21ST CENTURY SKILLS AND ITS DEMANDS ON TEACHERS

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The world is changing- and so must the educational system. Recent trends such as globalization, regional integration, technological advancement or Industrial Revolution 4.0, among others, are significant forces that shape present day’s education.

Qualification function being one of the three major functions of education (subjectification and socialization, being the other two) (Biesta, 2008), it is necessarily for education to take serious consideration of the economy which now requires graduates who could flexibly respond to real world problems, effectively communicate, and manage information. Knowledge production and team collaboration are also prized now in the industry which most of our graduate will soon be joining (Porter, Ketels & Delgado, 2007 as cited in www.21stcenturyskills.org, 2008).

These shifts gave rise to the need to train students with the necessary skills which are believed to be vital to thrive in the 21st century world. Among these essential skills are the learning and motivational skills (critical thinking and problem solving, communications and collaboration, creativity and innovation); digital literacy skills (information literacy, media literacy, information and communication technologies literacy); and career, and life skills (flexibility and adaptability, initiative and self-direction, social and cross-cultural interaction, productivity and accountability) (www.21stcenturyskills.org, 2008).

Training of individuals for the reproduction of knowledge becomes the thing of the past. This age now requires individuals to be able to learn by themselves through social
interaction and technology to adjust to the knowledge explosion. This was also reflected by the new basic education curriculum of the Philippines, one of the key features of which is the nurturing of the holistically developed Filipino who are College and Livelihood ready and equipped with the 21st Century Skills such as: (1) information, media and technology skills, (2) learning and innovation skills, (3) effective communication skills, and (4) life and career skills (DepEd, 2018).

However, these changes on the 21st century education places extreme demands not only on the learners but also on the teachers who are the front liner in implementing this new curricula. Training students with these new set of skills requires different principles and practices that might challenge the conventions of the traditional classrooms. For instance, it requires teachers to guide their students to become more independent learners. It would also be necessary to give them room to learn from their mistakes and explore their own ways to solve real world problems. Moreover, teachers must take students as co-partners in education and encourage them to take a more active role in the learning process, guiding them in constructing knowledge based on their own experiences. It would also be necessary to provide activities that will allow students to enhance their communication and collaborative skills.

However, more than the need to adjust the teacher’s pedagogies, the success in training students with these skills that are vital to succeed in the 21st century world are the teachers’ competencies over such skills. After all, we cannot give what we do not have. It is therefore imperative, that we, as teachers should continue to upgrade our skills and competencies to successfully prepare our students for higher demands.
References:

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