SCIENCE EDUCATION FOR THE 21ST CENTURY LEARNERS

by:
Bliselda D. Bicaldo
Teacher III – Jose C. Payumo Jr. Memorial High School

Since the early beginnings, Science has been the go to field to explain phenomena and unusual events occurring. It has also been defined in plethora of ways—but we just need the definition that science is an organized body of knowledge that we have learned ever since to know that it is science. In the Philippines, science is not the most loved subject to deal with, also, many would say that science is something that normal people don’t actively engage in. In fact, however, science is a crucial part of our daily lives. But, how well is the Science education for the 21st century learners?

According to Carl Sagan, a well-known advocate of the field, emphasized that “Science is more than a body of knowledge. It is a way of thinking, a way of skeptically challenging the world, which literally means that it is not a subject where it is important to memorize every bone in the human body, nor do you remember all the elements in the periodic table. It literally comes down to those of us being challenged. Providing quality science education makes it easier for students at a young age to be interested and to establish their range of beliefs from the answers to their questions.

But, there are also some issues that hinder the proposition of science education to the 21st century learners. One of these is the lack of teachers, which simply indicate that there is an insufficient amount of professionals teaching the field. In 2016, with the launch of the K to 12 program, which produced 36,641 free teaching posts, DepEd Secretary Leonor Briones stressed the need to recruit more teachers. The government tried to put an end to this shortage by offering DepEd teaching posts with above entry-level salary grades to graduates of science and technology under the Department of Science and
Technology-Science Education Institute's Junior Level Science Scholarships. Well, that is a big figure to dominate. Another factor would be, the shortage of efficient laboratories. Experimentation is the highlight of science for it allows the learners to be involved and to experience the real-world. But, the learners of today have a hard time doing this for the Philippines lack laboratories. Beside with this, are the quality materials. Together, they can make a big leap to science dilemma to be solved.

With these scientific education restrictions, one cannot help but wonder how our countrymen view science. As it would appear that science are just for the mad scientists trying to prove that humans came from apes. To make this situation better, solutions must be posed for the 21st century learners. In contrast to relying solely on feelings that could impede proper decision-making, science promotes the principle of objectivity. We present evidence and facts instead of arguing based on gut feelings or emotions alone, while staying open-minded to other people's perspectives. Encouraging people to listen to each other are the values enabled by objectivity and open-mindedness.

A strong education in science is not a choice, it is a must. If we want to see ourselves moving forward, we must strengthen the ways in teaching science in the Philippines.
References:

Definition of SCIENCE. [ ACCESSED 2018 Mar 26].https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/science