

TEACHING NATIONALISM THROUGH LOCAL HISTORY: STRATEGIES FOR THE 21ST CENTURY

by:

John Dean G. Regondola

Teacher III, Pablo Roman National High School

Teaching nationalism through local history, especially in a culturally rich setting like Bataan in the Philippines, requires a thoughtful approach that integrates historical sites, museums, and narratives into educational strategies fit for the 21st century. This region, known for its pivotal role in Philippine history, particularly during World War II, offers a wealth of stories and landmarks that can deeply resonate with students.

Local history empowers students to recognize the enduring values of courage, resilience, and patriotism embedded in their cultural heritage. By integrating historical sites, museums, interactive activities, and community engagement into educational practices, educators can inspire a new generation of Filipinos who are not only knowledgeable about their past but also committed to shaping a collective future grounded in national pride and unity.

Bataan, situated in Central Luzon, holds immense historical significance due to the bravery and resilience displayed during the Battle of Bataan. One of the most iconic sites is the Mt. Samat National Shrine, also known as Dambana ng Kagitingan (Shrine of Valor). This monument atop Mt. Samat commemorates the Filipino and American soldiers who fought gallantly during the war. Visiting this shrine not only connects students to their national history but also instills a sense of pride and reverence for those who sacrificed for freedom.

In addition to monumental sites, Bataan's museums play a crucial role in educating the youth about nationalism. Museo ng Bataan, for instance, showcases artifacts,

dioramas, and documents that depict the province's journey through history. By engaging with these exhibits, students can grasp the struggles and triumphs of their ancestors, fostering a deeper appreciation for their cultural heritage.

To make history come alive, educators can design interactive activities that immerse students in the past. For example, conducting mock interviews with local veterans or descendants of war heroes allows students to hear firsthand accounts of courage and sacrifice. Such activities enhance historical understanding and cultivate empathy and respect for those who shaped the nation's identity.

Linking past events to present-day issues helps students understand the relevance of nationalism in today's context. Discussions on the principles of democracy, human rights, and social justice can be framed through historical events such as the Bataan Death March. By analyzing these connections, students develop critical thinking skills and a sense of responsibility toward shaping a better future for their country.

Collaborating with local historians, community leaders, and cultural advocates enriches the learning experience. Field trips to lesser-known historical sites in Bataan, guided by experts, provide students with diverse perspectives and insights into the multifaceted nature of nationalism. Encouraging students to actively participate in community projects that preserve and promote local heritage further strengthens their sense of belonging and civic duty.

Incorporating digital tools and multimedia resources can enhance the accessibility and engagement of historical education. Virtual tours of Mt. Samat and interactive timelines of key historical events allow students to explore independently while supplementing classroom learning. Utilizing educational apps and platforms tailored to Philippine history ensures that students can access accurate information in an engaging strategy.

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