

# Rural Teacher Education for Community Schools in the Philippines

By **Miguela M. Solis**

President Ramon Magsaysay in his inaugural address in 1954 set the stage for a nationwide effort to improve the lot of the common man in the Philippines when he said, "... More than ever even we must think, plan and work as one, with only one supreme goal in mind—the promotion of the welfare and happiness of our people . . ."

The challenge has been accepted by the Philippine educational system—particularly teacher education, for in the rural areas of the country the teacher is a key individual in community improvement. In many rural areas the teacher has long been considered the guide and counsellor not only of children and youth but of the common man (taô) as well.

The community school is designed to carry a major role in improving community living. In teacher education the questions arise: What should be the role of rural education in national development? What are the objectives of teacher education for community schools? What should constitute teaching preparedness?

## The Role of Education:

The role of rural education in the Philippines as a primary institution responsible for fostering the all-round development of children and youth for democratic living as well as for economic and cultural improvement in general requires schools which:

1. are geared closely to community needs, problems and resources
2. are transmitters and extenders of the desirable aspects of the cultural heritage and generators of economic and social advancement
3. recognize the varying needs, abilities and problems of children and youth and design curricula in recognition thereof
4. embody in the community school concept the utilization of the total community resource, both human and material, thus enlarging the learning resource area far beyond the usual confines of buildings and traditional curricula
5. foster democratic human relationships by pupils, community members and teachers working together for community improvement

6. assume a leadership role for the continuous improvement of the lot of individuals and their society, thus are capable of adapting and adjusting in organization, curricula and relationships as community needs so demand for progressive socio-economic advancement.

## The Task for Teacher Education:

The task for teacher education derives from the role of the school. To provide the Philippine community schools with qualified teachers in carrying their roles in helping foster better living and all-round development of the learner in the various aspects of democracy, the education of teachers must be of such scope and quality as to enable them to live fully, happily and richly as educated persons. The general and professional education should be closely geared to the results of studies on community material and human resources with their evolving needs and problems.

The program in general education is designed to prepare the teacher:

1. for sustained physical and mental health
2. for proficiency in knowledge and utilization of language, mathematics, natural and social sciences
3. for aesthetic responsiveness in the fields of arts, literature, music and dance
4. for behavioral skills conducive to harmonious and productive human relationships
5. for development of open-minded and experimental attitudes in meeting teaching-learning situations that evolve from community needs, problems and resources
6. for responsibility as a member of the community in improving and enriching community living in a democracy.

In addition to the purposes to be satisfied through general education, the teacher education program is designed to satisfy these professional education needs necessary for service in the functional community school:

1. Understanding of the growth and developmental characteristics of children and youth, their needs and problems as they grow and learn to live in their homes, community and nation.
2. Understanding of and ability to cope with community problems in such areas as health, sanitation, agriculture, cooperatives, home industries, conservation, government and the like.
3. Understanding of the dynamics of human relationship and is skilled in techniques of group processes and their uses with children and adults.

4. Understanding of learning and the learning process and its applications in promoting educative experiences for youth and adults.

This, in brief, is the backdrop of the design for teacher education for rural education in the Philippines. The eight public normal schools, regional centers for teacher education and curriculum improvement, since 1952 have been undergoing a transition from 2-year traditional curricula institutions with inadequate buildings and facilities to 4-year community-school-centered teacher education curricula. Each school has been rehabilitated to include fully stocked professional library, curriculum laboratory, audio-visual center, science, home economics and industrial arts laboratories. Local and national curriculum committees have been at work designing courses and teaching materials.

#### Projects on the Go:

With the above pattern of responsibilities and duties of teacher education, unavoidably institutions in this level of education have to play an important role in experimentation and in the demonstration of better and newer teaching-learning procedures. Some of the most important projects designed to achieve competently prepared teachers for community schools are:

1. **Child Study Centers:** One of the weak spots in the Philippines is the teacher's inadequate understanding of the children under her charge as individuals and as group members. To solve this problem, a five-semester-hour course in **Understanding the Learner** is required in the Four-Year General Elementary Teacher Education Curriculum. To make the teaching-learning experiences and situations in this course functional and real, a child study center in each of the Bureau of Public Schools teacher education institutions was organized. In October, 1955, the writer with the approval of the Director of Public Schools, organized the first child study center at the Philippine-UNESCO National Community School Training Center, Bayambang, Pangasinan. The child study center has for its major aim to help classroom teachers develop interests and abilities in understanding children through the use of practical equipment and scientific techniques of assessing children. The centers operate on a cooperative approach in which the teachers (present and previous), parents, student teachers, school physician, school nurse, social worker, and other interested laymen work with the child study technician, who serves as a coordinator in the gathering, organizing, interpreting and evaluating of the data of the various aspects of growth and development of children. These child study centers are giving priority to the study of children in their respective laboratory schools in order to help future

teachers acquire the basic skills and abilities in understanding children and master teachers of the laboratory schools in graduating teacher-learning experiences according to their children's developmental levels. The data, therefore, serve as starting point in determining the universal and unique characteristics and needs of children in the laboratory schools. The first concern of the centers is on the utilization of the data by the classroom teachers and later the data will be used in drawing conclusions on the characteristics and needs of Filipino children on the regional and national scopes.

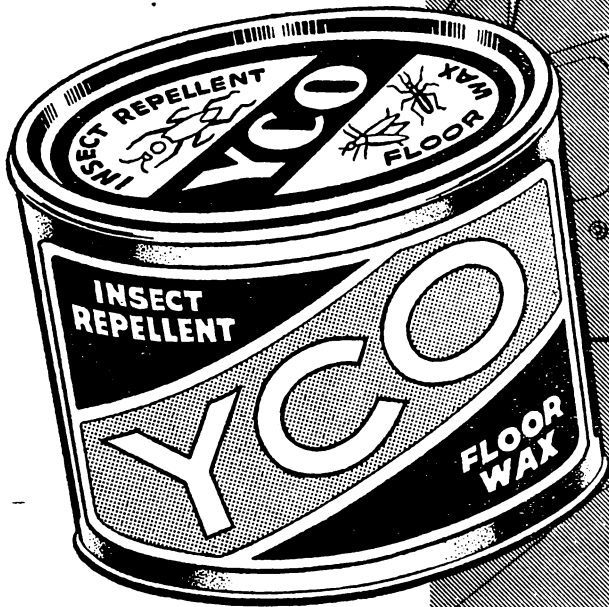
The child study centers are now operating for the children and students in their respective school campuses. In due time, they will extend the service to all children and youth in the service areas of the normal schools which, when taken together, will cover the whole Philippines. The latter groups of data will be utilized in determining national characteristics and needs.

2. **Opportunity Class:** "Education for all children of all people" is a significant adage in all democratic countries. After making a thorough study of children's needs, experiences, readiness, adjustment, purposes, interests, and abilities, inevitably the children with special talents in arts, sciences, crafts, constructive manipulations and other aspects of creativeness, will be identified as well as children with marked deficiencies intellectually, emotionally, socially, and physically. These various groups of children call for special attention for the provision of the necessary experiences and learning-teaching situations to foster the development of their talents or eliminate their difficulties as the case may be. The first opportunity class was organized in December, 1956, by the writer with the approval of Dr. Benigno Aldana, Director of Public Schools. It is located at the Pangasinan Normal School. It is an essential part of the Child Study Center.

3. **Pre-School Education Classes:** The significance of pre-school education for the development of growth and development of pre-school children cannot be over-emphasized. It is accepted that the first impressions are most lasting and early experiences are carried on in the life development of the individual. Results of studies and researches have shown that education in early age has measurable effects on the learning process of children in the next higher grades. Desirable social-emotional behaviors, if developed in the right manner in early childhood, persist to operate in the life of a growing child. These are a few of the supporting reasons why pre-school education has to be organized in the school system.

The first kindergarten class under the leadership of the writer was organized in October, 1955 at Zamboanga Normal School, with the cooperation of Mrs.

# YCO



**cleans  
as it  
waxes!**

**BEAUTIFIES!  
ECONOMICAL!  
INSECT-REPELLENT!**



for-  
• WOOD  
• LEATHER  
• METAL

YW-9-57

**ELIZALDE PAINT & OIL FACTORY, INC.**

378 Tarduy, Manila

Tel. 3 86-71

Ignacia Olasso, Supervisor of Laboratory School. All the normal schools have organized their respective pre-school education classes as an important phase of their course in child understanding (child growth and development) and of their child study programs.

**4. Balanced Approach to Community Education:** The ultimate goal of community education is **better life and life condition**. With this goal in view, necessarily the approach to effective teaching-learning experiences and situations should be evolved from the children's needs, interests, experiences, capacities, and values in the light of community needs, problems and resources. This approach gives a balance to the importance of the child and his community or society. This is the balanced approach—giving very close ties between the child and the community (cultural and environmental factors).

The first leadership class in **balanced teaching-learning approach** was organized in the 1953 Baguio Vacation Normal School. In the 1956 Baguio Vacation Normal School this leadership class was revived. Seventeen school divisions were represented in this class. These representatives have shown good start in evolving units of work from community needs, problems, and resources in the light of results of studies of children in their respective schools. This approach in teaching is an evidence in vitalizing teaching conformably with the demands of community education with particular stress in the rural areas.

**5. Special Teacher-Education Program:** To meet the expanding needs and responsibilities of the Bureau of Public Schools, **special teacher-education programs** for exceptional children—blind, deaf, partially hearing and seeing, mentally gifted, mentally retarded, socially maladjusted, and crippled as well as for **pre-school education** have been initiated in 1957 at the Baguio Vacation Normal School. Although these special teacher-education curricula are in their infancy stage, in due time all the normal schools and big central schools will have their own special classes for exceptional children.

Besides, the special teacher education curricula above, there are now being evolved to meet the demand for special teachers in music, arts, home economics and practical arts (crafts, elementary agriculture, elementary shop and cottage industries) developed within the framework of the Four-Year General Elementary Teacher-Education Curriculum. Without unduly lengthening this Curriculum, few well selected future teachers are enrolled in these special teacher education curricula. The enrolment is determined by the data on supply and demand in each special field.