

'Edukasyon sa Pagpapakatao' and Education for the Love of the World

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Abstract

The main contention of this paper is that *Edukasyon sa Pagpapakatao* (EsP) is a subject dedicated to teach human ethics. The issue about EsP is inspired by Hannah Arendt's philosophy of education, as she wanted education for the love of the world. Education for the young individuals, (ages 6-15) the recipients of the EsP curriculum, should be focused on making the students feel at home and love the world instead of teaching them mainly on how to live an ethical life. The world is all about the political structures and laws that stabilizes human plurality and spontaneity. As political structures and laws are dependent on people, active citizenry that values the rule of law and legal authorities are always required. That is why, EsP should be for the love of the world, emphasis on the necessity of the political life at the early age.

Keywords: Education, Hannah Arendt, Edukasyon sa Pagpapakatao, Political Philosophy

Background and Nature of Edukasyon sa Pagpapakatao (EsP)

EsP is one of the subjects that is part of the new DepEd K-12 curriculum. Students from grades 1–10 are required to take this subject. Each grade level has corresponding competencies for students to achieve before they could pass the subject. DepEd had issued *Edukasyon sa Pagpapakatao Gabay Pangkurikulum* last December 2013 containing the necessary information regarding the subject. The description of the subject says:

Ang Edukasyon sa Pagpapakatao (EsP) ay isa sa mga asignatura ng Pinaunlad na Programa ng Batayang Edukasyon na K to 12 na gagabay at huhubog sa mga kabataan. Tunguhin nito ang paghubog ng kabataang nagpapasya at kumikilos nang mapanagutan tungo sa kabutihang panlahat. Nangangahulugan ito na lilingin at pauunlarin ang **pagkataong etikal** ng bawat mag-aaral. Upang maipamalas ito, kailangang magtaglay siya ng limang pangunahing kakayahan (macro skills): **pag-unawa, pagninilay, pagsangguni, pagpapasya at pagkilos.**¹

Moreover, DepEd prescribes strategies on how to teach this subject.

Ang mga pangunahing dulog na gagamitin sa pagtuturo ng mga konsepto ay ang pagpapasyang etikal (ethical decision making) sa pamamagitan ng pagsusuri ng suliranin o isyu), ang Panlipunan–Pandamdaming Pagkatuto (Social-Emotional

¹ Department of Education, “K to 12 Edukasyon sa Pagpapakatao Gabay Pangkurikulum” (Philippines: 2013, 6)

Learning), at pagpapalano ng kursong akademiko o teknikal-bokasyonal.²

Wherein ethical decision making is describe as making a decision with the preference for the good and the betterment of the human person and the process includes

- (a) pag-alam sa mga detalye ng sitwasyon at
- (b) maingat na pagsasaalang-alang ng mga moral na pagpapahalaga na mahalaga sa isang sitwasyon. Mahalaga rin dito ang pagiging sensitibo sa mga aspetong moral ng mga sitwasyon sa pang-araw-araw na buhay at ang kamalayan sa mga tao o pangkat na maaapektuhan ng pasiya.³

Social-Emotional Learning, on the other hand, is being able to know and govern thyself, to empathize with others, to make responsible decisions, to establish good relationships with others and be able to face challenges effectively. These skills are necessary in order that students will become successful in life. Furthermore, the overarching philosophy of the subject that serves as conceptual basis says

[EsP ay] batay sa pilosopiyang Personalismo tungkol sa pagkatao ng tao at sa Etika ng Kabutihang Asal (Virtue Ethics). Ayon sa pilosopiya ng Personalismo, nakaugat lagi sa pagpapakatao ang ating mga ugnayan. Nililikha natin ang ating pagpapakatao sa ating pakikipagkapwa. Sa Virtue Ethics naman, sinasabing ang isang mabuting tao ay nagsasabuhay ng mga virtue o mabuting gawi

² *Ibid*, p. 4.

³ "K to 12 Edukasyon sa Pagpapakatao Gabay Pangkurikulum".

(habits) at umiiwas sa mga bisyo o masamang gawi. Samakatwid, ang nagpapabuti sa tao ay ang pagtataglay at ang pagsasabuhay ng mga mabuting gawi.⁴

The concise statements that comprise the philosophy of the entire EsP subject is very commendable as it is able to summarize the important points like the social and the individual aspect of becoming a better person likewise the need to act or live according to what is good.

Ang tunguhin o “outcome” ng pag-aaral sa batayang edukasyon ay ang panlahatang pag-unlad taglay ang mga kasanayan sa ika-dalawampu’t isang siglo. Taglay ito ng isang mag-aaral kung mayroon siyang mga kakayahang pangkaalaman, pandamdamin at pangkaasalan na magbibigay sa kanya ng kakayahan upang: (1) mamuhay at magtrabaho (2) malinang ang kanyang mga potensiyal (3) magpasiya nang mapanuri at batay sa impormasyon (4) makakilos nang epektibo sa lipunan at pamayanan sa konteksto ng sandaigdigan upang mapabuti ang uri ng kanyang pamumuhay at ng kanyang lipunan.⁵

The supposed outcome of learning based on the paragraph above can be summarized as the students journey towards becoming a good citizen in the country. In this regard EsP plays a vital role in molding students so that they could contribute for the progress of the society. However, one philosopher – Hannah Arendt has a disturbing question about the seemingly normal assignment of education in producing good citizens. Education towards good citizenship,

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ *Ibid.*

for Arendt, manifests an incorrect priorities of values especially among curriculum designers.

Hannah Arendt on Education

Ideal education, in Arendtian perspective, should be devoid of any proto-totalitarian elements and the only way to achieve this character is to make education separate from politics and social pressure as they always promote agenda. Promotion of a particular agenda means emphasizing one aspect while setting aside other concerns. Hannah Arendt's entire philosophy could be appreciated well if it is read with the background of her first-hand experiences under the rule of Nazis in Germany. Actually, she is a Jewish philosopher and her philosophy is her rationalization after she experienced the brutality of the Nazis during world war two. In fact her entire philosophy could be considered as an antidote against the risk of totalitarianism. She coined her entire project as 'thinking what we are doing' hoping that we will never allow totalitarianism to happen again. In line with this project is her stand about education. Arendt made it clear that

Education is the point at which we decide whether we love the world enough to assume responsibility for it, and by the same token save it from that ruin which except for renewal, except for the coming of the new and the young, would be inevitable. And education, too, is where we decide whether we love our children enough not to expel them from our world and leave them to their own devices, nor to strike from their hands their chance of undertaking something new, something unforeseen by us, but to prepare

them in advance for the task of renewing a common world⁶.

If we are going to follow the Arendtian view of education *for the love of the world*, in practice the first consequence of this would be clear understanding that the function of the school is “to teach children what the world is like and not to instruct them in the art of living”⁷. This is the main character that distinguishes Arendtian view of education. When Arendt writes of the world she means all the political structures and laws that stabilizes human plurality and spontaneity. Political structures and laws are manifestations of how humanity civilized and evolved away from the laws of nature. Education, in this sense, is making students feel at home and being in-love with the world. Education for the love of the world is grounded on the past. This particular type of education needs a realistic assessment of what the world of the past and the present can offer; critical thinking is required when student comes to the point of deciding whether to love or change the world. Likewise, education is predicted on the basic fact that human beings are born into the world. Young people come into the world and, because they are newcomers and uninitiated, need to be educated, which means they must be introduced to the world. Parents do this to some degree in the home, bringing the child from the home into wider world. But the primary institutions in which children are educated, in which they are led into the world, are schools.

Education, in this regard, can be understood more using Arendt’s clear-cut distinction of the *public* and *private* realms⁸. She has a comprehensive discussion regarding the difference of the two realms but she categorized education

⁶ Hannah Arendt, *Between Past and Future: Eight Exercises in Political Thought*, New York: Penguin Books: 1961, 196.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 195.

⁸ Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1958.

under the *private* realm because of these characteristics: (1) education has an end (2) and educators who are advanced in knowledge compare to their students have authority inside the classroom. A definite end/purpose at the same time an authority figure are essential elements that should be absent in the *public* realm of Hannah Arendt. *Public* realm is categorized by freedom and action. In fact in her discussions, *public* realm provides space for the individual to showcase his uniqueness and spontaneity through speech or discourse with other equals. The individual has to appear or stand out from the community of equals as he joined in the discussion or discourse. Arendt was actually alluding to the *agora* like experience of the Greeks where democratic spirit started.

Education is part of the *private* realm as Arendt emphasized that children are not yet prepared to join in the *agora* like democratic exchanges of opinions and ideas because they are not acquainted with the *world*. There are three key points that should be familiarized in her notion of formal education:

- (1) the classroom is not to be turned into a theatre where political dramas play out . . . ;
- (2) pedagogy works to introduce students to their inherited past, . . . ;
- (3) pedagogy looks to the future focused on the ecumenical efforts that will be required in order to change the trajectory of our history by initiating new beginnings as members of a collective speech community⁹.

The interpretation of Arendt's philosophy of education above aptly summarizes her vision of an ideal classroom. Foremost, Arendt's philosophy is concerned with human natality or the potentiality of every human individual

⁹ James Magrini, "An Ontological Notion of Learning by the Philosophy of Hannah Arendt" in *Philosophy Scholarship*. Paper 34. <http://dc.cod.edu/philosophypub/34> (2012), p. 5.

to start something new as a manifestation of his/her being spontaneous and unique creature. Education is tasked to develop the inherent promise of the individual that is why classroom experiences should not be biased to a singular agenda or the individuality of the child which is essential for him/her to become a participatory and contributory member of the public realm will be stifled. On the other hand, "Insofar as the child is not yet acquainted with the world, he must be gradually introduced to it; insofar as he is new, care must be taken that this new thing comes to fruition in relation to the world as it is"¹⁰. Arendt sounds conservative in this as she "presupposes that children who are to be enlightened and awakened to their potential as "new beginnings" are in need of guidance and require "authority"; it also demands that teachers assume the role of authority figures; lastly, this view stresses "learning" above "doing"¹¹. In many ways, Hannah Arendt has something negative against progressive education. She made three significant points to sum up how she understood progressive education:

1. There exist a child's world and a society formed among children that are autonomous and must insofar as possible be left to them to govern;
2. Under the influence of modern psychology and the tenets of pragmatism, pedagogy has developed into a science of teaching in general in such a way as to be wholly emancipated from the actual material to be taught. A teacher, so it was thought, is a man who can simply teach anything; his training is in teaching, not in the mastery of any particular subject.;

¹⁰ *Between Past and Future: Eight Exercises in Political Thought*, p. 189.

¹¹ *An Ontological Notion of Learning by the Philosophy of Hannah Arendt*, p. 3.

3. Students ... can know and understand only what they have done yourself, and its application to education is as primitive as it is obvious: to substitute, insofar as possible, doing for learning¹².

Before going to the points raised by Arendt against progressive education, it is fair to admit that she was not well-informed about the intricacies of what she was criticizing especially regarding how progressive education is understood today. Obviously, she was not well-acquainted with the learner-centered education that is why she was uncomfortable of the idea that children will manage their own learning and teachers will only guide and facilitate the entire learning process. Another point is her criticism on the lack of specialization among teachers, which is highly commendable as the content of learning may suffer without teacher's expertise. However, mastery of teaching principles and strategies is a requirement for a teacher to become effective for without this necessary skill classroom management will suffer. Moreover, proper employment of teaching strategies makes learning more interesting classroom activities more engaging on the part of the learners. Lastly, she points out active learning or learning by doing. Progressive education requires teachers to plan classroom activities that involves the learners because studies have proven that learners better learned when they are actively involved in the entire learning process. That is why, experiments in science subjects are becoming common.

Arendt's negative attitude towards progressive education is best understood in the context of her unique view of the purpose of education which is for the love of the world. Students, obviously, have limited experiences regarding the value of politics and the important role of the

¹² *Between Past and Future: Eight Exercises in Political Thought*, pp. 181-182.

political structure as well as the rule of law in guaranteeing basic rights and liberties. The teacher has to assert his authority especially in emphasizing the value of politics. This important lesson could not be learned actively by students e.g. by doing experimentations. What is then the qualifications of the teacher?

The teacher's qualification consists in knowing the world and being able to instruct others about it, but his authority rests on his assumption of responsibility for that world. Vis-à-vis the child it is as though he were a representative of all adult inhabitants, pointing out the details and saying the child: this is our world.¹³

To represent the world, though, we have to understand it, in the old sense of standing in for the world—of being its representative. If the world is the world of things, then the teacher who understands the world is the one who can bring it before students for them to learn it. Teachers show students how the world works, so that students may graduate and take their place in the world. Likewise, by representing the world to students in its richness the teacher preserves the world for its future adults by showing it to students as it is. The key is to present the world in such a way that it is both true to the teacher's expertise and yet still recognizable to the students as having a place for them. This requires a careful balance between the teacher's expertise and the students' newness. This way of representing the world is a creative act that enables students to end their education and care for the world in the new ways that they create. Thus, education is about opening students to the fact of what is. Teaching them about the world as it is. It is then up to the student, the young, to judge whether the world that they have inherited is loveable and

¹³*Between Past and Future: Eight Exercises in Political Thought*, p. 189.

worthy of retention, or whether it must be changed. The teacher is not responsible for changing the world; rather the teacher nurtures new citizens who are capable of judging the world on their own.

In other words, the teacher must be conservative in the sense that his or her role is to “cherish and protect something – the child against the world, the world against the child, the new against the old, the old against the new”¹⁴. The teacher conserves both the world as it is – insofar as he teaches the child what is rather than what should be or what will be – and the child in her newness – by refusing to tell the child what will be or should be, and thus allowing the child the experience of freedom to rebel against the world when and if the time is right.

EsP in Relation to Education for the Love of the World

EsP aside from the specific competencies for every grade level it has also its own keystone standards.

K – Baitang 3

Naipamamalas ng mag-aaral ang pag-unawa sa konsepto at gawaing nagpapakita ng pananagutang pansarili, pampamilya, pagmamahal sa kapwa/ pamayanan, sa bansa at sa Diyos tungo sa maayos

Baitang 4 – 6

Naipamamalas ng mag-aaral ang pag-unawa sa konsepto at gawaing nagpapakita ng pananagutang pansarili, pampamilya, pagmamahal sa kapwa, sa bansa/ daigdig at sa Diyos tungo sa

Baitang 7 – 10

Naipamamalas ng mag-aaral ang pag-unawa sa mga konsepto sa pananagutang pansarili, pagkatao ng tao, pamilya at pakikipagkapwa, lipunan, paggawa at mga pagpapahalagang moral at nagpapasiya at kumikilos nang mapanagutan tungo sa kabutihang panlahat upang mamuhay nang may kaayusan at

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 189.

at masayang
pamumuhay.

kabutihang
panlahat.

kaligayahan¹⁵

The keystone standards reveal that the main end of education is not only about the introduction of children to the world but it is more towards the instruction of the art of living. This is not actually bad as it is good for the individual as well as for the country as a whole. But an educational system that would produce good citizens is too good to be true.

There is no singular definition that could encapsulate what a good citizen is. However, Arendt's experiences under the atrocious rule of the Nazis made her realize that citizenship requires stable political world and active citizenry to maintain it. Political system houses a solid structure of rights guaranteed by law and since constitutions are only pieces of paper unless they are upheld by constantly renewed consent, the citizens need to understand the importance of such institutions and be prepared to value the conservation of their republic above their private interests.

The answer to the horrors of totalitarianism is not to be found in personal morality, however exalted, but that only worldly institutions, built in the space between plural men and kept in being by their active consent, can rescue us from "the darkness of the human heart"¹⁶.

All that is necessary is that we should be committed to *political* solutions to political problems: that we should be

¹⁵ K to 12 Edukasyon sa Pagpapakatao Gabay Pangkurikulum, p. 6.

¹⁶ Margaret Canovan, *Hannah Arendt a Reinterpretation of her Political Thought*, (New York : Cambridge University Press: 1992), p. 201.

willing to make and keep agreements with one another, to establish lasting institutions to guard the rights we guarantee one another, and to devote ourselves as citizens maintaining and improving the public world that lies between us. Education must take an active part in inculcating to the young minds of students the necessity of loving the world as they are still young and in need of proper orientation of what the world is like. To maintain the world is the responsibility of education specifically the smooth passage of the young from the private to the public realm. Instead of an education that tries to strive towards making the child a 'good citizen', ideal education should inculcate the value of citizens' participation in political affairs rather than being engrossed with their private lives.

Conclusion

The value of politically active and participative citizenry is one of the aspects that is wanting in the current EsP subject. Though it can be justified that it can be tackled during discussions as it is implicitly part of the subject but it would be better if it is considered as part of the macro-skills. Politics and politicians themselves do not enjoy positive perception in our society today. No wonder only a few would want to engage or be part of the entire political exercises. This is evident in the form of negative comments that can be observed in different media about politics and how young individuals are disillusioned to our democratic society. Political apathy is the new normal phenomenon happening today. Though it is not considered a major issue by many but Arendt has a point when she emphasized how valuable citizens' participation is in order to check our political system. If most of the citizens become indifferent there are tendencies that a singular dominant group would take the control and it will result to another totalitarian regime. Needless to discuss because history has already a verdict that totalitarian regime will only result to violence and destruction of humanity.

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