PHILIPPINE INCLUSIVE EDUCATION: A BRIEF REVIEW OF THE PHILOSOPHICAL BASES
By: Hazel C. Loreto
Teacher II

There have been a notable growing development in the field of Special and Inclusive Education in the past sixty years or so. The Philippines is among the many countries picking up interests in the said development, as it does not look to spare a country or two. This growing development in the science of education is inevitable as the world is now poised to sustain the complexities of both singularity and plurality in the globalization age. While more and more diversity and uniqueness are being discovered and accepted in the world nowadays, the clamor for equality and inclusivity, or that feeling of being one with the global community, have been directly intensifying as well – eventually breaking some norms and executing pedagogical innovations year after year, one national educational system after another.

The gradual change in our global society, be it in education or in general per se, is by no means an accident. It is the determinism of countless turn of events that can be based from different perspectives such as psychological, philosophical, historical/societal, and legal dynamism, in one way or another. And perhaps, the oldest among them, even before history even started, could possibly be the philosophical bases. When ancient people began asking about their mere existence and the validation of their reality, knowledge and education have been evolving and reshaping since then. It is more than safe to say now that the Special and Inclusive Education had its own philosophical roots. Arguably, education have been leaning to several philosophical bases, so many so far that understandably are being in contradictory already to one another; and yet, amazingly, some philosophical bases remained while already perceived as obsolete as alchemy.

In the Philippines, while behaviorism is still a predominant outlook in teaching and learning instructions, the introduction of its K-to-12 program have seriously shaken its national education system. It is reshaping the Philippine education as the country tries to pick-up its pace to label itself as one of the global education communities; to tag its learning citizens as one of the global education graduates – to be recognized as one of the learning contemporary world. This idea alone is enough to justify that inclusivity and equality influenced the guiding principles of not just inclusive education, but the whole of education program in the Philippines.

Of course, it is easier said than done. Philosophy is not that simple, as inclusive education is neither as well. The Philippine K-to-12 program have challenging tasks in both national and local educational scenes, and there is never enough a challenge as far as Special and Inclusive Education is
concerned. As a result, there are supposed highlights and emphasis on the part of inclusive education. The idea of inclusive education came into picture, as history shows, when education is supposed to be for all (as also stated in the 1987 Philippine Constitution) – equality! And to promote and foster equality among the Filipinos, everyone should be included in the program, be it physically disabled, mentally challenged, racially different, demographically unusual, economically marginalized, or individually unique – inclusivity!

References:
Inclusion in Education. Retrieved from https://en.unesco.org