

**Imperatives of Change
and
Tomorrow's Teachers**



Bonifacio P. Sibayan

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*Bonifacio P. Sibayan
President
Philippine Normal College*



*Dr. Bonifacio P. Sibayan
Fourth President
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Mr. Chairman, Members of the Board of Trustees,
Representatives of the scholarly community,
Distinguished Guests, Alumni, Colleagues,
Ladies and Gentlemen:

It is with humility and confidence that I accept the responsibilities of the college presidency; humility because I know the great worth of this institution the leadership of which has been entrusted to me, and confidence because of the support and trust pledged me today. I wish to thank all of you here gathered today for the great honor you have bestowed upon me by your presence and your best wishes.

Allow me a few moments to recall and acknowledge in humility our indebtedness to those who came before us, the men and women who taught and worked here to build the traditions and nurture the vision of this College. Thousands of alumni have left this institution, many of whom have distinguished themselves in Philippine education and in other fields. Perhaps it is not an overstatement to say that the core and strength of the Philippine

public elementary school system have been mainly the alumni of this institution.

When the then Philippine Normal School first opened its doors to the young on September 1, 1901, I am certain that many of those who came to enrol broke away from the settled folkways of their ancestral homes, to create a different life style. Because those who came to this institution ahead of us subsequently did their work admirably and because they responded to the demands of their times with the best in them, we are today beneficiaries of a changed life style and heir to a tradition of success. Now, we ourselves are called upon to respond to the demands of the present in keeping with a fast evolving society so as to chart a course to the future. To evade this responsibility would be to negate the principles on which the College was established. On the other hand, for us in the College to heed the call as our sole responsibility would be to ignore the existence of other institutions. But we do not seek to respond alone. We must, then, align ourselves with other institutions for mutual support.

The PNC as Nucleus

In the beginning, the Philippine Normal School had the whole field of teacher education to itself. Even later, when regional normal schools came into being, it continued to be the national institution for teacher education. Possibly it is in acknowledgment of the vanguard role of the College that the Presidential Commission to Survey Philippine Education, in 1971, recommended "that all government teacher-training colleges be organized into a national teacher-training system, to be called National College for Teacher Education, with the Philippine Normal College (PNC) as its nucleus institution."

That the government teacher education colleges might lose their independence is an understandable anxiety generated by such recommendation. I believe, however, that

those institutions will flourish best by retaining and continuing to develop their own identities especially with relevance to the regions that they serve. It is fundamental that in order to be an effective member of a community one should have one's own identity. Teacher education under government auspices in this country may best be done by an association of such colleges. Where the Philippine Normal College is called upon to lead, it will do so because of competence and not because it is so designated.

The Tasks and Problems

But the Philippine Normal College can lead only insofar as it can identify its tasks and concerns, can recognize and state the problems that stem from these tasks, and can project and sustain the solutions to these problems.

I see three major tasks in which the College should lead: 1) training for educational leadership and teaching competence; 2) research and innovation; and 3) service and extension work — all three tasks to be performed with excellence. But what is excellence? A German friend once told me that Germany does not export Mercedes Benz nor Leicas nor Rolleiflexes. Rather, Germany exports excellence. We in the Philippine Normal College, like the Germans, would desire to lead in the production of excellence.

The Filipino is capable of excellence — Rizal and many others have demonstrated this. And the schools should produce more Filipinos who excel in what they do.

I think that one of the most important things to teach a child is pride in what he does. But first, what he does must be excellent. He has to learn, to practice and to realize, however, that there is no excellence without intelligent labor. This is the lesson we learn from Rizal.

The First Task

The first task of the College is training for educational leadership and teaching competence.

The teacher works with human beings. It is obvious, therefore, that those entrusted to direct and influence the lives of others especially the young, should as much as possible, be the best educated in our society.

I am also aware that the classroom teacher is a key person in the school system but that a new type must be evolved — one who will act as teammate of the principal and the supervisor and parents and not simply be the most loyal and obedient subordinate he has been conditioned to behave. Two points are critical in the evolution of the new type of classroom teacher: 1) the quality of applicants, and 2) the curriculum.

The applicants

I should like to call attention to some interesting and useful facts on the socio-economic status of students who have chosen to study at the Philippine Normal College. The data show that 56 percent of the students come from what may be considered low income families, and only two percent from what may be considered good income. Forty-four percent of the parents have only some form of elementary education; 16 percent are college graduates; and four percent have no schooling.

This information is corroborated by the finding of the Presidential Commission to Survey Philippine Education that "as a man's educational attainment rises, the less are the chances of his child's getting into teacher education," and that ". . . generally, families with low middle and low incomes are the ones that send their children to teacher training schools."

Moreover, the Commission reports that 29 percent or almost one out of three students who enrol in a teacher's college would, if they had their own way, shift to another course. This means that many take the teaching course without having the proper motivation and interest.

Because the future teacher often comes from a family

with less economic advantages and therefore a background with less opportunities for education, it becomes imperative to offer him a richer and, if possible, a longer education. My interviews with a number of students in the college who failed in some subjects and had to be dismissed convince me that given a lighter load and a program stretched at longer periods, students with less-advantaged backgrounds and parentage would have better chances of succeeding. I am convinced that a five- to seven-year period for the education of the future teacher is reasonable. This will give him enough time to complete the requirements at a more reflective tempo and to go through a **change** before development, because the education of such a student should consist of, first, a **change** — symbolic and social change — then **development**. In contrast, the education of a student with a much better educational background is simply a matter of continuation or development. Moreover, such a student does not suffer the trauma attendant to change.

But herein lies the dilemma: the poor students cannot afford to stay long in college. This longer period, therefore, requires that poor but talented students be helped financially, perhaps through more scholarships or other feasible means, to stay on. Happily, explorations and preliminary conversations with responsible persons in government have elicited agreement to offer students from the various barangays all over the Philippines opportunity to study on scholarships at the Philippine Normal College.

The Curriculum

The second important point in the training for educational leadership and competence is the curriculum. The present curriculum has, to my mind, two shortcomings: 1) many things are crowded in too short a time, and 2) it tries to make the future teacher a professional without the necessary liberal education, the important pur-

pose of which is to educate the teacher to think with clarity and to feel with compassion. We should make haste slowly in the education of the teacher. The entrance requirement for the study of law and medicine is a four-year Bachelor of Arts. The same requirement commends itself to the course in teaching because the teacher should not be less educated than the lawyer or the physician.

Rafael Palma said in his inaugural speech in 1925, almost half a century ago, which I think is even more relevant today:

“This University would do well in placing stress on the diffusion of liberal studies and in insisting that the majority of its students pursue the cultural courses, if its aim would be that of sending forth scholarly men, truly great by reason of their broad outlook on life, their tested openness of mind, and the vast range of their accomplishments . . . Before a teacher should think of pursuing a specialized course of study, he should first possess a broad basic culture. Without this culture, he will be a mere strait-laced theorist — the exact antithesis of the man we need, who should be broad-minded, even-handed, tolerant, and winsome in his ways. We should exact of him that he be as well acquainted with ancient as with modern culture, lest he be ignorant of any fundamental of a truly educated man.” (Fonacier, 70)

As a matter of fact, the first requirement in the education of a teacher indicated by the Presidential Commission to Survey Philippine Education is that of a broad general education.

Work-Oriented Curriculum

Lately a new label for an old concept has come into the educational scene which to some has been disconcerting if not threatening. I refer to the **work-oriented curriculum**. I find this proposal a rallying point for the Filipino because recent events have started the climate that

encourages work-ownership of property, markets for products, protection and just rewards for effort, including literary or creative effort.

Properly directed, I anticipate in every student a sense of discipline and serious sustained effort in perfecting his skills and his craft — be it in the arts, in agricultural and animal sciences, and others.

I see the new curriculum as an instrument for doing away with the *capataz* system by instituting structures where administration is present not so much to supervise and check as to show how things can be done efficiently and effectively. I also see the work-oriented curriculum as implying a new attitude toward leisure, not so much as a major preoccupation as a reward for work.

The new curriculum will succeed provided: 1) it is taken not as a free-for-all undirected activity, and therefore pupils will go out to the community after they have acquired the skills to observe, to analyze, to design, to implement, and to evaluate; 2) success for work is gauged not merely by the number of handicrafts made but by the improvement of design, the reduction of productive time, the discovery of new materials or of marketing styles; and 3) formal instruction in basic skills like reading and writing and arithmetic, or in the arts like poetry and music, is given equal attention.

The work-oriented curriculum, therefore, reflects Margaret Mead's statement: "We must create new models for adults who can teach their children not what to learn, but how to learn and not to what they should be committed, but the value of commitment."

A work-oriented education need not mean the exclusion of the enjoyment of the arts. The Filipino has a tradition of song and dance and drama; hence the Filipino teacher must have contact with, and if possible intimate knowledge of, the arts of the Filipino, the Asian and the

rest of the world.

Research and Innovation

Our second task is research and innovation.

The main purpose of the research and innovation program is the training of Filipinos, teachers in particular, to do their own thinking and to rely on their own scholarship in the solution of problems. Filipino educators must look to Filipino scholarship for new knowledge and new ideas without losing contact with international scholarship. The College, then, must take initiative to develop educational theoreticians if it aims to help improve education.

Research in the Philippines is urgent. By way of proof, only very few studies have so far been done on the Filipino child, his characteristics, his capacities for learning. Such pressing topics as: What are the best ways for teaching a child who has certain socio-cultural characteristics? How does a child acquire concepts and language? What is the best way to teach science and mathematics and the social sciences?, demand study and solutions.

To this end, the Philippine Normal College will have to produce not only teachers but scholar teachers. A research tradition must be cultivated and made to bear fruit. No doubt research will lead to productive endeavors. Through research the Filipino will be able to produce books and teaching materials of the highest type of scholarship and the finest workmanship.

We must guard against chauvinistic tendencies, however. Scholarship has international standards and the Filipino must measure up to these standards.

Research must enable us to devise new formulas and new solutions to educational problems.

The 7 x 9 Formula

The traditional formula in the education of the child

which all of us are familiar with, and which has worked well enough during the first half of the century, is what I call the 7 x 9 formula — a group of from forty to as many as sixty children are seated in four rows of desks, in front of them is a teacher, and all of them are in a 7 x 9 meter classroom with four blackboards, erasers, pieces of chalk and some books. Both educator and layman now realize that this formula may have worked during the first half of this century, but it has become inadequate as our nation moves into the twenty-first century with the tremendous population increase and its concomitant problems.

Search for New Formulas

This means that we must undertake a serious search for new formulas, new strategies, new notions on the education of the child. Surely, there must be other styles, as good if not better, and more economical as well as more effective ways of educating the child.

For example: 1) Some subjects can be taught to large groups in auditoriums or large spaces, or lessons can be beamed to thousands in varieties of grouping patterns.

2) Some pupils do not need to "attend school" daily. There are certain pupils who can profit much with a minimum of exposure to teachers.

3) Parents can actually teach their own children to read and write before they enter school. Such children need not start in grade one with those who still have to learn to read and write.

The Administrator

While I have dealt largely on the teacher and the pupil, I must indicate here that the administrator must himself be an agent of innovation. His own preparation as now assessed needs re-shaping because his office demands financial skills, management skills, and knowledge of organizational behavior.

The concept of the development of and training for leadership especially in management in practically all fields has changed. The traditional "rose from the ranks" system once used in business has given way to a style where promising young men and women are purposely educated for management, administration, and leadership. Education will profit by adopting this model. I am happy to state that the Philippine Normal College, in cooperation with the Bureau of Public Schools and the College of Business Administration of the University of the Philippines, has started such a program this year with fifteen relatively young teacher scholars.

Extension and Service

Now, for the third task.

We must face the reality that the very setting of the Philippine Normal College is in the heart of urban life. While most of our students come from the rural mainstream and while we cherish and constantly summon the image of field and farm, still our mission would be incomplete if we did not forge direct links with the communities we serve.

The senior students in the College have, for years, gone out for internship off campus, but a more comprehensive program is most welcome where we can identify, adopt, and effect changes in as many types of communities as the students will return to: the farming area, the fishing village, the mill or factory homesites, the slum or inner pockets in the city, and the new emerging settlements. There was a time when we could have lumped all of these under the cover symbol of the term *barrio*, but now we should use a more dynamic term to avoid picturing a lethargic condition that the word *barrio* suggests. For this extension and service program, the College will need to recruit members in the disciplines of sociology, anthropology, social psychology, psycholinguistics, economics,

and demography.

The Philippine Normal College realizes that it is only one of many agencies whose concern is the people. We see ourselves as a partner, working hand in hand with technical institutes, with youth training centers, with adult and community development projects in home crafts, literacy, food production, health and sanitation (particularly to problems of air and water pollution and population), and socio-cultural pursuits.

We see our branches in Isabela in Luzon, Cadiz City in the Visayas, and Agusan in Mindanao, as centers to which our faculty and students can shuttle and gain a richer perspective of the national school system and the regional variations of socio-economic life.

It is this task of extension and service that we in the College can hope to contribute to the prosperity of the country — to plow back into the soil, and thereby enrich it.

The Means

Let me now address myself to the means for accomplishing what I have discussed as our tasks. I refer to the: 1) faculty and staff; 2) buildings and facilities; 3) finances; and 4) consortia and other arrangements.

Faculty

I consider a strong faculty and a competent staff as the most important of the means for achieving our tasks and our goals. It is my experience, and no doubt of many others, that denied a strong faculty and staff, money and facilities are not of much worth. Of the highest priority, therefore, is a sound faculty development program that includes: 1) identifying and attracting the best candidates for the faculty; 2) building of faculty by disciplines and specializations and maintaining a balance among the various disciplines; 3) training understudies; 4) advancing faculty members who do outstanding teaching or re-

search and who write scholarly publications; and 4) providing appropriations for sabbatical leaves.

Staff Development

Side by side with a faculty development program should be a staff development program which includes such features as: 1) in-service training; 2) merit promotion; 3) performance evaluation and employee appraisal; and 4) incentive awards. In addition, an under-study program should include identification and attraction of promising personnel. Necessarily, this program calls for funds.

Buildings and Facilities

It is hardly fair, it seems to me, to ask the faculty member to do scholarly research and study when he does not have the facilities and rooms to do some of his reading, his thinking and his writing. But the most important use of such rooms, is for the faculty member to confer with students individually or in small groups. Practically all the better colleges and universities have provided such space for the professor.

The buildings you see on campus were built at a time when education consisted mainly of instruction in a 7 x 9 classroom and the education of the future teacher was a much simpler undertaking. The need for quieter rooms, laboratories, conference and discussion rooms in addition to a well-stocked library and research facilities is acute.

I would like to propose something similar to one made by a former president of the University of the Philippines: that the government appropriate enough funds for salaries and operating expenses and that the tuition fees of students go into a building fund. This might yet solve our problems on building program and obviate the futile activity of constantly looking for building funds.

Financing

One of my favorite quotations runs this way: "Money

is not the most important thing in the world but it is inconvenient not to have it." I shall not bore you with a recitation of the inconveniences brought about by a shoe-string budget.

I would like to correct the erroneous idea that because the Philippine Normal College is a tax-supported institution, it does not need other sources of funds. I shall take this occasion to inform the friends and alumni of the College that the government contribution is a little over 60 percent of our budget, and therefore the remaining 40 percent comes from tuition fees of students.

The tasks I have outlined will necessarily require more funds than are available to us. I take this opportunity to appeal to the alumni, friends, and patrons of the College for generous support.

Conclusion

The Filipino as Teacher

This, then, is the institution that has been entrusted to me to administer. It has had its travail, its difficulties and failures, its successes and hopes.

I like to think that this institution, as an intellectual pioneer, has succeeded in contributing to the task of giving the Filipino a stature to be proud of. Looking back to the past, more than seventy years ago when the Philippine Normal School became a reality, the definition of the Filipino was implied by the purpose stated by law for which the teacher was to be trained, thus: "Education of the natives of the Islands in the science of teaching." Today, thanks in part to the work of thousands of Filipino teachers, many of whom came from this institution, the Filipino has been redefined. Now the phrase could be rewritten as follows: "Education of the people of the Philippines in the science and art of teaching." The great grandchildren of the natives of the archipelago can lay claim to the right to call themselves the Filipino people.

The Filipino as Human Being

I would like to close this essay on the education of the Filipino teacher with a thought on the Filipino — the Filipino for whom we dream and work hard. This is the Filipino who came in barangays, the Filipino with his ethnic ties, the Filipino who hopes for integration into the mainstreams of the national character, the Filipino who wants to participate in the international field. This is the Filipino who has extracted for his use the quintessence of various cultures brought into his land: from the East — Malay, Indian, Chinese, and Arabic; from the West — Spanish and American. This is the Filipino composed of fragments from many identities that have harmonized into a brown body like the color of Mother Earth. This is the Filipino whose courage and resilience and patience and intelligence have made it possible for him to remain whole. This is the Filipino who, with the guidance of great teachers and the blessings of Divine Providence, will prevail in his own land.

I thank you.