

Student-Centered and Outcomes-Based Education: A Foucauldian Reading

Christian Bryan S. Bustamante, Ph.D.
San Beda College

This paper is divided into three main parts. The first part discusses the meaning and characteristics of lifelong learning and the paradigm of student-centered and outcomes-based education. It is argued that lifelong learning as well as student-centered approach and outcomes-based education are not humanistic but utilitarian. The second part tackles the policy changes in Philippine education in line with student-centered and outcomes-based education. In the discussion it is emphasized that the policy changes and the adoption of the student-centered and outcomes-based education are utilitarian. The third part of the paper is an exposition of Foucault's philosophical notions of bio-power and subjectivation and its relevance to our understanding of education. In conclusion, there are many paradigms or frameworks that we can choose from to realize reforms and we can appropriately and properly for the holistic formation and meaningful learning experience of students. We have to avoid imposing one paradigm over another for such is dangerous to the academic freedom and creativity of educational institutions.

I. Lifelong Learning, Student-Centered Approach, and Outcomes-Based Education

According to the 1996 UNESCO Report, or also known as Delors Report, "education is not a miracle cure or a magic formula;" but it is one of the "principal means available to foster a deeper and more harmonious form of human development."¹ The Report further explains that education is an "on-going process of improving knowledge and skills" as well as an "exceptional means of bringing about personal development and building relationships among

¹UNESCO, *Learning the Treasure Within*, (France: UNESCO Publishing, 1996), p. 11

individuals, groups, and nations.”² The mission of education is “to enable each of us, without exception, to develop all our talents to the full and to realize our creative potential, including responsibility of our own lives and achievement of our personal aims.”³ The 1972 UNESCO Report, which is also known as the Faure Report, explains that the “principal *raison d’être* for education is the contribution it should make to the escape from dependency.”⁴ Education is a maturation process that leads one to escape dependency and experience autonomy.⁵

The two UNESCO Reports, which are twenty-four years apart, provide different but related views about education. The 1972 UNESCO Report emphasizes the role of education in the individual’s maturation and independency process. Based on the 1996 UNESCO Report, maturity and autonomy are characteristics of a deeper and harmonious human resource. Mature and independent individuals are the ones who are aware of their potentials and work hard to develop their talents, knowledge and skills to the fullest in order to achieve personal aims. The mature and autonomous individuals are products of proper education - education that trains and develops the critical thinking skills of students. Education, when not properly designed and implemented, can also inhibit the maturation and independence of individuals.⁶

For education to contribute to maturation, it must train and transform students into lifelong learners. In the 1972 UNESCO Report, lifelong learning means “linking education more closely to life, to work, to solving community problems.”⁷ It further explains that the link between education and life, work as well as community is a “rediscovery of powerful earlier precepts: Plutarch’s statement, “The City is the best teacher;” and Pestalozzi’s thesis “Every part of the background, natural or man-made – the home, the school, the community – participates in the educative task.”⁸ The 1996 UNESCO Report explains lifelong learning

²Ibid., p. 12

³Ibid., p. 17.

⁴William J. Platt, *The Faure Report: A Turning Point in Educational Planning* (presented at Science and Man in Americas, Technical Symposium No. 15, Educational Planning, Mexico City, June 19, 1973), p. 5.

⁵Ibid.

⁶Ibid.

⁷William J. Platt, p. 6.

⁸Ibid.

as “to learn how to learn.”⁹ Influenced by the phenomenon of globalization or borderless world, it broadens the idea of lifelong learning by emphasizing “better understanding of other people and the world at large.”¹⁰ It does not only relate education to home, school and community but to the problems of a borderless and pluralistic world. Hence, it emphasizes the development of “mutual understanding, peaceful interchange and harmony.”¹¹

The 1996 Report introduced the four pillars of education, the foundation of lifelong learning. These are learning to live together, learning to know, learning to do, and learning to be.¹² The idea of learning to live together means understanding other peoples and their history, culture, and traditions. The end results of this are to accept pluralism and differences as well as to develop mutual respect. Lifelong learners must be able to understand that the world is complex and plural, and peoples from different parts of the world possess their own discourses, ideas and truths. Others should not be perceived as “lesser,” or perceived ourselves as “better,” simply because of these differences. That is why the 1996 Report describes this first foundation as “necessary Utopia” and a means to escape from dangers of cynicism and resignation.¹³ The second foundation, learning to know, means providing students with a broad and in-depth general education that combines various disciplines such as natural sciences, social sciences, and humanities. It is the basic foundation of lifelong learner, and provides students with a “taste” of what is lifelong learning all about.¹⁴ Another pillar is learning to do, and this refers to the acquisition of competencies needed by an individual to deal with the variety of situations in life, particularly those that are unforeseen.¹⁵ Learning to do does not only mean acquisition of competencies, but it also refers to continuous development of oneself to meet the changing challenges in life. The last foundation, learning to be, is taken from the 1972 Report where education and lifelong learning is defined as a process to “escape from dependency.”¹⁶

⁹UNESCO, *Learning the Treasure Within*, p. 20

¹⁰Ibid.

¹¹Ibid.

¹²Ibid., pp. 20-22

¹³Ibid., p. 20.

¹⁴ Ibid., p. 21.

¹⁵Ibid.

¹⁶William J. Platt, p. 5.

The said report equates education with maturation process – the movement from dependency to autonomy.¹⁷ The 1996 Report explains the importance of this pillar by stressing the need to exercise “greater independence and judgment combined with a stronger sense of personal responsibility for the attainment of common goals.”¹⁸

To summarize, lifelong learning means making education and learning relevant to individual’s personal and professional life as well as to the community. One must realize that education is a powerful tool that can be used to improve and develop oneself as well as to provide solutions to various problems that one encounters in the community. Such realization can only happen by making it relevant. Lifelong long learning also means making an individual mature and independent – one who can render independent judgment or decision to better one self and to contribute solutions to societal problems. It is important to emphasize that lifelong learning is a process, and as such does not end after leaving the school campuses. Hence, lifelong learning is also an attitude that must be developed among students. It is an attitude that they must possess and display to face and overcome challenges in life. The challenge to schools and educators is to develop students not only as professionals but also as human persons. To state it differently, they should not only be professionalized but also humanized. The meaning of the four pillars of education is the humanization of students, for them to be able to accept and overcome challenges, to learn to respect differences, and to learn that learning is an unending process. Education is an unending process of learning as well as an endless process of humanization.

Medel-Anonuevo et al identify the characteristics of lifelong learner. First, a lifelong learner is an “active and creative explorer of the world.” This means having the ability to interact with the environment and such interaction is informed by theories, frameworks, perceptions, values, as aspirations and attitudes.¹⁹ Secondly, a lifelong learner has the ability to reflect on life as well as environment.²⁰ Through reflection, new insights or ideas about the relationship between life and environment can be gained and

¹⁷Ibid.

¹⁸UNESCO, *Learning the Treasure Within*, p. 21.

¹⁹Ibid., p. 9.

²⁰Ibid.

developed. That is why a lifelong learner does not only learn, but also “learns how to learn”²¹ through self-questioning and critical analysis of the learning process as well as its results.²² Thirdly, a lifelong learner is a self-actualizing agent who has the ability to motivate oneself towards the achievement of a particular goal. Fourth, a lifelong learner integrates thinking, feeling, and action²³ who has the ability to develop one’s cognitive and affective faculties. A lifelong learner can integrate not only knowledge and perspectives but also ideas, theories, principles and values into one’s behavior and emotion. In other words, a lifelong learner is not only an individual who is knowledgeable but also ethical and moral as well as professional. Fifth, a lifelong learner recognizes and optimizes individual differences in learning.²⁴ A lifelong learner has the ability to recognize and accept the plurality and complexity not only in learning but also in society at large. This plurality and complexity are rooted in the differences of individuals and societies, and a lifelong learner respects such differences. Lastly, a lifelong learner does not only learn continuously through reflection, integration, motivation, and respect; but also cultivates the development and sustainability of lifelong learning experiences.²⁵ A lifelong learner does not only aspire to learn but also builds a culture of lifelong learning.

Lifelong learning cannot be achieved without reforms in the educational system. The UNESCO emphasizes the “vital need for basic education,” the need to “review the role of secondary education”²⁶ and to “examine the issues raised by developments in higher education” in order to realize lifelong learning. The UNESCO further explains the need to “organize the various stages of education to provide for passage from one stage to another and to diversity the paths through the system, while enhancing the value of each.”²⁷ Reforms in the educational system do not mean complicated planning as well as broad and in-depth changes or innovations in the learning experience. It means going back to the basics of a productive and meaningful learning experience

²¹Ibid.

²²Ibid.

²³Ibid., p. 10.

²⁴Ibid.

²⁵Ibid.

²⁶UNESCO, *Learning the Treasure Within*, p. 22.

²⁷UNESCO, *Learning the Treasure Within*, p. 22.

by improving the teacher-pupil relationship, by making learning of children in local environment available, by using media in instruction effectively, and by giving full attention to the 3 Rs – writing, reading, and arithmetic.²⁸ Reforms also mean creative delivery of instruction by combining conventional as well as “out-of-school approaches,” so that pupils/students will experience the “three dimensions of education – the ethical and cultural, the scientific and technological, and the economic and social.”²⁹

Paradigm shifts in teaching and learning were introduced in order to educate and train lifelong learners. These are the shifts from teacher-centered learning to student-centered learning and from content-based to outcomes-based.

Student-centered learning is a mindset, a culture and a learning approach. It is characterized by “innovative methods of teaching which aim to promote learning in communication with teachers and other learners and which take students seriously as active participants in their own learning, fostering transferable skills such as problem-solving, critical and reflective thinking.”³⁰ Its goal is to create a learning environment that optimizes students’ opportunities to pay attention and actively engage in authentic, meaningful, and useful learning.³¹ Student-centered learning is a learning approach that optimizes the opportunities for students to learn by using the best possible ways to get the students to work.³² It utilizes a “learning by doing” approach where students are actively engaged in the learning process. Student-centered is related to authentic learning that “allows students to explore, discuss, and meaningfully construct concepts and relationships in contexts that involve real-world problems and projects that are relevant to the learners.”³³ It uses the methods utilized in the real world such as, teamwork, collaboration, technology, and professional presentation processes and solutions.³⁴ Based on these descriptions, the teacher does not monopolize the learning

²⁸Ibid., p. 23

²⁹Ibid., p. 24.

³⁰International Education and The European Students’ Union, *Student Centered Learning: Toolkit for Students, Staff and Higher Education Institutions* (Berlin: Laserline, 2010), p. 5.

³¹T. Doyle, *Learner-Centered Teaching: Putting the Research on Learning Into Practice* (Virginia: Stylus Publishing, LLC, 2011), p. 9.

³²Terry Doyle, *Learner-Centered Teaching: Putting the Research on Learning Into Practice*, Virginia: Stylus Publishing, LLC, 2011, p. 7.

³³ Ibid., p. 32

³⁴Ibid.

process; rather, the teacher shares the responsibility of learning with the students.

Another paradigm shift in teaching and learning which is considered as student-centered is the outcomes-based education. William Spady defines outcomes-based education as “defining, designing, building, focusing, and organizing everything in an education system on the things of lasting significance that we ultimately want every learner to demonstrate successfully as the result of their learning experience in that system.” Outcomes-based educational system involves two essential aspects. These are “developing a clear set of learning outcomes around which all of the system’s components can be focused” and “establishing the conditions and opportunities within the system that enable and encourage all students to achieve those essential outcomes.”³⁵

The foundation of the outcomes-based education is the learning outcomes. Outcomes are not values, beliefs, attitudes, or psychological states of mind; rather, these are “clear learning results that we want the students to demonstrate at the end of the significant learning experience.”³⁶ Since outcomes are what the students can demonstrate, these refer to what they can “actually do with what they know and have learned” and to the tangible, visible, and observable “application of what has been learned.”³⁷ Outcomes embody what the students have known and understood as well as their skills and competence.³⁸ The systemic, structural, operational, and cultural elements of education as well as the teaching and learning activities, assessment tasks and tools, and system of assessment should be defined by, designed from, built on, focused on, and organized around the learning outcomes.³⁹ Learning outcomes are learning competencies. One of the key features of competency-based education is the integration of “multiple components, including knowledge, skills, and attitudes.”

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Biggs and Tang classify outcomes into graduate, programme,

³⁵William Spady, *Outcomes-Based Education: Critical Issues and Answers (USA: The American Association of School Administrators, 1994)*, p. 12-13.

³⁶*Ibid.*, p. 13.

³⁷Spady, *It’s Time to End the Decade of Confusion about OBE in South Africa*, p. 4 and Spady, *Outcomes-Based Education: Critical Issues and Answers*, p. 13.

³⁸Spady, *It’s Time to End the Decade of Confusion about OBE in South Africa*, p. 4

³⁹*Ibid.*

⁴⁰Susan R. Swing, *Perspectives on competency-based medical education from the learning sciences in Medical Teacher*, 2010, 32: 663-886, p. 663.

and course outcomes.⁴¹ Graduate outcomes or also known as graduate attributes are “outcomes of the total university experience, such as creativity, independent problem solving, professional skills, critical thinking, communication skills, teamwork, as well as lifelong learning.”⁴² The programme outcomes are the “reasons for establishing the programme.”⁴³ Programme outcomes should be aligned with the graduate outcomes. Course outcomes refer to what the “student should be able to perform after teaching that couldn’t be performed previously.”⁴⁴ Outcomes are different to course objectives, because the latter refers to what the student should have learnt at the end of the course while the former refers to what the student should have performed.⁴⁵ Objective refers to the intent of the teacher while outcome refers to the performance of the students.⁴⁶ Objective is written in the perspective of the teacher while outcome is written from the students’ perspective. The latter is the result of the former.

Student-centered learning and outcomes-based education are constructive and transformative. These paradigms are centered on the idea that learners can construct their own meaning and understanding of social realities, make sense of the information and knowledge that they learned in the classroom, make “connections between old and new information, compare and question, challenge and investigate, accept or discard old information.”⁴⁷ Furthermore, these adhere to the principles that learners learn deeply when they interact with each other to compare and share their ideas and when they work in a group or team and learn how to resolve their conflicting ideas, express their views, and learn from others. These paradigms are also transformative because such aim to develop the autonomous thinking and critical reflection and consciousness of the students,⁴⁸ for them to possess the ability to analyze, pose questions, and take

⁴¹John Biggs and Catherine Tang, *Teaching for Quality Learning at University*, 4th ed. (England: Open University Press, 2011), pp. 10-12.

⁴²*Ibid.*, p. 10

⁴³*Ibid.*, p. 117

⁴⁴*Ibid.*, p. 118.

⁴⁵S. Mukhopadhyay and S. Smith, *Outcomes-Based Education: Principles and Practice in Journal of Obstetrics and Gynaecology*, 30(8): 790-794.

⁴⁶Biggs and Tang, p. 118.

⁴⁷Cooperstein and Kocevar-Weidinger, *Beyond Active Learning: A Constructivist Approach to Learning in Reference Services Review*, volume 32, number 2, 2004, p. 142.

⁴⁸Jack Mezirow, *Transformative Learning: Theory to Practice in New Directions Adult and Continuing Learning*, No. 74, Summer 1997, p. 5.

action on the social, political, cultural, and economic contexts that influence and shape their lives. Student-centered and outcomes-based education aspire to transform the learners perspective by allowing them to create meaning from their experiences through reflection, critical reflection, and critical self-reflection and to develop the learners ability to make sense of their experiences as related to the developmental movement of their lives; and to develop the expressive or emotional-spiritual dimensions of learning and integrating these dimensions more holistically and consciously within the learners' daily experience of life.⁴⁹

Being constructive and transformative, student-centered and outcomes-based education is humanistic in the sense that they put primary importance on the development of the students. The different aspects of education such as leadership and administration, teaching and instruction, learning facilities and resources, research and development are centered on the students' needs and learning. But my suspicious mind says it is not humanistic. It is utilitarian. The biggest questions that come into my mind are, "who defines the outcomes?" and "are student-centered and outcomes-based approach the only paradigms that can produce lifelong learners or can make education effective?" My answer to the first question is that it is the economy and the market that set the tone for defining the learning outcomes of the students. It is lifelong learning for the economy and for the market. It is learning not from the perspective of students but based on the demands of the economy and needs of the market. Student-centered and outcomes-based education's aim is to enhance the skills and competencies required by the economy and the market.

This paradigm shift posed a great challenge to teachers, particularly teachers at the higher educational institutions. It calls for variety in teaching and learning methodologies and activities that are focused on the learning experience of the students and that encouraged students' active engagement in learning process by allowing them to question, to speculate, or to generate solutions.⁵⁰ It advocates for the limited utilization of traditional instruction, lecture-based session, because it lacks active engagement on the

⁴⁹John M. Dirkx, *Transformative Learning Theory in the Practice of Adult Education: An Overview*, in *PAACE Journal of Lifelong Learning*, Vol. 7, 1998, pp. 3-7.

⁵⁰*Ibid.*, p. 7.

part of the students and students resort to lower order thinking skills such as transcription, memorizing and repetition of learning.⁵¹ Teaching and learning activities should be based on the needs of the students or on what they should be able to do. The variety of teaching and learning activities does not lie on the teachers' perspective but on the students'.

II. The Philippine Experience: Recent Developments on Educational Reforms

The Philippine government issued policy changes on education that reflect the principles of lifelong learning, student-centered, and outcomes-based education. The general justification for such policy changes is for the Philippine educational system to cope with the demands of the globalized and pluralized market and economy.

The President of the Republic of the Philippines issued Executive Order No. 83 on the 1st of October 2013 establishing the Philippine Qualification Framework (PQF) in order for the Philippine educational system to “adopt to the national standards and levels for outcomes of education” and to align with “international qualifications framework to support the national and international mobility of workers through increased recognition of the value and comparability of Philippine qualifications.” The Executive Order also aims to “support the development and maintenance of pathways and equivalencies which provide access to qualifications and assist people to move easily and readily between the different education and training sectors and between these sectors and the labor market.” It also recognized the vital role of education in the achievement of “growth, creation of employment opportunities and poverty reduction.” It addressed the gaps between “education and labor sectors brought about by poor information” and the “continuing disconnect between educational institutions and employment/industry trends which has brought about the mismatch in jobs and skills” by “encouraging lifelong learning of individuals, providing employers specific training standards and qualifications that are aligned to industry standards, ensuring that

⁵¹ Maniam Kaliannan and Suseela Devi Chandran, Empowering Student through Outcomes-Based Education in Research in Education, No. 87, p. 50.

training and educational institutions adhere to specific standards and are accountable for achieving the same, and providing the government with common standards, taxonomy and typology of qualifications as bases for granting approvals to stakeholders.”

Consistent with the goals of Executive Order 83, the Commission on Higher Education of the Republic of the Philippines issued a memorandum order on the 11th of December 2012 entitled “Policy-Standard to Enhance Quality Assurance (QA) in Philippine Higher Education Through an Outcomes-Based and Typology-Based QA.” The highly debatable memorandum order cited international developments and local problems as the bases for educational reforms. The reality of the ASEAN Integration in 2015, the Philippine government’s commitment to the “evolving efforts to recognize and develop a system of comparable qualifications, degrees, and diplomas across the Asia-Pacific region” and the “acceptance of internationally-agreed-upon frameworks and mechanisms for the global practice of professions” are the international developments that caused the issuance of the memorandum that calls for reforms in order to improve the quality of education. On the other hand, the problem and scandal of poverty is the main local problem that can be addressed by educational reforms.

The memorandum order advocates for an outcomes-based quality assurance system which until now needs to be defined and advocates for a shift from teaching-centered paradigm to student-centered paradigm. It explains that in the student-centered paradigm, “students are made aware of what they ought to know, understand and be able to do after completing a unit of study.” Furthermore, student’s learning activities and assessment are “subsequently geared towards the acquisition of appropriate knowledge and skills and the building of student competencies.” The focus of attention on this paradigm is the “students and the process that will enable the development and assessment of their learning competencies as defined by disciplinal and multi-disciplinal communities of scholars and professional practitioners.”⁵² In this context, the “development of learning competencies” is the “expected outcomes of higher educational programs.” Competencies refer to the identified and

⁵²Ibid.

operationalized “outcomes that bridge the gap between education and job requirements.” Competencies also refer to “thinking, attitudinal and behavioral competencies as well as ethical orientations.”

Another debatable memorandum order issued by the Commission on Higher Education on the 28th of June 2013 is the “General Education Curriculum: Holistic Understandings, Intellectual and Civic Competencies.” It contains the new general education curriculum for higher education. The new curriculum is progressive, competency-based, outcomes-based and learner centered curriculum. It identifies three outcomes that need to be realized: intellectual, personal and civic, and practical responsibilities. It envisions molding students who are lifelong learners by developing the following skills: analytical, problem solving, critical and creative thinking. The courses are designed to be interdisciplinary and broad enough to “accommodate range of perspective and approaches.” The curriculum requires authentic learning as well as high-level reading, research and writing.

The goals of the curriculum are to develop a professionally competent, humane and moral person, to prepare the Filipino for the demands of 21st century life and the requisite abilities to anticipate and adapt to swiftly changing situations, to think innovatively and create solutions to problems; and to enable the Filipino to find and locate oneself in the community and the world, take pride in and hopefully assert one’s identity and sense of community and nationhood amid the forces of globalization. The curriculum takes into consideration the demands of a 21 century globalized and pluralized world. It prepared students to the global and plural society by developing knowledge of self and identity, knowledge of society, culture and traditions, and knowledge of the dynamics of global community.

It is very clear that the bases for these policy changes are utilitarian – the national and international mobility of workers, the closing of gap between education and labor, the execution of the Philippine government to internationally agreed upon framework, and the preparation of Filipinos to the demands of the 21st century society and economy. These are noble bases for reforms; however, there is no single and one-size-fits-all framework or paradigm to realize reforms. Let us not forget that as educators our concern

primary concern is the meaningful learning experience of our students. There are different paradigms we can choose from to realize student's meaningful learning experience, and that can be utilized properly and appropriately for the holistic formation of students. The student-centered and outcomes-based education is only one of these paradigms. These can be advocated but not to be imposed, because these paradigms are not absolutes in themselves. These have their weaknesses and critics.

The strength of the student-centered and outcomes-based education is the identification and formulation of learning outcomes that can be used by teachers as guide in the formulation of meaningful teaching and learning activities as well as effective assessment tools. It is the alignment of the teaching and learning activities and assessment tasks to learning outcomes that we can adopt in the student-centered and outcomes-based education. It should be not imposed as the sole framework that can be used for educational reform, because it may not fit on all programs and courses like the Liberal Arts or on the language of a particular discipline like the Humanities or on the culture of an academic institution that has its own systems and process to ensure learning and to deliver quality education.

At the end of the day, what is important is that students are passionate and positive about learning. They are inspired to learn and to unlearn. Teachers guide them in understanding the relevance of what they are doing inside the classroom to the larger society and to their day to day life, and ignite in them the desire and the love for learning. That is why teachers should not be left out in all of these paradigmatic shifts. These paradigmatic shifts will be useless without teachers' support and cooperation. Teachers should be put at the center of these changes. Before we think of the best framework for educational reform, we have to think first of our teachers. They need to be re-educated, re-oriented, re-trained, and re-tooled, for they are the only best instrument that can be utilized in the implementation and success of any educational and learning paradigm.

III. Philosophical Perspective of Education anchored on Foucault's Philosophy

My discussion on Foucault's philosophy of bio-power explains why I look at these paradigms as utilitarian. My years of reading and studying the works of the Michel Foucault led to the following conclusions.

A. The human person is a construction.

The human person is constituted by the different techniques and strategies of bio-power. Bio-power is defined by Foucault as the exercise of power over life.⁵³ Bio-power sees the body as machine and as human species. As a machine, it can be disciplined, optimized, extorted, utilized, and integrated into systems of efficient and economic control; and as human species, it sees the body with mechanics of life and biological processes that can be regulated and interposed.⁵⁴

Bio-power employs technologies to discipline and regulate the body. In disciplining the human body as a docile, it employs mechanisms such as surveillance and monitoring as well as examination and normalization to calculate, utilize, maximize and integrate the body.⁵⁵ On the other hand in regulating the body as a species that has mechanics of life and biological processes;⁵⁶ bio-power employs the technologies of population, statistics and confession to gather information and to construct knowledge about the mechanics and processes of life in order to formulate interventions that will regulate life. Bio-power looks into the propagation, birth, mortality, health, life expectancy and longevity as essential information in formulating regulatory interventions.

Bio-power is involved in the process of subjectivation. Subjectivation refers to "how human beings are made subjects."⁵⁷

⁵³Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality: An Introduction*, volume 1 (New York: Vintage Books, 1990), pp. 139-145.

⁵⁴*Ibid.*, p. 139.

⁵⁵*Ibid.*, p. 139.

⁵⁶Axel Honneth in his book *The Critique of Power: Reflective Stages in a Critical Social Theory* (trans. Kenneth Baynes, Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 1991) explains that bio-power is an application of Foucault's theory of power to the conduct of human bodies. The human bodies are control not just in terms of motor and gestural motions but in the fundamental organic processes of birth, procreation, and death (p. 168)

⁵⁷Michel Foucault, *The Subject and Power in The Essential Foucault: Selections from the Essential Works of Foucault 1954-1984*, Ed. Paul Rabinow and Nikolas Rose (New York: The New Press, 1994), p. 126.

The individuals undergo series of disciplinal and regulatory processes in order to be transformed into subjects, for them to adopt and adjust to the economic order and system and to the political and economic goals of the State. Subjectivation makes possible the “adjustment of the accumulation of men to that of capital, the joining of the growth of human groups to the expansion of productive forces and the differential allocation of profit.”⁵⁸ The subjectivation of individuals is an important solution to social problems that are inimical to the economic and political interests of the State.

Foucault’s analysis of the construction of the human person is within the context of the new economic order, capitalism. Because of capitalism, modern society was transformed into an extensive manufacturing factory where there are different forms of processing units that would produce the kind of subjects that the economy required.

He does not agree with the Marxist thought that ideological constructs alone are responsible for the rise and spread of capitalism. He claims that bio-power is an indispensable element in the rise of capitalism for the following reasons: (1) it is bio-power that guarantee relations of domination and effects of hegemony; (2) it is bio-power that makes possible the “adjustment of the accumulation of men to that of capital, the joining of the growth of human groups to the expansion of productive forces and the differential allocation of profit;” (3) it is bio-power that supports and fortifies the division of labor; (4) it is bio-power that facilitates the propagation of the ideologies and culture of the elite that are accepted as knowledge and truth; (5) it is the reason behind the force that moved man to work.⁵⁹

Foucault emphasizes that it was not just ideology, morality and rationality that strengthen the capitalist system and propagate the elite culture. The intervention of strategies and technologies of bio-power and of power-knowledge over life and body was essential in the fortification and spread of capitalism and capitalist culture. These strategies and technologies were utilized to modify and take control of life and body so that these will become useful and productive for the economy.

⁵⁸Ibid., p. 141.

⁵⁹ Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality: An Introduction*, p. 141.

B. Institutions are involved in the construction of the human person.

Institutions regulate and discipline the human person. This is articulated in the major works of Foucault. These are the sexual prescriptions in the Ancient Greece,⁶⁰ Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality: An Introduction*, p. 141. the existence of confinement and asylum during the seventeenth century,⁶¹ the rise of the clinic and the hospital, the development of medicine and psychiatry,⁶² the different forms of punishments from the sixteenth century to the seventeenth century and the establishment of prison.⁶³ These provide us micro-perspectives about the constitution of the subject. The different techniques and strategies involved in these discourses manifest the working and doing of bio-power. The works of Foucault on madness, clinic, prison and sexuality render us philosophical and historical perspectives about the construction of the subject through bio-power.

C. Institutions used knowledge in the constitution of the human person.

The potent tool used by the institutions in the construction of the human person is knowledge. Institutions are successful in the construction of the human person because of the production of knowledges - knowledges that were used by the human person in understanding oneself. The construction of the human persons requires power that uses a different kind of force; and that is, the force of knowledge. The medical and clinical gaze, surveillance, examination, and panopticon were able to abstract knowledge and information about the human person or about the population in general. These different techniques penetrate the soul of the

⁶⁰Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality: The Use of Pleasure*, volume 2, Trans. Robert Hurley (New York: Vintage Books, 1990) and *The History of Sexuality: The Care of the Self*, volume 3, Trans. Robert Hurley (New York: Vintage Books, 1988).

⁶¹ Michel Foucault, *Madness and Civilization: A History of Insanity in the Age of Reason*, trans. Richard Howard (New York: Vintage Books, 1988).

⁶²Michel Foucault, *The Birth of the Clinic: An Archaeology of Medical Perception*, trans. A.M. Sheridan Smith (New York: Vintage Books, 1994), *Abnormal: Lectures at the College de France, 1974-1975*, trans. Graham Bruchell, ed. Valerio Marchetti and Antonella Salomoni (New York: Picador, 1999) and *Psychiatric Power: Lectures at the College de France, 1973-1974*, ed. Jacques Lagrange, trans. Graham Burchell (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006).

⁶³Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, trans. Alan Sheridan (New York: Vintage Books, 1995).

modern human person in order to understand how and what one thinks of oneself and others, and how and what one does in solitude and in public. The penetration results to the gathering of information and to the creation of knowledges.

These knowledges are significant, because such were used as bases for the discipline and regulation of the human person. The different techniques of discipline and regulation were further improved and intensified, because these knowledges provided more insights and information about the human person. In this context, knowledges are political. Knowledge should not only be viewed from the traditional perspectives of rationalism and empiricism. Knowledge is not pure. The search for knowledge is not just motivated by the desire to understand the truth but also by the need to control. Knowledge is equated with truth to give more credibility to what one knows. The higher the perception of credibility is and the higher the truth value of knowledge is and the more one can control others. This is the interest of institutions in the search for knowledge – the desire and need to control the human person.

The rise and fall of knowledges are affected by the shifts in political and economic discourses. It is not autonomous to the changes in political and economic climates. Knowledge is not simply discovered or revealed. It is determined and created because of its political significance in the society and in the State.

D. University is an instrument of bio-power and subjectivation.

Based on the foregoing, universities are instruments of bio-power and subjectivation. Foucault mentions that the rise of schools and barracks during the seventeenth century marked the birth of bio-power. Foucault does not elaborate on how the rise of schools contributed to the rise of bio-power, but it can be abstracted in his discussion on asylum, clinic, and prison that universities played a crucial role in the discipline and regulation of man. The asylum, clinic and prison are extensions of universities. These are the medical laboratories of universities. Through these they gained more knowledge about man as mad, sick, or criminal.

The raw information gathered by doctors in these laboratories is processed in the universities. The result of such processing is known as discourses and knowledges. They are written into texts and that texts propagated knowledges about the human person and provided new understandings about the human person.

Universities do not act independently. They are commissioned by the State and institutions for such knowledges are significant to the development of society and to the welfare of the human person. In this context, it can be concluded that universities since the modern period are utilized by the State and institutions to manufacture knowledges for productive utilization of the society in the name of advancement and development. If universities in the medieval period, and even up to the present, exist to create discourses about the Catholic faith and propagate it as well; universities in the modern period were established and funded by the State to search for knowledges for the advancement and development of the human person and of the society as a whole. Knowledges are created and utilized to have a stronger society and State.

But this advancement is not always humanistic but also utilitarian. The human person in the process needs to be regulated and disciplined to conform to the developmental goals and objectives of the society and of the State. The transformation of the human person is important in the realization of the goals and objectives of the society. The human person is seen as a means to achieve a stronger society and State. That is why the human person needs to be educated. Universities do not only create knowledges but it also transforms human person to be an instrument and asset of the society and of the State. Such transformation is made possible by the the knowledges offered to him/her by the university. The human person sees oneself in the perspective of the knowledges that the university teaches.

In the context of Foucault's philosophy, education can be defined as an instrument of subjectivation. Education is a process that transforms individuals to be subjects, the kind of subjects that societies need or the global economy demands. Based on the UNESCO Reports, it is a process that leads students to the state of autonomy (maturity) from dependency (immaturity) or the process that produces lifelong learners. These are the kind

of human resources or workers needed by the globalized and pluralized world, and these are the subjects that will thrive and survive in the new economic environment.

Education is an instrument of subjectivation, because it “helps individuals fulfill and apply their abilities and talents.”⁶⁴ It also “increases productivity, improves health and nutrition, and reduces family size” and “presents specific knowledge, develops general reasoning skills, causes values to change, increases receptivity to new ideas, and changes attitudes toward work and society.”⁶⁵ The benefits of education are twofold: it develops the individual person in terms of knowledge, skills and attitudes in order for him to become productive and improves economic growth by making individuals employable, entrepreneur, and productive in their own field of work.

Philosophically, the human being is fashioned by education.⁶⁶ Without this fashioning, one is “worse than he/she is” and the “most misshapen of creatures.”⁶⁷ The human being, without education, is “like a shrub that has grown up by chance in the middle of a road, and got trampled under foot by the passers-by.”⁶⁸ Education provides the things that one lacks at birth, and that is “manhood” or humanity. Humanity is the “common vocation of man;” and before that student leaves the four corners of school, he/she must, first and foremost, be a human person.⁶⁹ He/she is a human person that will find a place for himself/herself whatever the changes of fortune.⁷⁰

Education is a tool of subjectivation, for it transforms or fashions individuals to be human persons. It is through education that they acquire the qualities of being a human person, as well as the skills and knowledge needed by a human subject to survive and thrive in the changing social and economic orders. This implies that education is a lifetime process, for an individual human person needs to learn continuously not only to improve oneself also to survive and thrive. The human person has to make oneself

⁶⁴E. Wayne Nafziger, *The Economics of Developing Countries* (New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1997), p. 271.

⁶⁵*Ibid.*

⁶⁶Jean Jacques Rousseau, *Emile*, Trans. William Boyd (London: Heinemann Educational Books Ltd), p. 11.

⁶⁷*Ibid.*

⁶⁸*Ibid.*

⁶⁹*Ibid.*, p. 15.

⁷⁰*Ibid.*

relevant to the changing political goals and economic needs of the society.

On the other hand, education is very important not only for an individual but also for the society and the State. It is through education that members of the society or of the State are transformed into productive subjects. It is through education that individual members are transformed to become assets of the society and of the State. That is why education is very important for societies and States. It is a tool to achieve economic growth and political stability.

Education transforms because it has a panoptic disciplinary effect. Panopticon is an architectural design that dissociates the “see/being seen dyad: in the peripheric ring, one is totally seen,⁷¹ without ever seen; in the central tower, one sees everything without ever being seen.” The disciplinary effect of panopticon is the development of consciousness or awareness that one is always being observed. Hence, one behaves properly and accordingly because of that consciousness and awareness. Panopticon penetrates individuals’ behavior⁷² by internally molding their consciousness that they are constantly being observed; and if they failed to behave properly and accordingly, they will be punished. It acts directly on individuals by giving power of mind over mind as well as by facilitating the submission and integration of individuals to the social norms, economic system, and political structure.

Education’s disciplinary effect is permanent in individuals’ consciousness. It does not only mould individuals’ knowledge and skills, but it also forms one whole being to be cooperative, productive, and useful resources of the society and of the State. Education, positively or negatively, influences permanently individuals’ behavior as well as worldviews. Education does not only provide knowledge and skills to individuals, but also introduces them to the existing norms, systems, and structures with the end of integrating them, so that they will become useful resources.

Based on the foregoing discussion about education as a form

⁷¹Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of Prison*, p. 202.

⁷²*Ibid.*, p. 204.

of subjectivation and as disciplinary and panoptic, education's role in the society and in the State is essential and critical. It is responsible in fashioning individuals to be human subjects – the subjects that the society and the State need or require. It is a very important social and political tool towards the achievement of social and political goals that can be lump into one two words – progress and development. Failure in the educational structure, programs, and policies is fatal to the progress and development of a nation and country.

IV. Concluding Remarks

The recent paradigm shift in education creates a lot of challenges and debates. It is also a threat for some while others see it as opportunity. Student-centered and outcomes-based education cannot be taken out from the challenges and demands of the globalizing economy, complex market, and pluralistic society. This paradigm does not exist in a vacuum. This influenced by the economy and the market. This is a new tool of bio-power or of subjectivation being utilized in order to discipline, regulate and transform students into the kind of human resources that the global economy or the global market needs – a lifelong learner. But let us not forget that as educators our concern primary concern is the meaningful learning experience of our students. This paradigm should be utilized properly and appropriately for the holistic formation of students and for their significant learning experience.

This new paradigm must not be imposed through the issuance of decrees or passage of a law. It is not the “one-best-way” to realize learning. There are many paradigms that schools can choose from that will best suit their culture, tradition, values and vision and mission. Choosing one paradigm over another and asking schools to adopt it is a form of domination that will eventually kill academic freedom and creativity. Furthermore, it may also hamper learning if it is not fit to the culture of the institution and to its style of teaching and learning.

Educational is essentially and critically political, because of its significance to the welfare of individuals and to the economic and political stability of society and State. Hence, we have to be

very careful on the utilization of educational framework that can be used as a basis for national educational framework. We have to assess frameworks that suit our culture as well as our needs. Throughout the years, educational institutions have developed framework and tradition of teaching and learning. Such must be recognized and respected as we work for reforms; because if not, reforms may only weaken the educational institutions and the educational system in general.

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