



The Trade School Principal and His Role in the Economic Development of the Philippines

DELFIN G. GUIROLGICO
Principal, Albay Trade School

The economic and political needs of the Philippines at present demand a renewed and modified perspective of the role of the trade school principal. He should no longer consider himself just a mere masterworker in a particular trade. His is more than a trade technician. He is a leader in the community, a teacher in the educational field, and a skilled worker in a specific technical line or trade. As an educational leader, he is responsible for the training of a "Vocationally Efficient Filipino Citizen" in a particular locality or region. As a trade school principal he is a specialist who recognizes that his mission is only achieved by the proper development of that consciousness for real training in the salable skills, and orientation and practice in the art of culture living. He is matured professionally and practices in the pursuit of a specialized education, the trade. In a nutshell, he is expected to contribute to the economic development of the Philippines by creating that emerging vocational - education - consciousness through the triple function of community leadership, educational or professional leadership, and a master or technical worker.

As the head of a government enterprise, the school principal assumes the position in which he has to deal with the proletariat and middle class, and with politicians and other social and economic leaders in the locality or region. He becomes a community leader who should be understanding.

In giving technical advice to the lawmaking body of the province, he should always be cooperative. Yet he should be firm and uncompromising when the minimum standards and requirements of the school are not considered in the proper perspective. Inefficiency arises if the trade school is allowed to operate on sub-standard facilities, equipment, and accommodations. This results to failure in turning out the much desired 'Vocationally Efficient Filipino Citizen'. Without the irreducible minimum essentials, the school ceases to be a vocational school. The principal should not, however, fail to consider the desirability of working towards augmenting the meager income of the school from provincial aid, by raising the school trust fund in accordance with the provisions of Republic Act 364.

His social or public relations should not be neglected. His success in this line is measured on his ability to participate in the social activities of the community. A proper dissemination of information about the school through the printed media and other means may be employed in rendering an accurate accounting of the people's investments in running the school, on what the school is, and what it is doing for the public. This informative service should be given priority by the trade school principal. He should find proper use of industrial fairs, trade school days, convocations, public addresses, local or regional and national publications, in giving a desired

statement of the balance sheet of the school.

The principal should protect the interest of the common people from being denied or stripped of their due share and attention in the public finances and laws. This group of people looks up to him as their spokesman and representative in securing from proper authorities the just share for the education of its members. His personality and character as well as public actuations should secure the respect of all groups of society and be approachable by all types of persons and all levels of social standing in the community.

His role in the economic development of the country cannot be considered successful unless he succeeds in assuming a definite position among the educational leaders of the locality or region. The trade school principal should be professionally matured and capable. He should draw respect by being well-informed not only in his sphere of specialization—that is trade education, but also he should be conversant with the general or cultural studies. To successfully bridge the gap between vocational education advocates and general education followers, he should experience continuous educational growth. This educational growth can be made possible through wider professional readings, studies and research, statistical and critical surveys, broad public relations, intelligent and conscious formulation and tryout of new theories and techniques of vocational education, travels and conferences, industrial participation, and the like. In general, the trade school principal should be well-informed both in vocational education and the field of general cultural education.

As an example to be emulated, the trade school principal should be a very capable worker in a specialized trade or pursuit. There can be no more demoralizing incident than when the principal fails to execute a job where he professes to be skilled. Then too, he should not stop in knowing only one specific line of work as he would not be able to properly exact a precision execution of training in all the phases that the school undertakes in trade education. He should be, in theory and practice, a leader of his teachers and students in every activity in the trade school.

It is ridiculous for the principal to assume knowledge of every specialized job in the trade school when he has not gained mastery of one particular endeavor. He should secure for himself a working knowledge of all the vocational offerings to enable him to be sympathetic with all the activities undertaken in the school. It is not enough to assume that one can properly administer and supervise an activity because he has interest in it. He can only administer or supervise effectively a particular work when he has had a successful participating experience in it, that is, he has had experienced the *what*, *which* and *how* of the work. Without this participating knowledge, he will not be able to check the minimum standards of performance required of every trainee. The greatest enemy of a functional vocational education program is the principal or the administrator-supervisor who professes to know what vocational education is and then makes inadequate provisions for the proper attainment of the goals which he envisions to be achieved by the school.