining the performance of the school and the teachers? I hope not because it encourages rampant cheating and dishonesty for both the teachers and the students. During the pretest, students are told not to answer the test because they must get low grades. On the other hand, during posttest the weak students are made to sit right beside the bright students so that they can copy their answers. There are also some cases wherein the weak ones are discouraged from taking the posttest so that they will not pull down the school mean. These practices have been going on for years and the government should be aware of them.

For the first year of BEC's implementation, we expect confusions and problems, which are just normal. However, we also expect that they will be threshed out as we go along with the implementation. We will hear a lot of complaints from teachers, parents, and students. But, through the cooperation of everyone concerned, we pray and hope for its success for the future of our country.

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LILIA T. SANTOS
2000 Metrobank Outstanding Teacher

Change is the only constant in this world. It is a fact that most of the stakeholders in this change that we are undergoing now were educated under the old system in which knowledge rather than virtue was imbibed and imparted. We can even say that learning was not taught at all, only knowledge that becomes obsolete with new discoveries in a changing world. The revolutionary persons that run the present Department of Education (DepEd), who were trained in the old system, are saying that the old system must give way to the new.

This of course is not a product of an overnight decision. It underwent series of curricular assessment and recommendations supported by realities like:

- ❑ The reading ability of our children rises in the early grades and then tends to plateau at the intermediate level. They possess simple literacy, but not functional literacy. There is a danger that when the student drops out before the end of Grade 6, he or she will return to illiteracy.
- ❑ Our congested curriculum is one of the causes of unsatisfactory and unsteady achievement of our students.
- ❑ One size fits all approach.
- ❑ One way, top to bottom process.
- ❑ Our pupils/students achieved very low mastery on expectancies in both elementary and secondary education. They obtained a score of only about 50 percent, the lowest of which are scores in Science and Math.

The 2002 Basic Education Curriculum (BEC) is not the sole project undertaken to solve the pressing problems of our educational system. The more recent that we had is the Program for Decentralized Educational Development (PRODED), which involved not only curriculum development but also the upgrading of physical facilities, the production of instructional materials, and the in-service training of teachers, among others. This project gave way to the National Elementary School Curriculum (NESC) and the National Secondary Education Curriculum (NSEC). There were also other projects aimed to address the major causes of unsatisfactory achievement of our learners like the Secondary Education Development Project, the Third Elementary Education Project, the Social Expenditure Management Project, and National Educators Academy of the Philippines' Scholarship and Training Program in the different subject areas.

The process of change is really painful. Like it or not there are sectors who would get hit. In this specific change that is underway, the teachers are the ones who will be hit the most. However, I can honestly say that this change does not pain me a lot because I believe that for anybody to progress, change must always take place—that change can be a minimal or major one.

The restructuring of our curriculum, which is to be implemented this school year, has more merits than demerits.

A restructuring of the curriculum will help do the following: enable the teachers to be innovative and interdisciplinary in their instructional strategies; encourage the learners to think critically and creatively; allow them to pursue their meaningful interests; and make the teaching-learning endeavor a two-way or interactive process.

An interactive curriculum will be more effective for contemporary learners who want to participate more actively in their learning experiences. In this curriculum, the learner is an active partner. He/she takes on the role of constructor of meaning. The teacher serves as facilitator, enabler and manager of learning (although this teaching-learning process was also the guiding principle during the PRODED days). I am just hopeful that at this point, it will really give a positive effect on the holistic development of the Filipino child.

There is more contact time in the five learning areas. This will enable the learner to engage in different or varied learning tasks. The five learning areas in the new curriculum are: Filipino, English, Science, Mathematics and Makabayan. These are designed to produce graduates who are functionally literate, equipped with life skills, appreciative of the arts and sports, and spiritual. In specific terms, the linguistic literacy and fluency shall be developed in Filipino and English; scientific and technological literacy in Science and technology; numeracy skills in Mathematics; and sociocultural and politico-economic literacy in Makabayan.

Values are treated as integral to the five learning areas. Education in and for values is geared towards the learners' self-actualization.

The adoption of integrative teaching will help a lot in the process of acquiring knowledge and skills. It focuses on the issues of the real world. The Filipino learner will be empowered for life-long learning so that he can cope in his risky new world.

There is not much problem about the implementation of the tool subjects; however, there is a lot of arguments and confusion in the Makabayan or the experiential area or the so-called "Laboratory of Life." I have read several comments regarding the 5th subject. Some of the comments are:

- It is diluted and lumped with other Makabayan subjects.
- Time allotted is less in comparison with the other four subjects.

- It is not grounded on reality.
- It negates nationalism.

Since the schools are allowed to design and contextualize the implementation of Makabayan, I believe the subject will be properly taken up. It will also develop in the learner what we expect him to be if the components of the subject is properly integrated.

The next issue is “Is this new curriculum feasible?” With the different studies and preparation undertaken by the DepEd, hopefully its implementation will run smoothly.

What would then be the constraints in its implementation? Since the implementation was abrupt, several possibilities may happen. Some trainers were not fully prepared to disseminate the correct information at the school level. The materials needed may not reach the frontline stakeholders—the teachers. The teacher training institutions are not yet ready to equip would-be teachers for the new curriculum, particularly the Makabayan.

The work of the teacher, then, is very challenging. In this light, I am calling on my fellow educators to see something positive in the program, and not just the problems. We need to see the opportunities behind it.

Many changes have been made in our curriculum and yet, we have not gained much positive results. I believe that this is so because as I have observed, whenever a change is underway, we do not make ourselves part of the change. The teachers are the frontliners in any change in our curriculum. Let us, at this point, own the change and let us give the 2002 BEC a chance.

The challenge is in managing the reform. The public will continue to be critical of and even against everything that is being tried out. Hence, we who are involved in the project must convince them that what we are doing is the right thing.

MARIA P. MAGANA
1996 Metrobank Outstanding Teacher

A very significant change is set to happen when classes in the elementary and secondary schools open on June 17. This is due to the implementation of the restructured Basic Education Curriculum (BEC), a product of 16 years of study conducted under different Education Secretaries.

As stated by the present Department of Education (DepEd) Secretary Raul S. Roco, the restructuring of the curriculum is part of an ongoing effort to improve the quality of learning, focusing on the basics of improving the literacy and numeracy of students, while inculcating values across learning areas to make it more dynamic.

Under the new elementary curriculum, the time allotted for tool subjects such as English, Science, Mathematics, and Filipino was increased. It also focuses on Makabayan, which is the integration of three subjects: HEKASI (Social Studies), MSEP (Music, Arts and Physical Education), and HELE (Home Economics for Girls and Work Education for Boys).

I think that the restructured BEC is the answer to the continuous deterioration of the quality of our education system. Why?

Above all, we have to admit that we have an overcrowded curriculum, which, because of insufficient relevance to the diverse context of learners, hinder or delay the development of lifelong learning skills. Thus, the decongestion of the curriculum under the restructured BEC makes it easier for teachers and learners to contextualize it with stronger integration of competencies within and across the learning areas. The additional time allotted to the tool subjects will surely help the learners absorb the lessons more, and provide them ample time for group participation in the different activities.

Another special feature of the new BEC, which I consider to be of great advantage to the learner, is its emphasis on interaction. Upon scrutinizing the different learning tasks in each subject area, it was found out that the new curriculum covers an ideal teaching-learning process. Learning tasks provide more reciprocal interaction between students and teachers, between students themselves, between students and instructional materials, between students and multimedia sources, and among the teachers of different discipline.

Providing the necessary time and conditions for pupils to interact will further develop their communication skills, and enhance their critical thinking, thereby developing their self-confidence.

Another good feature of the restructured BEC is its emphasis on the integration, which provides for deep and meaningful learning. In this particular aspect, teachers of different disciplines are expected to plan and teach together. This activity of course will foster cooperation as well as respect with one another since they are working as one for a common goal. Most of all, there is an assurance of an effective teaching-learning condition because the lesson was a result of group planned activities.

Makabayan, which embodies the ultimate objective of the DepEd (developing patriotism), is considered a “laboratory of life” in the new curriculum. With the fusion of various related subjects like HELE, MSEP and HEKASI, and with the focus on self-identity through an adequate understanding of Philippine History and our politico-economic system, local cultures, arts, crafts, music and games, the learner is indeed being prepared for life with a firm commitment to the common good.

In preparation for the BEC implementation this school year, the DepEd has been carrying out different activities as early as last year to disseminate information on the new curriculum. Series of meetings, seminars and workshops were done with the department heads, superintendents, principals, teachers, parents, and students to make them aware of the rationale for and features of the new BEC.

At this very moment, Cluster School-Based In-service Meeting of all teachers in Manila is ongoing. The activity covers the overview of the new curriculum, including the rationale behind it and manner of its implementation; and the preparation of quality lesson plans in consonance with the present learning tasks per subject area.

During the process, the new BEC handbook in the different subject areas, which contains the learning tasks and subtasks, was analyzed and compared with last year’s PELC. It was discovered that there were minimal changes. The learning tasks in the curriculum, which were deemed to be less important, were deleted and more important ones were added. It was also noted that the English tasks and subtasks were integrated along the four areas namely; listening, speaking, reading and writing. However, these tasks were not properly grouped as to first, second, third and fourth grading period. In other words, there was no boundary as to the coverage of each grading period. But, it was highly noted that the skills or tasks were properly sequenced in accordance with its difficulty. Hierarchy of tasks was observed.

Since the BEC is a product of 16 years of continuous study of people expert along the line, the Philippine Commission on Educational Reform finally recommended the adoption and implementation of the restructured BEC this school year. And as stated by DepEd Secretary Raul S. Roco, this year is a “pilot test” for the said curriculum.

I see no harm in giving it a try. Implementing a change is really difficult, but how can we prove its effectivity if it is not given the chance to be tried out? I do look forward to what Secretary Roco said, that everything is ready—books, materials, and most of all, prepared lesson plans for the execution of the 2002 BEC.

How I wish the new curriculum would produce better students and thus, raise the academic performance of Filipino students and empower them for lifelong learning through the attainment of functional literacy.

RAQUEL L. PASIGPASIGAN
1993 Metrobank Outstanding Teacher

Recent researches indicated that information is most securely encoded and best retrieved by the brain when it can be connected to a web of meaning. A study of 15,000 eighth graders showed that students from schools using interdisciplinary approach scored higher on standardized tests than peers who were enrolled in single disciplined subjects (Ed Lawton 1994). Students also displayed more intellectual curiosity, a better attitude toward learning, and higher achievement.

The reported results and the needs dictated by today's information-rich world justify the implementation of the restructured curriculum. The 2002 Basic Education Curriculum (BEC) has the features of the interdisciplinary approach and integrative learning. The 2002 curriculum involves different intelligences and learning styles. Shoemaker wrote that similar to integrative learning, it cuts across subject-matter lines, brings together various aspects of the curriculum into meaningful association to focus upon broad areas of study. It reflects the independent real world, and involves the learners' body, thoughts, feelings, senses and intuition in learning experiences that unify knowledge.

A growing number of education reformers point to the fact that the strengths of the new 2002 curriculum far outweigh the old curriculum. This school year, school children will have lesser subjects. There will be stronger integration of competencies and values within and across learning areas. There will be greater emphasis on the learning process and the integrative modes of teaching. There will be increased time for tasks, to gain mastery of the competencies of the basic tool subjects.

Having worked as elementary classroom teacher for 31 years, I believe the former elementary curriculum was overcrowded. A self-contained teacher has to write her lesson plans, master the content, prepare varied visual aids, and construct test questions for eight different subjects. I personally believe that the teaching of facts and skills artificially compartmentalized into separate subjects fails to prepare students for a changing world. Thinking becomes limited, only within the confines of the subject matter. On the other hand, integrative education immerses students in an enriched environment. Integration provides a holistic context for learning that leads to greater ability to make and remember connections. It involves the practice of recognizing and articulating relationships among subject matters, and applying learning from one context to another. It also involves building bridges between academic learning and the wider world. It enables students to have more time to gain mastery of the competencies of the basic tool subjects. The teaching process becomes exciting and affirming.

The arts of reading, writing, speaking, listening taken up in English are necessary in diverse disciplines. As students practice these arts, they develop the skills in critical and imaginative thinking in other learning areas such as Science and Mathematics. Per the DepEd, using English as the medium in Science and Mathematics proved to be advantageous. The trend toward international understanding makes it imperative that we train students in a medium by which they can be understood by other people of the world. In addition, English provides abundant reading and instructional materials, which are not readily available in Filipino.

Given the volume of knowledge in Social Studies, the 2002 curriculum serves as a unique structure for the integration of knowledge in Arts, Music, Physical Education, Work Education and Home Economics. This affords the students external opportunities to forge connections and to apply knowledge, skills and values. Teachers help students reflect on what they have learned and understand how they can use the learning.

Success in bringing out desired results largely depends on the competencies of the teachers. Much of the implementation is left to the creativity and ingenuity of the classroom teachers. Teachers should be able to develop skills, which would enable them to make maximum contributions. They should be able to develop skills essential for effectively integrating competencies and values within and across learning areas. In this light, opportunities for acquiring these skills should be arranged.

School authorities must explain to the teachers the nature of the restructured curriculum through conferences, in-service meetings and mass media. There should be a national training of pilot teachers who, in turn, will train local teachers. Master teachers who are comfortable with integration should handle the core subjects. Necessary steps must be taken to ensure collaboration. Common preparation time should be provided to teachers working as a team. Science teachers should be able to incorporate relevant exercises, which strengthen mathematical skills such as graphing, measuring, and problem solving in the science context.

There is a need for teachers to cooperatively chart down in a table of specification the concepts to be presented in English, utilizing materials in Science as well as in other learning areas. They should plan sequences of instruction for presenting content and processes. Teacher's guides should include teaching strategies consistent with methods of inquiry.

Evaluation devices should be employed to get valid assessment of the program implemented. Scholars, teachers, curriculum specialists, psychologists, experts should examine the materials and make suggestions for improvement. Set a feedback loop to get a flow of suggestions from schools where teachers, pupils and curriculum workers have tried out the materials.

According to Ann Ross and Karen Olsen, integrative education can be presented using five models of implementation. These include:

1. *Single subject integration*—The teacher presents the content of one curricular subject as it appears in real life, and requires students to apply skills and the content.
2. *Integrated core model*—One teacher remains with the students for two to three periods. For example, a teacher might teach English in the context of Science. A teacher might teach social studies as the core around which the rest of the Makabayan subjects are planned.
3. *Integration double core model*—Two teachers instruct the same students within two integrated cores. For example, one might teach Math skills in the context of Science, while another might teach English skills within a Science context.
4. *Self-contained core model*—One teacher with multiple subject credentials remains with one group of students all day, teaching all skills and content within one or two meaningful context.

I firmly support the implementation of the 2002 BEC because when horizons are widened and thinking becomes global, the creative, discriminatory and problem-solving capabilities of our students combine with natural enthusiasm.

LILIA F. VERGARA
1990 Metrobank Outstanding Teacher

The strong arguments for the 2002 Basic Education Curriculum (BEC) are very well stated in the executive summary of the Department of Education (DepEd) primer. I do agree with the following points:

1. The vision, mission of the DepEd
 - ...every learner to be functionally literate, equipped with the skills, appreciative of the arts and sports, and imbued with the desirable values of a person who is *makabayan, makatao, makakalikasan, at maka-Diyos*.
 - ...to provide quality basic education that is accessible to all, and to lay the foundation for lifelong learning and service for the common goal.

2. Rationale for curricular reform
 - ...to filter information critically, seek credible sources of knowledge, and use data and facts creatively so that they can survive, overcome poverty, raise their personal and national self-esteem, and realize or gracious life in our risky new world.
 - ...empowers them for lifelong learning or enables them to be competent in learning or enables them to be competent in learning how to learn....

3. Some recent curricular assessments and recommendations
 - An overcrowded curriculum can hinder or delay the development of lifelong skills, *as coverage of the subject matter tends to take priority over in-depth learning*.
 - ...a refined curriculum whose components *have been clustered* into fewer *learning areas*, better *integration* of competencies and topics..., more time... for mastery of essential competencies...for personal analysis and reflection on the major concepts.
 -enable the teachers to be innovative and interdisciplinary in their instructional strategies, encourage learners to think critically and creatively,...pursue meaningful interests and make the teaching-learning...interactive process.

4. Philosophy of the 2002 BEC

- The curriculum aims at empowering the Filipino learner to be capable of self-development throughout one's life and to be patriotic (*makabayan*), benevolent (*makatao*), ecologically aware (*makakalikasan*), and godly (*maka-Diyos*).
- The ideal teacher helps students to learn not answers but how to reflect on, characterize and discuss problems, and how, on their own initiative, they can form or find valid answers.

5. Features of the 2002 BEC

- Competence in learning...entails the secure attainment of functional literacy, which includes...linguistic fluency and scientific-numerical competence...In general, the *time allotment* for these subjects will be increased...to increase the time for tasks and activities to gain mastery of basic competencies...contextualize content.
- As for the teaching of Filipino, it will be enriched through the integration of vocabulary, values, and competencies from the social sciences.
- The fifth learning area...will be a "laboratory of life"...most experiential, interactive, interdisciplinary, and value-laden.
- Statements 10, 11, 12–15 are well taken.

6. The conceptual framework

- Parameters of the curriculum: the demands of society, environment and the learner define the parameters of the curriculum.
- The support system: teachers who implement the curriculum should be trained; materials, equipment, and facilities should be made available.

The following are my comments on the 2002 BEC:

1. The mission-vision of the DepEd curriculum should be the guiding principles in planning *What* and *How* to implement the BEC. These are clear and well-defined.
2. The intention to prioritize *in-depth learning* is well accepted. This was one of the weaknesses of the Secondary Education Development Project Curriculum where topics/concepts were discussed too simply, missing out on the more important answers to the *Why* of it.

The approaches used in the 1970s (e.g., BSCS, CBA, PSSC Physics) encouraged learners to *think critically* and *creatively*, etc. but these were watered down and eventually changed by then Department of Education Culture and Sports.

3. Training of teachers, upgrading of physical facilities, production of instructional materials and a very good curriculum are vital factors that contribute to satisfactory performance of students.
An overcrowded classroom, of course, will also be a factor. Having 50 or more students in one class, no matter how effective or efficient a teacher is, can certainly affect the teaching, learning process. There should be a reduction of the numbers of students per class to 40-45.
4. On the increase of time allotment per core area of learning, all except Science had an increase of 60 to 80 minutes (120 minutes for Math). The time allotment for Science had been reduced by 20 minutes in the elementary level, aside from its removal as a separate subject area in Grades I and II, and by 80 minutes in the secondary level where Physics is now considered as an optional subject.
5. More time is needed for the planning of Makabayan before it can be implemented. Using the thematic approach for the teaching of the course needs more collaborative work among teachers to define the overlying concepts, which can integrate the five subject areas into Makabayan; otherwise, these subjects will still be treated as five different subjects.
6. I suggest/believe that the implementation of the BEC should be *gradual* rather than *full or across all year levels*. How can Algebra, Geometry, Trigonometry, etc. be taught without the prerequisite subjects?
7. Why should Filipino require an increase of 80 minutes and Science a reduction of 80 minutes? Give back the 80 minutes to Science. Filipino is reinforced in Makabayan anyway.
8. I am for giving the new curriculum a try, but more time should be given for planning and preparation before its full implementation.

LEODIVICO C. LACSAMANA
1989 Metrobank Outstanding Teacher

Paghuli sa Ibong Adarna

Any form of education aims at preparing students for a meaningful life. This meaningful life is defined and contextualized by the kind of environment the learner lives in. Likewise, this environment provides the parameters with which the teaching-learning process should evolve. As such, I would like to believe that in terms of general content and goals, there is nothing substantially different between the old Basic Education Curriculum or BEC (1989 National Elementary School Curriculum and National Secondary Education Curriculum) and the 2002 BEC. There is, however, a change in some nomenclatures and a slight shift on pedagogy.

Undeniably, the 2002 BEC has two remarkable significance: (1) it foregrounds certain concepts and paradigms that were elided in the old curriculum, and (2) it is more flexible since it provides greater options on the part of the learner and the school on how to approach the teaching-learning process. If the trajectory of the Philippine Educational System for the New Millennium is from domesticity to global competitiveness, from materiality to humanistic concerns, as evidenced by the ongoing and increasing attention on how to take care of the environment, then, the new BEC is probably a fine take-off point. But this remains to be seen in the immediate years to come.

Some of my specific comments and reactions are:

1. I do not think that the old curriculum is “overcrowded” as claimed by the primer. The Makabayan as a learning area can be overcrowded in a sense and to a certain extent for it presents many logistical and administrative problems. Several components are all lumped into one, and many teachers put together in one subject is facing the Herculean task of coordinating many but varied concerns. May I know in what sense the primer is using the word “overcrowded”?
2. I like the idea of integration, but this has been happening, I believe, even prior to the framing of the 1989 BEC (NESC and NSEC). The Conceptual Approach, which became the by-word in the 1980s, is actually a form of horizontal integration. This approach contributed a lot to the enhancement of critical thinking on the part of the students. Even the 1973 Revised Secondary Education Curriculum is already speaking of the multidisciplinary

and interdisciplinary approaches as one of its main features. I believe integrative teaching is not something new.

Since time immemorial, learning is collaborative and interactive; otherwise, what is the use of putting together teachers and learners in one effective classroom situation? Whatever desired output is expected in such a set-up, it is assumed that cooperation and interaction will forever flourish in such a protracted environment.

I think refinement is the keyword that aptly describes the kind of integrative teaching we want to apply in our profession; a kind of approach that is continuously evolving to capture the demands and challenges of the time. This is what I call "Paghuli sa Ibong Adarna"—an act of lifetime searching and identifying the ultimate curriculum and pedagogy for the changing Filipino learner which gives paramount premium to local context and global exigencies.

3. This statement, for me, is a no-no and definitely unacceptable: "Filipino is a learning area and the medium of instruction for Makabayan. English is a learning area and medium of instruction for Science and Mathematics." Filipino, the national language, will never develop and flourish if we follow this ruling, aside from the fact that it goes against certain constitutional mandate. Can we not do something to alter this? Can we not suggest better options apart from this anti-nationalistic stance? How can we expect the national language to achieve further and higher intellectual status if we forbid the use of it in Mathematics and the Sciences? Again, this is another blunder committed by the Department of Education (DepEd).

Another thing, the title description, Filipino sa Iskolarling Pakikipagtalastasan is awkward and misleading. Language teaching in the secondary level, I firmly believe, is basically for mastery and competence and not yet for specialized and scholarly discourse. The tertiary level will take care of this, including the very detail of researching, documenting, and conceptualizing framework. It is better, I suggest, to use Filipino sa Mabisang Pakikipagtalastasan.

4. How would you exactly implement the learning area Makabayan? In the 1989 New Secondary Curriculum, the components of this learning area (SIKAP) were taught, using another nomenclature, separately and distinct. How do we do it this time considering that the same components are still there? If Makabayan is one distinct learning area, there must be only one teacher who will coordinate all components, if not teach all components. If these components will be taught separately, then we are going back to the same set-up or should I say, "overcrowding" of subjects. How is grading facilitated or done in the new curriculum? Which is which? What is what?

5. If Values Education is integrated in all subjects, then there is no need to teach it as one separate area. Values, of all kinds, are effectively taught through intelligent, directed discussions, facilitated by a good set of questions. Literature as one component in any language teaching is an effective venue to identify and clarify values, just like discussing any topic in Biology and Chemistry, or even a lecture in Music and Arts. If there is Religion in the private schools, why not have one in the public schools? It is high time to give this serious thought and reflection.
6. I like this statement: "Schools are allowed to design and contextualize the implementation of Makabayan." This is a sign that finally the DepEd is serious in finding ways to decentralize its certain functions. It allows greater freedom on the part of the schools to implement what is best for them. But since this freedom goes with certain responsibilities, there must be some kind of broad guidelines to follow to prevent confusion. And this must come from the DepEd.
7. I can see that the two broad competencies specified in the 2002 BEC are: Linguistic Fluency and Scientific-numerical Competence. This is fine. Actually, in the recent world survey on the Qualities of a Professional, the numbers 1 and 2 slots are on ability to articulate ideas and ability to work with others. The last two are on ability to use the computers and manipulate technical and scientific gadgets. There is a need to get hold of this survey and use it as a guiding post in coming up with institutional competencies to be developed among the Filipino learners to make them competitive for the global communities, today and tomorrow.
8. Lastly, I like the idea of tracking in Mathematics and the Sciences. This is similar to the idea of offering Electives. What happened to this mechanism? When I was in high school, Elective Subjects are offered. Can we not do this in the other learning areas? I remember that in all these Electives, varied activities and intelligent discussions were the "lifeblood" of the classroom scenarios. Can we reflect on it in the immediate future?

EVELINA MACLANG-VICENCIO, Ph.D.
1988 Metrobank Outstanding Teacher

The die is cast for the 2002 Basic Education Curriculum. In spite of the brickbats it has received from media, cause-oriented groups, the legislature, and even some members of the education sector, the Department of Education (DepEd) has remained steadfast in its belief that it will improve basic education, and in its pursuit of its implementation. And it has scored its first victory. The 2002 Basic Education Curriculum (BEC) will be implemented nationwide in all public schools 10 days from this writing. It will therefore do more good for everybody, especially for us in the academe, if we explore the challenges and possibilities that the restructured curriculum poses, than prove that a dozen things are wrong with it—for the sake of our children. After all, what curriculum is without imperfection?

It would be well to remember that the history of curriculum change is like fashion—it keeps coming back. What is in fashion now can be traced back to fashion sometime in our raiment history. The hem slowly and teasingly rises only to drastically fall back later on. In a similar manner, curriculum has been separated, forcibly integrated, searingly fused, freely broadened, and even cored, only to be slowly separated again. However, everytime a “historical innovation” is resurrected, it is given a polishing and restructuring to make it relevant to society. To illustrate, integration—which is a key feature in the 2002 BEC—was first explored by Plato and given a strong push by John Dewey (1938/1969) whose concept of experiential problem-based inquiry learning (that promotes democracy) is again being emphasized. The focus on integration, however, is not without empirical basis. Several comparative studies had been carried out on the effectiveness of integrative programs, and almost always, the results were in its favor. Students who studied in schools with different types of integrative programs performed as well or even better on standardized achievement tests than students enrolled in schools using the separate subject curriculum (National Association for Core Curriculum, 1984). The literature on curricular integration also identifies benefits of the approach not only to students but also to teachers, administrators, the community, and the schools. Integration therefore merits its continuous presence in our curriculum.

Now, the question that keeps bobbing and bugging DepEd: what exactly is integration? In spite of DepEd’s identification of some modes of integrative teaching (i.e. thematic teaching, content-based instruction, focusing inquiry, and the generic competency model), explanation in hundreds of seminars nationwide, and provision of model lesson plans to illustrate it, the teachers are still asking—what is integration and

how do we integrate Science and English, and Musika, Sining at Edukasyong Pangkatawan with Sibika at Kultura. And if these are not enough, how will Values Education be integrated in all the learning areas? (This afternoon I have been requested to give a seminar to Grades 1 and 2 teachers on the integration of Science and Health in English).

These questions are very valid because like many concepts in education, integration has as many definitions as there are curricularists who have attempted to study and promote the concept. Integration has been called interweaving; connectedness of subjects; holistic approach; interdisciplinary, cross-disciplinary, multidisciplinary, trans-disciplinary, pluridisciplinary curriculum; shared, fused, core, thematic; and every related word that can be found in the Thesaurus plus others that are as unrelated as the definition of a team of teachers who stated that the "integrated curriculum is like a girdle because both need to be connected; hold the whole together; and enhance the base."

Congruent with the varied definitions are the many modes of integrative teaching. Fogarty (1993) alone proposed 10 models of integrative teaching. To distinguish them from other curricular models and make them easier to remember, he likened them to various glasses—fragmented like the periscope, connected like the opera glass, nested like the 3-D glass, sequenced like the eyeglasses, shared like the binoculars, webbed like the telescope, threaded like the magnifying glass, integrated like the kaleidoscope, immersed like the microscope, and networked like the prism. (Fogarty was not a Creative Director for nothing). Fogarty's models are classified according to disciplines and learners: the first three are within single disciplines, the next five are across several disciplines, and the last two are within and across learners. Meanwhile, our Curriculum Indigenization Team at the University of the Philippines-College of Education proposes seven models, and Jacobs (1989) has six. Then there are the continuum of Kimpston (1989), those of Bereiter (1986), Ackerman and Perkins, (1989), Short and Jennings (1976), Jacobs (1989), the various strategies of the North Carolina State Department of Public Instruction (1986), and many others. The varied definitions and modes of integration, though overwhelming and oftentimes confusing, should not be viewed as a weakness but as a blessing. It opens the field wide for critical and creative educators.

What are the challenges and possibilities posed by 2002 BEC to the schools, the administrators, the teachers, teacher-training institutions, teacher organizations, and to the Department of Education?

The 2002 BEC empowers the schools to innovate, experiment, and discover what kind of integration works for them. They can let their creative juices flow and come up with their own concept of integration and their own mode of doing it. Their efforts, however, should be documented by embarking on a school-based research to determine its effectiveness, and then shared and disseminated to DepEd and the interested public.

The administrators are challenged to think of different schemes of loading so that the teachers can teach, do research, and do exciting things together. Many teachers,

especially of subjects that have been rendered “weak” because of integration, like Values Education, fear that they would lose their jobs since their teaching load would be greatly reduced. This should not be so. DepEd has not instituted a standard formula for scheduling but has only stated the number of hours for each subject. Again, the administrators are challenged to be creative in scheduling classes. Two specific possibilities that have been explored in integrative classes are teachers working in teams for 180 minutes a day (can be divided any way) and team teachers having a 45-minute daily planning period together. Lesson planning, after all, has been identified by DepEd as part of the teaching load to prevent underloading. Administrators can also encourage teachers to do action research, either individually or as a team. They can provide the teachers with training on how to do action research. This will enhance the professional growth of teachers and hopefully encourage them to pursue further studies. The system of peer coaching, which is the responsibility of Master Teachers, can be everybody’s responsibility. Administrators should have an eye for teachers who want to try integration and support their efforts.

Are teachers ready to implement integrated approaches? Teachers of subjects that have been integrated were used to teaching their field separately. How can a paradigm shift be effected? Teachers can collaborate with each other by doing cooperative lesson planning and team teaching. Integration is difficult to do if a teacher plans the lesson by herself. Subject teachers have their own expertise and it is easier for them to see possibilities of integration when they work closely together.

Teacher-training institutions can work hand in glove with DepEd by providing preservice and in-service education that will prepare teachers with competencies needed to implement BEC. The training of teachers should include instruction on various learning theories (e.g. multiple intelligences and learning styles); development and promotion of life skills; curriculum development that is creative and not prescriptive; action research; and critical and creative thinking. (The UP College of Education has strong curricular offerings in these subjects. It is one of a handful of teacher training-institutions that offers graduate courses in curriculum studies. The author teaches curriculum development and strategies to develop critical and creative thinking).

The various teacher organizations, especially those that promote specific subjects, are challenged to think beyond their subjects and to explore possibilities of working together to make learning more meaningful to pupils. Learning is not compartmentalized in the brain—it is interpreted and acted upon holistically. Teaching should therefore assist the pupils to integrate what they have learned. How can integration be done while preserving the integrity, the indigenous logic, and the structure of subjects? That is a challenge to subject-oriented teacher organizations. How can teacher organizations promote synergism and not turfism? That is an even greater challenge (that DepEd continues to hurdle).

The DepEd has started something that it is bound to carry to fruition. It should therefore institute a systematic monitoring system that would encourage schools to

implement the curriculum in accordance with its philosophy and principles. This should include a system of reporting problems and successes that might even merit instituting an award system. To have an overall view of the different learning areas, the Curriculum Division of DepEd can develop a Table of Specifications for all the concepts and skills, especially the life skills (including critical and creative thinking skills) and Filipino values that society would like to promote.

If DepEd is serious in encouraging schools to innovate, experiment, and create its own scheme of integration, it should just make the field aware that there are varied concepts of integration, but more importantly, it should formulate criteria for integration, not just prescribe modes of integration. The criteria will serve as guidelines for their initiatives and will also prevent abuse of the term. For instance, the integration of concepts, processes, or skills should (1) have educational value; (2) be natural and not artificial; (3) be true to the subjects; (4) be practical; (5) be cost-effective in terms of time; and (6) enhance the subjects.

Let me end with an anecdote about a little boy who asked his father for help in repairing his broken toy. When the job was done, the boy looked up and said, "Father, when I try to do things by myself, they go wrong. But when you and I work together, they turn out just fine." Let us join hands and work together for the 2002 BEC so that it will not be a surprise if it turns out fine.

PERLA B. MORAÑO
1996 Avon Gintong Ilawan Teodora Alonso Educator Awardee

The curriculum constitutes the sum total of learning experiences which the school offers to the learners. Its development is a dynamic process. Thus, it continues to evolve to meet the needs of its clientele. The 2002 Basic Education Curriculum (BEC) is one such instance of evolvement.

Since a lot of questions, comments, pro and con, have cropped up concerning the efficacy of this curriculum and the logic of its immediate implementation, going over it objectively to weigh its merits and demerits is in order.

A close look at the 2002 BEC would reveal the following strengths:

1. It addresses the problem of an overcrowded curriculum, which, per the results of studies conducted, is the reason for the unsatisfactory achievements of our students. An overcrowded curriculum hinders or delays the development of lifelong learning skills since coverage of the subject matter tends to take priority over in-depth learning.

A refined curriculum whose components have been reclustered into fewer learning areas with better integration of competencies and topics within and across these learning areas can help raise the level of achievement of our pupils. Furthermore, providing more time not for additional subject matter that will overload our learners but for the mastery of essential competencies and for personal analysis and reflection on the major concepts will give the learners ample time to devote to reflection, exploration and asking probing questions.

2. The restructured curriculum is less prescriptive and more flexible. This will pave the way for teachers to be more innovative and interdisciplinary in their instructional strategies and encourage the learners to think critically and creatively, allow them to pursue their meaningful interest, and make the teaching-learning endeavor a two-way traffic.
3. This curriculum promotes more mutual interaction between students and teachers, between students themselves, between students and instructional materials, between students and multimedia sources and between teachers of different disciplines.

The use of information technology and the greater emphasis on computer literacy in all the learning areas in every school where equipment is available make this curriculum interactive.

4. Values development is integral in all learning areas from the elementary to secondary levels. This makes every teacher of the 2002 curriculum a values educator. He/She can identify and contextualize the values inherent in his/her discipline and serves as a role model of the learners.
5. In this curriculum, Makabayan serves as a provision for a laboratory of life. It is a practice environment for holistic learning to develop a healthy personal and national self-identity. Among the learning areas, it promises to be the most experiential, interactive, interdisciplinary, and value-laden. It will be the learning area that will provide the Filipino learner the quality time to demonstrate practical knowledge and life skills that have been gained, especially the skills of empathy, vocational efficiency and problem-solving in daily life.
6. This curriculum considers the learner an active partner rather than an object of pedagogy. He takes the role of constructor of meaning, while the teacher serves as a facilitator, enabler and manager of learning.
7. Learning is assessed not solely on testing, but by using a variety of measures, which include the use of portfolio containing the student's reflections, logs, diaries, journals, and creative expressions. These provide authentic information on how students think and feel or what they have learned.
8. The focus is on students' growth in learning over time, emphasizing performance and application rather than knowledge.
9. Monitoring and evaluation are integrated components of this curriculum. It provides for pre-implementation monitoring and evaluation to assess progress and provide intervention where necessary.

Summing up, the 2002 BEC is considerably improved compared to its past counterparts in terms of learning areas, points of emphasis, and teaching-learning strategies. It is highly relevant with the times and can very adequately meet the needs of the NOW Filipino learner.

To embark on anything that departs from the ordinary way of doing things is never easy. Hence, the resistance to change by those who are directly affected by it is to be expected. Among the reasons for the negative response to this curriculum are the following: (1) the limited time horizon for the preparation of materials and training of teachers; and (2) the apprehension of teachers that some of them may be dislodged from their positions.

The above-named problems have been anticipated and addressed accordingly. Materials have been prepared and replicated for teachers' use. Training by groups was

conducted this summer in all divisions throughout the country. Intensification of this training—the ironing out of kinks—is being done in all schools in their school-based meetings done before the opening of this new school year.

Anent the apprehension of some teachers regarding the possibility of being dislodged from their positions, this has been assuaged by the fact that the curriculum in question is not new. It is simply restructured and HEKASI, MSEP, EPP, EKAWP and Industrial Arts teachers will handle the same subject areas but the stress is on thematic teaching where close collaboration among them is a must.

Since this new curriculum includes in its features, close monitoring and evaluation of all activities relative to its implementation, problems and loopholes can be readily identified and adjustment maybe made in order to achieve the desired learning process. The quality of support to the schools shall equally be evaluated to contextualize results, inform policy, and improve practice.

What counts, therefore, at this point, is the will to give the new BEC a fighting chance to prove its efficacy. It is worth trying.

NERISSA DURIAN DAVID
1995 Avon Gintong Ilawan Teodora Alonso Educator Awardee

Content of the 2002 Basic Education Curriculum (BEC)

The integration of basic Science and Health concepts in Makabayan for Grade 1-3 and the nurturance of the child's multiple intelligence, particularly that of their musical, bodily-kinesthetic and visual-spatial intelligence, shall make the learning process more meaningful and challenging to the learners. The process of integrating learning areas effectively poses a challenge to the teacher's creativity, resourcefulness and diligence. Hence, it is suggested that quality and productivity (Q & P) circles be held regularly with the teachers to aid them in the integration process.

The engagement of pupils in character-building activities to develop good behavior and values that are manifested and therefore observable as they learn the concepts of good citizenship and cultural heritage shall help maintain and sustain their enthusiasm and interest, thus making the learning process a source of joy and success. The teachers, however, give so much focus on the subject matter that the infusion of values is left out. School heads and master teachers must therefore consistently follow-up classroom teaching.

In Grades 4-6, content focuses on Heograpiya, Kasaysayan, at Sibika where they are developed into an aware and responsible citizenry not only of the country but of the world—to become globally competitive. The teachers may not have a clear perspective of what a globally competitive 4th, 5th, or 6th grader is in terms of behavioral manifestations. A specific definition of a globally competitive child needs to be formulated.

Methods

During the training of teachers, they were oriented on some modes of integrative teaching such as thematic teaching, content-based instruction, focusing inquiry, and generic competency model. They conducted workshops that enable teachers prepare instructional models based on the specific steps for each type of strategy/technique. The preservice preparation of some teachers, however, leaves much to be desired. It is about time that the Department of Education (DepEd) articulate this need to the teacher-education institutions.

In many schools in Manila, one of which is Dr. Albert Elementary School and also Legarda Elementary School where I am now assigned, integration of subject areas, multiple

intelligence learning, and higher order thinking skills have already been the focus of learning-teaching endeavor. This means that many teachers are prepared to implement the above-mentioned methods and that they can even go beyond these suggested methods. Filipino teachers who are really dedicated to the service are more than ready to implement these suggested methods and can even go beyond them.

Implementation-Feasibility

Teacher Preparedness

The pedagogical expertise of teachers in the different methods suggested is generally within the satisfactory level considering the fact that focus on the higher order thinking skills and the multiple intelligence in the teaching-learning process has done for the past five years or more. It is on this premise that I would like to believe that teachers are generally ready to implement the BEC 2002. The lack of pedagogical expertise among a number of teachers should serve as a challenge to the school heads and the instructional support system composed of master teachers and supervisors.

Instructional Materials

The Philippine Education Learning Competencies was a springboard of the BEC learning continuum. The BEC learning competencies were further studied by subject experts (supervisors) who arrived at a learning continuum that has an organized list of learning tasks per learning unit. With this provision, the teachers have grouped themselves into teams to prepare lesson plans for their use.

It is only a matter of diligence and consistent follow-up of the school head as well as adequate time for the teachers to be able to come up with quality lesson plans for each learning task. Quality lesson plan entails the preparation of the plan, practice exercises, devices and other multi-media resources to make the teaching effective.

I am suggesting ways to enliven and enrich curriculum implementation:

1. Develop teachers awareness of what it takes to be an effective teacher. This must be followed by internalization of said traits.
2. School heads should hold Q and P Circles—quality and productivity circles where the following are taken up:
 - 2.1 Specific traits that need to be developed by the group.
 - 2.2 Preparation of quality lesson plans—and the paraphernalia that will go with each plan (workshop as well as “writeshop”)
 - 2.3 Problem/concerns that effect the teaching-learning process

3. All teachers should know by heart Bloom's taxonomy of thinking skills and Howard Gardner's multiple intelligences together with the manifestations, projects, activities that go with them.
4. Master teachers should be trained in preparing curriculum maps and curriculum matrices to aid other teachers in the preparation of lessons that enable pupils to engage in activities suited to their learning styles.

PROGRAM

- 9:00–9:15 a.m. Registration of Participants
- 9:15–9:30 Welcome Remarks
Felice P. Sta. Maria
President, Atocha Alternatives
Chair, Social and Human Sciences Committee of the UNESCO
National Commission of the Philippines (UNACOM)
- Virginia A. Miralao, Ph.D.*
Executive Director, Philippine Social Science Council
Member, UNACOM Social and Human Sciences Committee
- 9:30–9:50 Roundtable Goals and Objectives
- Developing Guidelines for Workshop Structure
(breakout sessions and/or plenaries)
- Florentino H. Hornedo, Ph.D.*
Professor, Ateneo de Manila University and the
University of Sto. Tomas
Vice-Chair, UNACOM Social and Human Sciences Committee
- Zenaida T. Domingo, Ph.D.*
Chief, Business Development Office, SEAMEO-INNOTECH
- 9:50–10:00 Coffee Break
- 10:00–11:30 1st RTD Session
- 11:30–12:00 Presentation of the O.B. Montessori School Curriculum
Preciosa S. Soliven, Ph.D.
UNACOM Secretary-General
- 12:00–1:00 Lunch Break
- 1:00–2:30 p.m. 2nd RTD Session
Zenaida T. Domingo
- 2:30–3:00 Synthesis/Wrap Up
Florentino H. Hornedo

PARTICIPANTS

METROBANK OUTSTANDING TEACHERS

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Formerly with UPIS, now Director of the UP-CHED Zonal Research Center
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Leodivico C. Lacsamana

Former faculty of La Salle Greenhills, now Professor at the University of Asia and the Pacific
Specialization: Filipino and Social Studies

Lilia F. Vergara

Retired faculty member of Philippine Science High School, and now Consultant at Mapua High School
Specialization: Chemistry

Raquel L. Pasigpasigan, Ed.D.

Former faculty member of Justo Lukban E.S., now with San Juan de Dios Educational Foundation
Specialization: General Education (elementary)

Maria P. Magana

Master Teacher at Bagong Barangay E.S. in Pandacan, Manila
Specialization: Journalism

Patricia C. Jocson

Ramon Magsaysay High School, España, Manila
Specialization: English

Lilia T. Santos

Master Teacher II at Aurora A. Quezon Elementary School
Specialization: Mathematics (elementary)

AVON GINTONG ILAWAN TEODORA ALONSO EDUCATOR AWARDEES

Nerissa Durian David

former Principal, Dr. Alejandro Albert Elementary School, now the Principal of
Legarda Elementary School
Specialization: English

Perla B. Moraño

Principal, Gen. M. Hizon Elementary School
Specialization: English and Journalism

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