

# **DEVELOPING THE FILIPINO PROFESSIONAL TEACHER: JOURNEY OF A HUNDRED YEARS**

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## **1. Early Education of Filipino Teachers**

The treaty of Paris in 1898 formally ended the short-lived Spanish – American war where America won and Spain seceded the Philippines to the United States. Shortly after, the Taft Commission passed Education Act no. 34, establishing the Department of Public Instruction which was mandated to expand the public elementary school system established by Spain in the Philippines but using English as medium instruction.

In August 1901, the ship SS Thomas transported 500 American teachers (170 of them were women) from San Francisco to Manila. Thereafter all pioneer American teachers in the Philippines had been called “Thomasites”. The Thomasites produced instant teachers by identifying bright Filipino students who showed proficiency in the 3R’s and in English. They were hired to teach lower grades half of the day and the rest of the day they spent as students in intermediate grades.

It is interesting to note that the first public school teacher in English was not an American, rather it was a 16 –year old Filipina who finished the 2 –year post secondary normal course and was appointed to teach the first English class for adults in the first public elementary school in Paco, Manila. She was Maria Salome Marquez, featured in the book Manila, My Manila, by the chronicler of Filipino –Hispanic culture and traditions, Nick Joaquin.

## **2. Semicentennial Growth in Teacher Education**

In the second quarter, the 2 –year post –secondary normal course was introduced at the Philippine Normal School. At that time the flame of nationalism was sweeping the country, and in response, pioneer Filipino educators opened private schools to answer the demand of Filipino parents for a Filipino –oriented education for their children mediated by Filipino teachers. These pioneers included Librada Avelino and Carmen de Luna of Centro Escolar de Señoritas, the Tanchocos of Manila Central University, the Benitezses of Philippine Women’s University, the Jocsons of National University, the Ylagans of National Teachers’ College, and several more in the Visayas and Mindanao. Soon, the 4 –year bachelor’s degree courses for secondary school teaching (B.S.E.) and elementary school teaching (B.S.E.Ed.) were opened.

Passage of R.A. 1080 on June 15, 1954 required bar and board examinations administered by the Civil Service Commission. This was the first attempt at professionalization when teaching in the public schools required passing the Teachers Examinations administered by the Civil Service Commission, the Junior Teacher Examination for elementary level teaching and the Senior Teacher Examination for high school teaching. Later in the sixties the distinction between Junior and Senior was deleted and the test was called Teacher Examination.

## **3. The Golden Age of Teacher Education**

Teacher education reached its peak in the mid –century, considered as its golden decade. The college degree courses in teaching attracted students who belonged to the upper quartile of high school graduating classes. Colleges of Education strictly enforced selective admission and

selective retention to insure quality. On campus Education students were leaders in co – curricular and extra –curricular organizations and activities. They were on the editorial staff of campus newspapers and during commencement exercises, they were recipients of Latin honors and awards. Thus colleges of education increased in number and their enrollment drew from all strata of the socio –economic ladder.

Even after the independence of the Philippines from American rule in 1946, the system of education continued to follow the American system. Civil Service Examination for teachers continued to be a requirement for those who desired to teach in the public schools until 1976 when P.D. 1006 formally organized under the Civil Service Commission the National Board for Teachers to exercise supervision over the teaching profession, and which required passing the Philippine Board Examination for Teachers (PBET) to teach in the public schools.

#### **4. Challenges in the Seventies and the Eighties**

The third quarter proved to be the most dramatic period, for it witnessed the all –time high and the sudden fall of teacher education enrollment, the latter largely attributable to the result of the published findings that teaching was among the most crowded professions. The subsequent emphasis on technology –related courses to support the country’s bid for industrialization further reduced the glamour of the profession. Enrollment hit rock –bottom level in the seventies. It was in this period that the Philippine Association for Teachers and Educators (PAFTE) was organized to give support to the beleaguered teacher education sector.

In contrast to the glorious fifties, majority of the students who entered the teacher education programs in the seventies and eighties came from the lower quartile of high school graduating classes, those who placed 40 -60 percentile in the National College Entrance Examination (NCEE), and those who could hardly communicate in passable English, not even in passable Filipino. The few good ones who entered were jobless AB/BS graduates who enrolled for 18 units of education in order to qualify for teaching especially English, Mathematics and Science. It was sheer sentimentalism and tenacity to pursue their founding missions that motivated the private colleges of education to carry on despite dwindling enrollment. Hardest hit were private schools whose enrollment of 4–5 sections per year level dropped to as few as 4–5 students per year level.

The fourth quarter is a slow, painful recovery period. The pioneer colleges of education situated in cities and poblacion carried on despite low enrollment and poor quality of entrants also because Education is a “talk and chalk” course and its operational cost could be absorbed by the other units in the colleges and universities. Meanwhile, more colleges of education were opened at the countryside where the growing teacher shortage was more acutely felt. The quality of students however still left much to be desired. Teacher educators were hoping that at the last decade of the century some miracle would happen to reverse the tide to make teaching the profession of first choice.

#### **5. The Turning Point**

In 1994 the teaching practice received the much needed push with the passage of R.A. 7836 which professionalized teaching by requiring passing the licensure examination for teachers (LET) before one could teach in basic education classes of both public and private schools. Since

the law was also meant to address the problem of teacher shortage, it allowed other college graduates to take the LET after taking 18 units of specified education/pedagogical subjects.

In two – decades’ time so much water has gone under the bridge and R.A. 7836 has undergone close scrutiny especially since the priority concern of the Professional Regulation Commission is the enhancement and modernization of the regulatory laws of the 43 boards under its supervision. Responding to PRC’s mandate, the members of the Board for Professional Teachers analyzed the LET results from March 2013 to March 2017. These are among the findings:

**THE LICENSURE EXAMINATION FOR TEACHERS (LET) RESULTS:  
THE COMPLETE PICTURE**

SCOPE: 2013 – 2017

I.	<u>Professional Teachers –Elementary Level</u>	<u>PASSERS</u>
	Total Number of Examinees – 493, 906	
	First Time Examinees – 185, 691 (37.59%)	<b>101, 497 (54.65%)</b>
	Examinees who were Repeaters – 308, 215 (62.40%)	<b>39, 288 (12.74%)</b>
		<b>140, 785 (28.50%)</b>
II.	<u>Professional Teachers – Secondary Level</u>	<u>PASSERS</u>
	Total Number of Examinees – 578, 191	
	First Time Examinees – 261, 465 (45.22%)	<b>151, 842 (58.07%)</b>
	Examinees who were Repeaters – 316, 726 (54.77%)	<b>48, 476 (15.30%)</b>
		<b>200, 318 (34.64%)</b>
III.	<u>Professional Teachers – Elementary and Secondary Levels</u>	<u>PASSERS</u>
	Total Number of Examinees – 1, 072, 097	
	First Time Examinees – 447, 156 (41.70%)	<b>253, 339 (56.65%)</b>
	Examinees who were Repeaters – 624, 941 (58.29%)	<b>87, 764 (14.04%)</b>
		<b>341, 103 (31.18%)</b>

AVERAGE NUMBER OF LICENSED TEACHERS  
PRODUCED ANNUALLY: **68, 220**

**6. First Timers vs Repeaters**

The Board probed deeper into the comparative statistics of examinees between the first timers and the repeaters which the PRC Rating Division provided.

**Licensure Examination for Teachers – Elementary**  
**March 2017**  
**Number of Examinees**  
**By Examinees' Type**

CATEGORY	TOTAL	FAILED	PASSED	% OF PASSING
<b>FIRST TIMERS</b>				
2017 (Year Grad.)	34	22	12	35.29 %
2016 (Year Grad.)	7,080	4,661	2,419	34.17 %
2015 (Year Grad.)	961	730	231	24.04 %
2014 and earlier	1,293	1,084	209	16.16 %
<b>TOTAL FIRST TIMERS</b>	<b>9,368</b>	<b>6,497</b>	<b>2,871</b>	<b>30.65 %</b>
<b>REPEATERS</b>	<b>44,545</b>	<b>41,816</b>	<b>2,729</b>	<b>6.13 %</b>
<b>TOTAL EXAMINEES</b>	<b>53,913</b>	<b>48,313</b>	<b>5,600</b>	<b>10.39 %</b>

**Licensure Examination for Teachers – Secondary**  
**March 2017**  
**Number of Examinees**  
**By Examinees' Type**

CATEGORY	TOTAL	FAILED	PASSED	% OF PASSING
<b>FIRST TIMERS</b>				
2017 (Year Grad.)	82	29	53	64.63 %
2016 (Year Grad.)	9,802	4,711	5,091	51.94 %
2015 (Year Grad.)	2,178	1,236	942	43.25 %
2014 and earlier	10,048	5,330	4,718	46.95 %
<b>TOTAL FIRST TIMERS</b>	<b>22,110</b>	<b>11,306</b>	<b>10,804</b>	<b>48.86 %</b>
<b>REPEATERS</b>	<b>50,474</b>	<b>42,796</b>	<b>7,678</b>	<b>15.21 %</b>
<b>TOTAL EXAMINEES</b>	<b>72,584</b>	<b>54,102</b>	<b>18,482</b>	<b>25.46 %</b>

**Licensure Examination for Teachers – Elementary and Secondary**  
**March 2017**  
**Number of Examinees**  
**By Examinees' Type**

CATEGORY	TOTAL	FAILED	PASSED	% OF PASSING
<b>FIRST TIMERS</b>				
2017 (Year Grad.)	116	51	65	56.03 %
2016 (Year Grad.)	16,882	9,372	7,510	44.49 %
2015 (Year Grad.)	3,139	1,966	1,173	37.37 %
2014 and earlier	11,341	6,414	4,927	43.44 %
<b>TOTAL FIRST TIMERS</b>	<b>31,478</b>	<b>17,803</b>	<b>13,675</b>	<b>43.44 %</b>
<b>REPEATERS</b>	<b>95,019</b>	<b>84,612</b>	<b>10,407</b>	<b>10.95 %</b>
<b>TOTAL EXAMINEES</b>	<b>126,497</b>	<b>102,415</b>	<b>24,082</b>	<b>19.04 %</b>

**7. Pitfalls in Teacher Professionalization**

A century of experience in teacher professionalization should have taught us by now that we have consciously or unconsciously been misled by a number of fallacies in teacher education. For whatever it is worth, allow me to identify four.

The first fallacy is that pre –service teacher education should be so good and so complete as to be able to equip graduates with all the skills and competencies expected of teachers. With knowledge explosion and information technology revolution it is virtually impossible to stuff the accumulated wisdom of several generations into a single college program no matter how long the course is, how rich the content is, and how efficient the teachers are. Besides, the world of work cannot be adequately re –created in schools. Not even the best practicum or internship experience opportunities can match the varied challenges and surprises in the real professional world.

The second fallacy is that teacher education should confine itself to the preparation of teachers only at the elementary and secondary levels. It is now a fact that concentration of resources at these two levels did not translate to the desired effective teaching on the tertiary level. Post –secondary non –degree/technicians and college teachers may be recognized masters in their respective crafts, disciplines or professions but if they have not mastered the science of teaching, the desired teaching –learning process may not necessarily take place. It is to be remembered that they are also molders of future technicians and professionals.

The third fallacy is that a single examination is sufficient to ensure schools of quality teachers. New professional teachers need guidance, assistance and inspiration to develop commitment to the profession. Implementation of P.D. 10912 which requires professionals to earn continuing professional development units to renew their professional ID Cards will insure continuous updating of teachers’ knowledge and competencies and progression in teachers’ career. Here is the blueprint of the career progression for Professional Teachers.

## CAREER PROGRESSION FOR PROFESSIONAL TEACHERS

Years of Teaching	Phases of the Teacher's Lifelong Career <sup>1</sup>	Stages in the Teacher's Development Continuum	PQF Level
1-3	Induction ↓	Teacher 1	6
4-8	Self-Assessment ↙   ↘	Teacher 2	
9-15	Experimentation   Career Progress ↓   ↓	Master Teacher 1	7
16-24	Self – Reassessment ↓   ↓	Master Teacher 2	
25-32	Frustration   Satisfaction <sup>2</sup> ↓   ↓	Master Teacher 3	8
33-40	Bitter   Serene Disengagement   Disengagement ↓   ↓	Master Teacher 4	
41 and more	Total   Extension of Disengagement   Employment	Emeritus Teacher <sup>3</sup> (active retired teacher)	

<sup>1</sup>Daniel Fessler (1992)

<sup>2</sup>M.A. Huberman (1993)

<sup>3</sup>Betty Steffy (2001)

<sup>4</sup>John Hattie (2003)

The fourth fallacy is that idealism in the teaching profession is enough to sustain the morale of teachers. The era of the teacher – philosophers who preferred to die from starvation rather than compromise their ideals is over. Now some teachers suffer from malnutrition and languish from illness because of meager pay. Majority of the administrative cases against teachers brought to the attention of the Board are cases of non –payment of debts. These are the realities that we teacher educators face in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Far from being cowed however, we sally forth and face the challenges squarely while pining for the recurrence of the golden decade of teacher education when teaching was the first choice of the best high school graduates.