



Integrating Discipline in the Basic Education Curriculum

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Abstract

This study examines the philosophy behind the *Dabawenyo DCPlinado* Curriculum Integration Program. It looks into the problems, issues, and goals that the program intends to address. The pedagogical framework used recognizes the universal dimension of ethical learning, but acknowledges at the same time the big challenges and nuances given the unique circumstances that students and people in general are in. It responds to the real intent of values education, which is the moral development of individuals and society as a whole. While recognizing the negative connotation of the concept of discipline, the argument is that without it, peace and progress cannot be achieved. Discipline has nothing to do with punishment. It is about the conviction to commit oneself in order to accomplish an important task or goal. This sense of commitment is important in being a good or responsible citizen.

Keywords: Dabawenyo DCPlinado; Values education; Discipline; Virtue Ethics

Introduction

This study provides the context, basic concepts, and philosophy behind the *Dabawenyo DCPlinado* Curriculum Integration Program. It seeks to highlight the importance of moral values and adherence to societal rules that promote respect for others, self-discipline, and a person's sense of accountability. The purpose and intent of the holistic approach to values education is to develop well-rounded citizens who are upright in their moral conduct and behavior. The goal is to pursue the development of a society that is founded on forming decent and dignified individuals who are morally grounded in the idea of mutual respect and equal dignity.

When it comes to the concept of discipline, there is a negative connotation to the same. But a look into its philosophical dimension reveals that discipline is less concerned about punishment. It has something to do with the desire to accomplish something that is worth doing. The vision of this curricular program is the formation of citizens who are law-abiding and in solidarity with each other in the pursuit of the common good. The dynamics of the integration are meant to create an inclusive, sustainable, and well-ordered society. People, rich and poor alike, must feel safe and secure in their everyday life.

On top of the governance agenda of the City Government of Davao is public safety and sustainable development.¹ This desire is anchored in the concept of self-discipline. The principle of law and order is crucial to development. Investors want peace and security. Political stability and equal opportunities are important. Dabawenyo DCPlinado intends nothing less than a peaceful and inclusive community for all. In our time, the economy depends on the contributions of our migrant workers.² The education of the youth should be innovative to create better opportunities for the next generation and beyond.

¹ "12-Point Agenda." *Official Website of the City Government of Davao*. <https://www.davaocity.gov.ph/know-davao-city/12-point-agenda/>

² Ryan Urbano. "Global Justice and the Plight of Filipino Migrant Workers." *Journal of Asian and African Studies* 2011, 47 (6): 606.

Respect for Others in Society

A city cannot allow any type of discrimination to happen. People must treat each other with utmost respect. Even if our circumstances are unequal, we have the same moral worth as human beings. Values education is critical. This curriculum integration program reinforces the same because it seeks to fulfill its function beyond the classroom. This is because society needs to address any violation of the dignity of humans. For this reason, the program will be mainstreamed in order to expand its reach and provide a moral framework for all the citizens of Davao City. The approach towards the grassroots will ensure that more people will become aware of the relevance of respect for people in making a community inclusive. Inclusivity is a vital component in securing the future of the city.

It is the mission of every government to protect the dignity of each individual. Governing society must be based on ethical values that define for every person the worth of each human life. Society cannot allow those who are in power to oppress the poor. We are equal in the eyes of God. Davao City realizes its important role in the growth and progress of the nation. Believing that the “people are the real wealth of the nation,”³ Dabawenyo DCPlinado seeks to instill self-discipline in our youth for them to learn basic moral virtues that are critical in making society just, humane, and democratic, especially in the post-pandemic world.⁴

A person who is self-disciplined is committed to a purpose. The same individual realizes the importance and value of recognizing one’s obligation to self, family, and society in order to achieve one’s goals in life. The program describes and discusses but does not limit the extent of communal values that are unique to the Filipino and the Davaoeño. The modules are contextualized in the history, identity, and diverse culture of the city as the melting pot in Mindanao. The very unique aspect of this program is its philosophical foundation and rootedness in the community of inquiry.

³ Mahbub Ul Haq, *The 2010 Human Development Report*. <https://www.undp.org/malaysia/publications/2010-human-development-report>.

⁴ Rafaella Montegazza, “Children of Covid: The educational consequences of the epidemic on the new generation.” *Eubios Journal of Asian and International Bioethics* 31, 2 (2021): 65.

Knowing the vital role of the youth in promoting environmental preservation and protecting the planet, the program also inculcates the value of cleanliness and the ethics of care. Society must be aware of the role of every citizen in preserving the planet. Knowing the impact of social media and modern technology in terms of influence, the program helps learners assess the effect of the internet on their lives. They will be encouraged to develop authentic person-to-person relationships instead of superficial ones. Conscious of the importance of fundamental values, this curriculum integration program intends to form learners into good and responsible leaders.

The Philosophy Behind Dabawenyo DCPlinado

The present values education curriculum of the Department of Education is showcased in its Good Manners and Right Conduct (GMRC) and Values Education (VE) courses. The curriculum is also founded in the 1987 Philippine Constitution, the Youth in Nation Building Act (RA 8044), and the Values Education Act of 2020 (RA 11476). The same is critical in terms of building a society that is just. But the fact of the matter is that many Filipinos still lack discipline. They throw their garbage anywhere, most lack courtesy on the road, and still, a lot use social media to demean and discriminate against other people, including persons with impairment.

When it comes to the mentors who will deliver the program to learners, Cathy Mae Toquero expounds on the challenges of education, especially after the COVID-19 pandemic.⁵ She writes that “there is also a greater need for educational institutions to strengthen the practices in the curriculum and make it more responsive to the learning needs of the students even beyond the conventional classrooms.”⁶ It is for this reason that the creation was made consultative and democratic. School principals themselves, with the supervision of their DepEd administrators in Davao City, created the modules to be rolled out to learners. Consultants helped provide the philosophical and ethical framework of the program.

⁵ Cathy May Toquero, “Challenges and Opportunities for Higher Education amid the Covid-19 Pandemic: The Philippine Context.” *Pedagogical Research* Volume 5, Number 4 (2020): 3.

⁶ Ibid.

In an important paper, Fleurdeliz Altez-Albela expresses a concern about the preparedness of teachers in teaching philosophy, in this case, ethics.⁷ She asks, “the preparedness of our teachers remains an important concern. How do they transmit philosophical information and induce philosophical skills? How are our teachers being prepared to do philosophy in basic education?”⁸ It is worth noting that teaching ethics will require a recognition of the universal nature of virtues. Bernardo Caslib, Jr. writes, “when Socrates said ‘know thyself’, he was reminding the Athenians that to know oneself is the key to living a moral life. Without proper knowledge of the self, incapable of monitoring the soul, one falls into the pit of moral decay.”⁹

The Dabawenyo DCPlinado Curriculum highlights the holistic approach to moral education that is critical or emancipatory.¹⁰ The concept of the self is studied in relation to social systems and social organizations. The human self is known by way of one’s interactions with others in society. For Michael Sandel, an American philosopher, the individual is a product of society, culture, and history. Consciousness is never abstract.¹¹ A sense of self is always based on a social identity. The individual is not a mere passive participant in the formation of the self but an active one, which means understanding the situatedness of the person and realizing the challenges of structural as well as systemic injustices and the desire to overcome them in order to achieve a good life.

The good life refers to human well-being or happiness.¹² Let us examine the deeper meaning of the term. For Aristotle, the idea of virtue is about the self-realization of the human being.¹³ Each person has a potential that needs to be actualized. This actualization is the attainment of a life of virtue. What does virtue mean? Virtue for

⁷ Fleurdeliz Albela-Altez, “Finding the Place of Philosophy in the Philippine Education Curriculum,” *Philosophia: An International Journal of Philosophy* 25 (2): 271.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 272.

⁹ Bernardo Caslib, Jr., “Why Intellectual Virtues Matter?” *Kritike* 11 (2): 95.

¹⁰ Christopher Ryan Maboloc, “Critical Pedagogy in the New Normal.” *Voices in Bioethics* (2020): 1.

¹¹ Michael Sandel, *Liberalism and the Limits of Justice* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1983), 21.

¹² Martha Nussbaum: *Frontiers of Justice*, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2006), 201.

¹³ Aristotle, *Nichomachean Ethics*, (London: Penguin, 2004), Book 2:2.

Aristotle means “excellence.”¹⁴ However, virtue cannot be taught. It can only be achieved through “constant practice.”¹⁵ It is a matter of “habit.”¹⁶ A person who is truly honest must be consistent in his actions which means that he possesses the virtue of honesty. Virtue, in this sense, is the perfection of human character.¹⁷

The program is anchored on a moral framework that is cognizant of the role of the individual to self, society, and country. It seeks to instill the duty of citizens in society. While people have rights and privileges as citizens, it is incumbent that each individual realizes that one has a moral duty to contribute to the good of others, help one’s fellow human being, and become a responsible citizen who adheres to the rule of law. The program is inclusive. It is open to diversity and realizes the value and importance of moral norms that define what makes people fully human.

The Role of Discipline in the Future of Philippine Society

Today, however, we are aware of a vastly changing world. The problems of the world now call upon each person to be responsible as democratic citizens. The most urgent task at hand is not merely about knowing the good. It is in doing it. We have to show compassion and care for other people, especially in times of need. By showing empathy, society extends to the least privileged the purpose and meaning of social justice. The problem of poverty, for instance, does not only tell us that people lack the necessary resources in order to live decent and dignified lives. It manifests the lack of moral accountability of our leaders, their greed, and their lack of concern for human welfare.

In educating our children, one needs to ask, what does it mean to be a good human person (*Maayong Tawo*)? Ethics investigates the rightness or wrongfulness of human action. It is the task of an ethics course to examine these in order to assess the morality of human acts. For instance, an act of kindness can become a form of hypocrisy if the actual motive is self-promotion. Ethical conduct, in this sense, is the foundation of the good of society. Our hope depends on the principles

¹⁴ Ibid., Book 2:6.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Ibid, Book 1:1.

and values that make society just and equal. The challenge of the times can be found in the three critical issues that Philippine society must address.

First, in the information age, there are apparent dangers that young people especially minors are exposed to in what Luciano Floridi calls our “information society.”¹⁸ Children can be abused, manipulated, and exploited online. Information is being used to influence the behavior of human individuals for purposes of profit and political gain. For this reason, parents play an important role in guiding their children on the responsible use of social media and mobile devices. Teachers should be able to explain to the learners the limits, dangers, and risks of exposure to the online environment.

Second, climate change is a real existential threat that should be understood by everyone. A concept that has defined the debate on the issue is “climate justice.” Climate justice, some authors say, has two important components – “intergenerational justice and intra-generational justice.”¹⁹ The first refers to our ethical obligation to future generations while the latter is about the moral duty to compensate the victims of climatic disasters and natural diseases. Intergenerational justice recognizes the fact that today's generation must act as stewards of the environment. The fact that people inhabit a planet that is still livable implies a moral duty to protect it for the next generation.

Third, the virtue of self-discipline should be the foundation for making a just and democratic society where people respect each other and follow the rule of law, putting an end to the decades of bad patronage politics that only favored the elite and few.²⁰ Training children young is critical in the formation of their character. Character will serve as the foundation in the development of Philippine society and hopefully address the democratic deficits in the country.²¹

¹⁸ Luciano Floridi, “The Foundation of Information Ethics.” *Handbook of Information and Computer Ethics*. Edited by Kenneth Himma and Hernan Tavani. (New Jersey: Wiley and Sons, 2008), 3.

¹⁹ Christopher Ryan Maboloc, “On the Ethical and Democratic Deficits of Environmental Pragmatism.” *Journal of Human Values* 22 (2): 109.

²⁰ Paul Hotchcroft and Joel Rocamora, “Strong Demands and Weak Institutions: The Origins and Evolution of the Democratic Deficit in the Philippines,” *Journal of East Asian Studies* 3 (2): 259.

²¹ Clarita Carlos, *The Electoral Reforms in the Philippines: Issues and Challenges*. (Makati: Konrad Adenauer Stiftung

Instilling good virtues in young individuals will prepare them for life in which they are expected to play a big role in the realization of the aims of just institutions.

Conclusion and Recommendation

There are issues that are practical that the Dabawenyo DCPlinado Program intends to solve. However, it is clear from the outset that a values education program is crucial in empowering people. Why create a new program when there are existing modules that are available? This has a lot to do with the unique circumstances of citizens. Davao City, being in Mindanao, is faced with many challenges. Despite its situation, the same has been able to attain a level of progress by means of its culture of security. The approach of the program recognizes the universal principles of ethics in terms of value formation.

After a year of its implementation, it should be assessed to determine the strengths and weaknesses, challenges, and opportunities. After the assessment of the program by a competent body of experts formed by the appropriate government body or agency, it can be fully implemented for all learners from Grade 1 to 12 but in gradual phases depending on the availability of human resources and budget considerations in the creation of modules. Further consultations among all stakeholders are desired. In-depth discussions with local authorities and school administrators are also recommended to ensure a democratic process in implementing the program.

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