SMAW: NO CHOICE?

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Often, teachers in senior high schools verbalize not so good feedback about students taking Shielded Metal Arc Welding or SMAW. We heard them say “Sumakit ang ulo ko sa SMAW!” or “Wala akong mapiga sa SMAW” or even “Pwede ba wag SMAW ang section na hawakan ko this semester?” Although most of them uttered these expressions with a smile, we may consider this as serious matter about SMAW students with underlying causes. The teachers’ perception about the students and the class they handle can affects the way they approach and facilitate learning. From the perception that SMAW students are not academically inclined, teachers tend to change their way of teaching too far from the strategies they have been using to teach students from other academic and techno-vocational strands. This also includes the way teachers provide discipline and classroom management to SMAW students. The root of these perception arises from students’ attitude that are funnel down on this specific or strand specialization.

It was an observation that low academic performing students from junior high school tend to choose technical vocational, arts and design, or even sports track when moving up to senior high school. Its not a bad choice but instead a better compensation to develop skills rather than improve logical knowledge and scientific processes. But the real question is, do SMAW students have no or limited choice when choosing tracks for senior high school. Teachers often heard challenges and trials from these students such as “Ayaw ko ng Math,” “Gusto ko yung walang English,” or “Sana wala na lang research.” Not stricted with SMAW, these are the some of the statements uttered by students enrolling in senior high school who are not that academically inclined in core subjects especially Math, Science, English, and Research.
Addressing this concern about making limited decision for SMAW students upon choosing their specialization should involved both teachers and parents’ participation. With limited potential to excel academically, proper career guidance and orientation should be given to students prior to choosing their track. Parents, being the first teachers at home are supposed to guide and teach their children to improve their options, alternatives, and potential to succeed. Students taking technical vocational tract are in demand both locally and abroad. This was supported by the report given by TESDA (2018) suggesting that welders are still highly needed by the industry and one of the highest paying jobs abroad. According to Lato (2015), highly skilled welders is highly in demand everywhere which also prompted private and public institutions to offer welding courses to interested individuals and companies. Indeed, we should not see them as students and people of limited potential but of people with great potential to excel in the modern world.

References:
