

## STRENGTHENING VALUES EDUCATION IN THE PHILIPPINES AND ITS IMPACT ON GRADE 7 STUDENTS

*by:*

**Rhea Joyce C. Kries**

*Teacher I, Justice Emilio Angeles Gancayco Memorial High School*

The Department of Education (DepEd) in the Philippines has recently introduced a new subject called Values Education, replacing the previous Edukasyon sa Pagpapakatao (ESP). This change, which took effect in the School Year 2024-2025, aims to strengthen the values system of students, particularly those in Grade 7.

The decision to replace ESP with Values Education stems from the need to provide a more comprehensive and structured approach to instilling values in students. ESP, which focused on human development and moral reasoning, was often criticized for its lack of a clear framework and consistency in implementation. The new Values Education subject aims to address these issues by offering a more systematic and cohesive curriculum that emphasizes the importance of values in personal and social development.

The primary goal of Values Education is to develop students' moral and ethical values, helping them become responsible and conscientious individuals. The subject aims to instill core values such as respect, honesty, responsibility, and empathy, promote critical thinking by encouraging students to reflect on their values and make informed decisions based on ethical principles, and foster a positive learning environment by emphasizing values and creating a supportive and respectful atmosphere in schools.

The implementation of Values Education in Grade 7 is expected to have a significant impact on students' personal and social development. By providing a structured framework for values education, the subject aims to help students internalize and practice core values in their daily lives. This, in turn, can lead to improved behavior,

better interpersonal relationships, and a more positive school environment. Moreover, the new subject is designed to be adaptable to different contexts and situations, allowing teachers to tailor their lessons to the specific needs of their students. This flexibility ensures that the values education program remains relevant and effective in promoting ethical behavior and personal growth.

The introduction of Values Education in the Philippines represents a significant step towards strengthening the values system of students. By replacing ESP with a more structured and comprehensive curriculum, DepEd aims to provide students with the tools they need to develop into responsible and ethical individuals. The success of this initiative will depend on the effective implementation of the program and the commitment of teachers, students, and parents to uphold and promote core values.

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