Reimagining Philosophy: The Relevance of "Love of Wisdom" for Senior High School Students at Tanauan City Integrated High School in Contemporary 21st Century

Ismael C. Casquejo

Department of Education, Tanauan City Integrated High School

ABSTRACT

"Philosophy" comes from the Greek words Philo and Sophia meaning "love of wisdom." Philosophy uses the tools of logic and reason to analyze how humans experience the world(Metcalf, 2020). It is an activity people undertake when they seek to understand fundamental truths about themselves, the world in which they live, and their relationships to the world and each other. Philosophy takes on existential questions (Marschall, 2023). One relevant question for everyone is the meaning of life. Although the meaning of life can be different for different people, it is nonetheless given attention to the subject.

In this present time where people have easy access to almost everything and information can easily be falsified by social media, truth must still prevail. This should be emphasized in schools for students. Philosophy is useful in this regard because it utilizes logic and reasoning to develop critical thinkers (Bushman, 2022).

As the subject demands profound intellectual activity to arrive at the truth, it might be unappealing to students. But this very method can help students learn to write clearly, read closely with a critical eye, and spot poor reasoning which is a crucial skill in the present times. Accordingly, the result of the research indicated that critical thinking, creativity, collaboration, and communication are 21st-century learning skills that can be applied to inculcate the relevance of Philosophy in contemporary times.
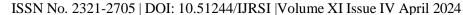
Keywords: critical, collaboration, existential, meaning, Philosophy

INTRODUCTION

The "Enhanced Basic Education Act of 2013" or the Republic Act 10533 changed the Philippine education landscape by essentially adding two more years in high school called senior high school. Senior High School is two years of specialized upper secondary education; students may choose a specialization based on aptitude, interests, and school capacity. The choice of career track will define the content of the subjects a student will take in Grades 11 and 12.

There are seven learning areas under the Core Curriculum: Languages, Literature, Communication, Mathematics, Philosophy, Natural Sciences, and Social Sciences. These learning areas have been taken up in junior high school except for Philosophy. Hence, Philosophy in senior high school is the firsthand encounter of students with this classical yet timeless subject.

"Philosophy" comes from the Greek words Philoand Sophia meaning "love of wisdom." Philosophy uses the tools of logic and reason to analyze how humans experience the world (Metcalf, 2020). It is an activity people undertake when they seek to understand fundamental truths about themselves, the world in which they live, and their relationships to the world and each other. This can be translated into the teaching-learning process as the development of critical thinking, comprehensive reading, clear writing,

and logical analysis.

In this present time where people have easy access to almost everything and information can easily be falsified by social media, truth must still prevail. This should be emphasized in schools to students. Philosophy is useful in this regard because it utilizes logic and reasoning to develop critical thinkers (Bushman, 2022). Therefore, Philosophy is still relevant in contemporary times.

As the subject demands profound intellectual activity to arrive at the truth, it might be unappealing to students. But this very method can help students learn to write clearly, read closely with a critical eye, and spot poor reasoning which is a crucial skill in the present times. Hence, despite its archaic origin, its value persists today. What can be done is to partner its intellectual nature to 21st-century teaching methods so that it can be interesting to students and improve their academic capacities.

INNOVATION, INTERVENTION, AND STRATEGY

In conducting the study, the researchers emphasized the relevance of philosophy. Philosophy is the study of general and fundamental questions about existence, knowledge, values, reason, mind, and language. Philosophical methods include questioning, critical discussion, rational argument, and systematic presentation. It also provides a good way of learning to think more clearly about a wide range of issues, and its methods of analyzing arguments can be useful in a variety of situations in other areas of life. Given these intellectual attributes of the subject, it helps develop the scholarly capacity of students.

As a discipline that started a long time ago, it can be tempting to teach it traditionally. But, to do that is not to keep up with the development made in human history. Appropriately, it should be taught with the same intent as it was in ancient times. However, the way it is taught may be modified to keep in touch with the kind of learners in the 21st century and modern-day advancements in technology.

Hence, the strategy introduced in this study is to teach Philosophy with 21st-century skills or strategies. Among the skills or strategies, the research focused on learning skills (the four C's), namely, critical thinking, creativity, collaboration, and communication (Hummel, 2024). In doing this, the students can improve their intellectual capacity and at the same time, they can easily adapt to the subject because the approach will be that of the contemporary time.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This research endeavors to explore the intersection of philosophy and 21st-century skills development, elucidating how philosophical inquiry can serve as a catalyst for the cultivation of key competencies essential for thriving in the digital age. By posing pertinent research questions, this study seeks to unravel the multifaceted relationship between philosophy and the acquisition of skills such as critical thinking, creativity, collaboration, and communication.

1. What is the relevance of Philosophy in contemporary times?

2. How is a classical subject like Philosophy being taught in contemporary times?

3. What 21st-century learning skills can be applied to inculcate the relevance of Philosophy in contemporary times in terms of:

    3.1 Critical thinking;

    3.2 Creativity;

    3.3 Collaboration and

    3.4 Communication?

RESEARCH METHODS

A. Participants and/or other Sources of Data and Information

This study utilized homogeneous purposive sampling, that is, selecting shared characteristics or set of characteristics from respondents. For this study, the shared characteristic is studying the Introduction to the Philosophy of the Human Person. The researchers asked 5 respondents per G11 HUMSS class because HUMSS students primarily take this subject.

Homogenous Purposive Sampling	
Grade 11 HUMSS	Frequency
Abad	5
Agoncillo	5
Benitez	5
Corpuz	5
Delos Reyes	5
Enriquez	5
Osias	5
Palma	5
Total	40

B. Data Gathering Methods

The data collected were organized and categorized using the research questions. To present the results of the study, the following tools were used.

1. Researcher-made Questionnaire is a series of questions, mostly in print, to gather information and effectively measure the behavior, attitudes, preferences, opinions, and intentions of relatively large numbers of respondents.
2. Interviews consist of a series of pre-determined questions that all interviewees answer in the same order.
3. Observation is classified as a participatory study because the researchers have to immerse themselves in the setting where their respondents are while taking notes and/or recording.
4. Focus Group Discussion is to gather together people from similar backgrounds or experiences to discuss a specific topic of interest guided by a moderator (or group facilitator) who introduces topics for discussion and helps the group to participate in a discussion among themselves.

DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

1. What is the relevance of Philosophy in contemporary times?

Meaning of Life

Philosophy takes on existential questions. One relevant question for everyone is the meaning of life. According to students, the subject tackled this topic. Although the meaning of life can be different for different people, it is nonetheless given attention in the subject.

- "Our discussion makes a connection to the meaning of life."
- "As a student, I think Philosophy asks essential questions about life."

Critical Thinking

One aspect of Philosophy is to think thoroughly. To think thoroughly is to think critically. Ideas should be critically thought of before being accepted. Students know the importance of critically examining a

claim before consenting to it. Critical thinking is an appropriate response to the current massive influx of information through the internet.

- "The questions ask in the subject are something I have not encountered before, so it makes me think more deeply."
- "The subject challenges to think profoundly because the questions are not easy to answer."

Way of Living

Philosophy is a way of living. It can be just a mere subject for some but to fully understand it, it must be a way of life or part of life. Students were able to grasp this reality about the subject. The depth of thought of philosophy can only be grasped if properly given time and attention by those who study it.

- " I think Philosophy is not just a subject but a way of living for some people."
- "To truly understand the subject, I think you have to make it somehow a part of your life."

2. How is a classical subject like Philosophy being taught in contemporary times?

Different Teaching Modalities

The pandemic brought about different modalities not being used before. This caused adjustments for both teachers and students. According to the respondents, they were given modules and videos as learning materials for the subject. Moreover, online classes and materials are given to those students who are capable of accessing the internet.

- " The subject was taught through different modalities; I usually submit my output through the Messenger app."
- "We were asked to watch videos to clarify difficult-to-understand discussions."

Personal Questions

The approach of the subject is personal. It asks relevant existential questions to the learners. Students thought that this approach might be easily adaptable for some while some might need to adjust. Through these personal questions, learners can reflect on their views by honestly responding to them.

- "The questions on the subject are mostly from a personal perspective."
- "I think the questions are mostly subjective. It made me think about my position in life on various topics."

Individual and Group Activities

Before the pandemic, individual and group activities are done in the classroom. According to the respondents, this was still done during the time of the pandemic. These learning strategies are applicable in Philosophy. Even in online classes, group activities can still be done virtually. Moreover, group activity can be an opportunity for students to share and compare their thoughts on philosophical topics given by the teacher.

- "We were given individual work in this subject."

- "During online synchronous class, the teacher asked to do group activities even though there were only a few students in the class."

3. What 21st-century learning skills can be applied to inculcate the relevance of Philosophy in contemporary times in terms of:

Table 1 Critical Thinking

	Critical Thinking	Weighted Mean	Verbal Interpretation	Rank
1	Identify alternative courses of action, and predict the likely consequences of each	3.25	Applicable	1
2	Evaluate sources for validity and credibility to differentiate truth from falsehood	3.15	Applicable	2.5
3	Ask powerful and complex questions	3.15	Applicable	2.5
4	Define the issue and identify key opposing positions	3.10	Applicable	4.5
5	Defend and justify a position	3.10	Applicable	4.5

4.00 – 3.50	Highly Applicable
3.49 – 2.50	Applicable
2.49 – 1.50	Hardly Applicable
1.49 and below	Not Applicable

For the table on Critical Thinking, respondents had Identify alternative courses of action, and predict the likely consequences of each as their ranked 1 indicator with 3.25. It was followed by Evaluate sources for validity and credibility to differentiate truth from falsehood and Ask powerful and complex questions with 3.15. Define the issue and identify key opposing positions and Defend and justify a position had the lowest weighted in the table both with 3.10. All indicators are verbally interpreted as Applicable.

Defend and justify a position had the lowest weighted mean although it is very important in critical thinking. Students can improve on this aspect of critical thinking if they are taught to defend their position. Debating strategies and identifying fallacious arguments can help them on this regard.

Table 2 Creativity

	Creativity	Weighted Mean	Verbal Interpretation	Rank
1	Contribute skills and talents to make the (school) community a better place	3.38	Applicable	1
2	Demonstrate flexibility as goals and situations change	3.28	Applicable	2
3	Use relevant parts of a text, document, visual, electronic, or audio source	3.20	Applicable	3
4	Recognize instances in which more than one interpretation is valid	3.13	Applicable	4
5	Propose a new plan of operation, system, or scheme based on available data	3.10	Applicable	5

The second table, Creativity, had Contribute skills and talents to make the (school) community a better place the highest weighted mean of 3.38. It was followed by Demonstrate flexibility as goals and situations change with 3.28. The third ranked is Use relevant parts of a text, document, visual, electronic, or audio source with 3.20. It is followed by Recognize instances in which more than one interpretation is valid with 3.13. The last ranked indicator is Propose a new plan of operation, system, or

scheme based on available data with 3.10. All indicators are verbally interpreted as Applicable.

Among the indicators, propose a new plan of operation, system, or scheme based on available data might be the most challenging and incidentally ranked least in the table. Creating new idea, plan or scheme might be a challenging and time consuming task but can be the most rewarding. It is best to teach students to interpret data and be bold and confident to a healthy extent for them to be more creative in their intellectual life which can be helpful in their professional lives after they are done with their academic undertakings in school.

Table 3 Collaboration

	Collaboration	Weighted Mean	Verbal Interpretation	Rank
1	Respect and tolerate others' beliefs, feelings and convictions	3.50	Applicable	1
2	Adjust personal behavior to fit the dynamics of various groups and situations	3.25	Applicable	4
3	Discuss, connect, and/or compare with other works	3.05	Applicable	5
4	Participate in communities through organizations working to address an array of cultural, social, political, and religious interests and beliefs	3.45	Applicable	2
5	Exhibit moral and civic virtues such as concern for the rights and welfare of others, social responsibility, tolerance and respect, and belief in the capacity to make a difference	3.28	Applicable	3

The table on Collaboration had Respect and tolerate others' beliefs, feelings and convictions as the highest ranked indicator with 3.50. The second rank is Participate in communities through organizations working to address an array of cultural, social, political, and religious interests and beliefs with 3.45. The next indicator is Exhibit moral and civic virtues such as concern for the rights and welfare of others, social responsibility, tolerance and respect, and belief in the capacity to make a difference with 3.28. The fourth indicator in rank is Adjust personal behavior to fit the dynamics of various groups and situations with 3.45. The least ranked indicator is Discuss, connect, and/or compare with other works with 3.05. All indicators are verbally interpreted as Applicable.

Collaboration does not mean outputs are not going to be compared. Comparison is also important in the context of development or improvement. The table indicates that discuss, connect, and/or compare with other works had the lowest weighted mean in the table. The comparison aspect might be overwhelming to students, but this should not be the mindset. Comparison is important for achieving improvement of thought and outputs.

Table 4 Communication

	Communication	Weighted Mean	Verbal Interpretation	Rank
1	Understand legal/ethical issues related to access and use of information	3.50	Applicable	1
2	Dialogue with others who have different perspectives	3.13	Applicable	2
3	Articulate and construct reasoned arguments from	3.15	Applicable	3

	diverse perspectives and frames of reference			
4	Participate in persuading, compromising, debating, and negotiating in the resolution of conflicts and differences	3.15	Applicable	4
5	Create an engaging and appropriate message for the intended audience, task, and purpose, whether verbally, in writing, through multimedia, or a combination of these modes	3.30	Applicable	5

The fourth table, Communication, had Understand legal/ethical issues related to access and use of information as the highest ranked indicator with 3.50. It is followed by Create an engaging and appropriate message for the intended audience, task, and purpose, whether verbally, in writing, through multimedia, or a combination of these modes with 3.30. The next ranked are Articulate and construct reasoned arguments from diverse perspectives and frames of reference and Participate in persuading, compromising, debating, and negotiating in the resolution of conflicts and differences with 3.15. The last ranked indicator is Dialogue with others who have different perspectives with 3.13. All indicators are verbally interpreted as Applicable.
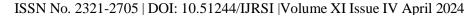
Dialogue with others who have different perspectives had the lowest weighted mean in the table. It is a reality that people will not always have the same perspective. Making a dialogue with persons with different perspectives can be intimidating. But sometimes this should be taught to students. Understanding different perspectives can only be achieved through dialogue.

CONCLUSIONS

1. Philosophy takes on existential questions. One relevant question for everyone is the meaning of life. Although the meaning of life can be different for different people, it is nonetheless given attention in the subject. Likewise, one aspect of Philosophy is to think thoroughly. To think thoroughly is to think critically. Ideas should be critically thought out before being accepted. Moreover, philosophy is a way of living. It can be just a mere subject for some but to fully understand it, it must be a way of life or part of life.

2. The pandemic brought about different modalities not being used before. This caused adjustments for both teachers and students. The approach of the subject is personal. It asks relevant existential questions to the learners. Before the pandemic, individual and group activities are done in the classroom. According to the respondents, this was still done during the time of the pandemic. These learning strategies are applicable in Philosophy.

3. Critical Thinking, Creativity, Collaboration, and Communication are 21st-century learning skills that can be applied to inculcate the relevance of Philosophy in contemporary times.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Philosophy is supposed to answer the deepest question of human existence. Also, it widens the perspective of a person by placing the human person in his/her rightful place in the whole of creation. Hence, It should be taught with the same intent as it was in the ancient time. However, the way it is being taught may be modified to keep in touch with the kind of learners in the 21st century and modern-day advancement in technology.

2. Philosophy etymologically means "love of wisdom". Wisdom is not traditional knowledge but something more profound. Due to its nature, throughout its history, it tackled questions and issues crucial to the very existence of human beings. The topics in the subject can sometimes be intimidating

for students who just encountered it. The topics might be compartmentalized into smaller parts and after all the discussions, may be summarized or synthesized for better understanding. Moreover, games and enjoyable activities can be made in the initial parts of the lesson so that the students will be interested and have sustained enthusiasm for the subject.

3. In asking about 21st-century skills, some areas can be given attention to so that the students may improve their understanding of the subject.

For critical thinking, students can improve this aspect if they are taught to defend their position.

For creativity, it is best to teach students to interpret data and be bold and confident which can be helpful in their professional lives after they are done with their academic undertakings in school.

For collaboration, comparison is important for achieving improvement of thought and outputs.

For communication, making a dialogue with persons with different perspectives can be intimidating. But sometimes this should be taught to students. Understanding different perspectives can only be achieved through dialogue.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

REFERENCES

1. Billington R. (2003). *Living Philosophy: An Introduction to Moral Thought.* Routledge.
2. Bushman, I. (2022). Education in the 21st century: philosophical foundations and principles. Futurity Philosophy, 1(2), 4-15. https://doi.org/10.57125/FP.2022.06.30.01
3. Congress of the Philippines. (2013, May 15). *Republic Act No. 10533*. Official Gazette. https://www.officialgazette.gov.ph/2013/05/15/republic-act-no-10533/
4. Hummel, B. (2024, March 26). *What Are the 4 C's of 21st Century Skills?* icev. https://www.icevonline.com/blog/four-cs-21st-century-skills
5. Indiana Department of Education. (n.d.). *Essential Social Studies Skills and Strategies.* https://www.doe.in.gov/sites/default/files/standards/essential-social-studies-skills-and-strategies.pdf
6. Kumar H. (2017). What is Philosophy? https://www.quora.com/What-is-the-etymology-of-the-word-philosophy
7. Makumba M. (2015). *Introduction to Philosophy*. Paulines Publications.

8. Marschall, A. (2023, May 4). *What to Know About Existentialism—Philosophy and Existential Therapy*. verywellmind. https://www.verywellmind.com/what-is-existentialism-5667161

9. Metcalf, T. (2020, October 10). *What is Philosophy?* 1000-Word Philosophy. https://1000wordphilosophy.com/2020/10/10/philosophy

10. Oxley J., Ilea R. (Eds.). (2015). *Experiential Learning in Philosophy*. Routledge.

11. University of Washington. (n.d.). *Why Study Philosophy?* https://phil.washington.edu/why-study-philosophy

12. Warburton N. (2004). *Philosophy: The Essential Study Guide*. Routledge.