

THE CHALLENGE TO FILIPINO EDUCATORS

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The Philippine archipelago, which is composed of 7 640 islands, still experienced cultural and sociological diversity from then up to now. These cultural differences, beliefs, and unique practices are sometimes considered hindrances to promoting unity in Philippine society. Different colonizers in the past are still influential to the Filipinos' philosophy and way of life. As Francisco Sionil Jose stated, "We are a country without memory," this quotation reflects why the history of misunderstanding repeats itself up to the current era.

Changes in the social, economic, cultural, technological, and political domains, according to De Guzman (2003), must be the emphasis of every educational system. In relation to these, education in the Philippines has undergone multiple stages of development from the pre-Spanish times to the present. Thus, in meeting the needs of the society, as stated on the Department of Education Website, education serves as the focus of priorities of the leadership at certain periods in our national struggle as a race. Relating this to the issues and problems in the educational system, the educational philosophy, vision, missions, aims, and mandates intends to unify Filipino races, cultures, religions, and genders.

The purpose of the DepEd mission is to safeguard and promote every Filipino's right to a quality, fair, culture-based, and complete basic education in an environment that is child-friendly, gender-sensitive, safe, and motivating. DepEd clearly wants to produce literate, functional, productive, and innovative individuals which will contribute to the nation's progress. The educators' task is to make sure that the aims, programs, and

mandates of the educational system will reflect in the products, the diversity of social and cultural aspects will not affect the quality of education in the Philippines and, the assurance to address the problems and issues regarding races, gender, religion, and other differences in the school level must be ensured.

Habitat for Humanity (2020) mentioned in one of their articles that education helps people become better citizens, and get a better-paid job, which shows the difference between good and bad. Education instills in us the value of hard work while also supporting us in our development and growth. Hence, we can shape a better society to live in by knowing and respecting rights, laws, and regulations. Additionally, schools never stop integrating Filipino values, languages, etc. into the academic and non-academic aspects. A culturally responsive curriculum is best suited to this heterogeneous culture. Schools that recognize their student population's diversity recognize the need of teaching cultural awareness.

According to Lynch (2014), teachers who want to create cultural awareness in their classroom should show their pupils that they sincerely care about their cultural, emotional, and intellectual requirements. Hence, educators continuously develop and innovate several strategies that they can use to build trusting relationships with diverse students and incorporate cultural awareness into the classroom setting.

On the other hand, society and culture also affect the educational system. Society and culture influence how people see the world, how people see the community where we live in and how we tap or communicate with each other. Being a part of a culture, both educators' and learners' society and culture influence their speech, actions, learnings, and behavior. Thus, the connection between society, culture, and education really matter.

The Philippines society with a population of more than 70 000 000 and with a high population growth rate, still facing huge problems of poverty, unemployment, underemployment, and particularly

environmental degradation. Also, crab mentality still exists. Not to mention the current pandemic they are facing today. As educators, the teachers should make a difference by motivating learners to contribute meaningfully to building a unified society as well as the nation. The challenge to Filipino educators is to strategize and be committed to resolving and recovering from the lapses brought by the pandemic and another enemy, the cultural diversity.

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