K-12 CURRICULUM: GEARING UP LEARNERS WITH 21ST CENTURY SKILLS

by:
John Paul C. Solon

Education keeps on reinventing itself. As man spearheads to more knowledge and understanding, the course of education becomes more dynamic. The more students are able to transpire what they are learning to meaningful applications, the more trajectory for self-improvement they may attain. As Borabo (2012) suggested that the core of John Dewey’s philosophy is learning by doing. Teachers do not want to teach the theories and principles alone but to apply these learnings in the daily lives of students. Restructuring the educational system should be done in order to cope up with the needs of the learners in the 21st Century.

21st Century skills concept is guided, mainly, by the principle that students must be taught what will be relevant, useful, in-demand and universally applicable skills—these should be the priority of every school today. Consequently, some schools before do not prioritize teaching that will suffice the skills of the learners. The approach to students who are considered as 21st century learners must differ from the learners of the 20th Century, the skills to be taught must answer to the specific demands that is placed upon them in a complex, competitive, knowledge-based, information-age, technology-driven economy and society.

Hence, 21st Century skills encompass a wide array of skills, habits and traits essential for the educational and career successes. Since the standards of today’s education require teachers to become globally competitive, creative, and adaptive, acquiring of 21st century skills has no escape. Developing such traits is a guarantee that every learner can survive the challenges and changes may happen in education in the 21st century.
With the implementation of the K-12 program of the Department of Education (DepED), one of its tenets is the application of 21st Century skills among students and teachers for them to be paralleled with the educational standards around the world. Since the Philippines is one of the late countries to implement a 12-year cycle basic education, the development of the 21st Century teaching and learning in the country is seemingly less progressive as compared with the rest of the world. But with the K-12 Program, there is a bigger assurance that the country is now gearing towards the realization of such endeavor.

The K-12 curriculum specified skills and competencies needed to be acquired, mastered and exemplified by learners. Such complexities reinforced teachers to become flexible, adaptive and responsive to the needs of these highly advanced and diverse learners. Hence, profiling has been continuously done to aide learners in maximizing their potentials as global learners who are responsible users of technology, think globally, and revolutionize global interest to education and learning. At this juncture, teachers’ pivotal role in shaping the minds of learners begets optimal opportunities to hone the important resource of mankind – its people.

Teachers in the K-12 Program, find it difficult to help learners develop higher-order-thinking skills, critical thinking skills, and metacognitive skills they are badly needing, in order to succeed in the bigger world. Since 21st Century education is complex, the competencies and skills needed to be exemplified by learners are also complex.

Today’s education is beyond just mere grasping of information, but most especially, transforming and applying such data into meaningful real-life experiences. It is only through practical applications of the things students and teachers are learning that there can be true meaningful teaching and learning process.
References:
