

OUT-OF-FIELD TEACHERS: THE UNFURNISHED WARRIORS AGAINST ILLITERACY

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When one talks about quality education, qualified educators are contributors to attaining this great aftermath. An 'equipped teacher' typically needs years of university education, practice teaching, licensure exam, and other training to be able to deliver lessons effectively to learners.

Yet, the study of Bayani & Guhao (2017) concluded that adequate instructor placement is crucial in an effective teaching-learning experience. It was also mentioned in the study that out-of-field teaching can threaten a student's ability to learn. The same results can be true not only in non-Filipino majors but in the whole array of educators within the country.

This claim was supported by the findings of Co et.al. (2021) in which it was concluded that the teaching and learning process in out-of-field teaching is harmful to the educational system. This problem is worsened by the implementation of K-12 in which the shortage of highly qualified teachers for every field of specialization is lacking, according to the study.

As a result, it is not surprising that according to an international study conducted by the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (2018), the Philippines ranked in the low 70s among 79 countries in terms of reading, mathematics, and science. Educators' mismatch or out-of-field teachers, as studies call it, may not be alone to blame, yet experts suggest that it is a significant factor.

Imagine technical professionals, for example, hard science personnel teaching high schoolers elementary algebra or general biology without proper theories on general education. The science of the subject itself is not in question, they may possess a higher understanding of the nature of the subject. What is in question is the delivery of the lesson. How will he or she go to adjust the lessons based on the individual student's capability and learning curve? How does he or she go to assess students, prepare exams and prepare adjustments based on the evaluation?

On the other hand, imagine another scenario wherein a Bachelor of Science in Education major in the Filipino Language teaches pre-calculus or analytic geometry to students, or a BS Education major in Biology who teaches physical education. The quality of information and knowledge transfer will surely be compensated compared to when it is delivered by the right individual. This is the main reason why professionals specialize in a specific field; because specialization exists. There is a right authority to perform a specific job. A surgical operation cannot be performed by an elementary teacher, the same way that medical doctors are incomparable to teachers in terms of teaching children. It is simply because an outstanding output can only be delivered by the right individual.

In the education world, we educators are not just experimenting with guinea pigs, we have entrusted a part of our student's future. Thus, incompetence, misalignment, and mismatch should have no room in the warfare against illiteracy. These shortcomings will just result in another nationwide mediocrity. What we should bear in mind is that we educators are dealing with the children's future. Every decision and policy should be well thought out because the future of the country is at stake.

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