

***Special Filipino Curriculum (SFC): A Technology- Oriented Curriculum for Foreign Language Students***

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**Abstract**

The technology-oriented curriculum aims to develop a program that aids students who speak foreign languages as they learn the Filipino subject. Its objectives are to look into the learners' needs; enumerate the competencies that shall be developed by the curriculum; and evaluate the effectiveness of the curriculum of Special Filipino Class (SFC).

Teachers and students of SFC in Saint Pedro Poveda College were used in the Focused Group Discussion (FGD) in order to identify the topics to be developed in the curriculum while three experts in the field of curriculum and language evaluated the created course.

The results of the evaluation revealed that the foreign students who are studying the Filipino language give much importance in sharing their ideas and understanding of the people around them, thus making them more practical in choosing the lessons and activities to do. On the other hand, the second language teachers focus on the teaching of Filipino values and culture embedded in their lessons.

With these results, the infusion of technology was made to the strategies in teaching Filipino language to create meaningful activities for the students that will cultivate not only just their knowledge and skills about the topics they need to learn but also the underlying cultural values in using the language.

The study further recommends that there shall be a tracer study for the students who underwent the program to know the impact of what they have learned in the course on the field they chose after high school.

Keywords: second language, curriculum development, personalized education

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## **Introduction**

Effective communication leads to diverse ideas that might help in making progress in the community, but in the instance that the language becomes a barrier for an individual to interact with the people around him; he faces a problem not just in understanding and expressing his ideas but also in establishing himself to the new environment where he is. The same context is what most of the foreign students are experiencing, especially when they go to the countries that speak a different language. It is where the well-aligned and well-planned second language curriculum is needed.

In the school system of the Philippines, Filipino is referred to as 1) a subject to be taught, and 2) a language to be used in teaching. It is a required subject in the Basic Education Curriculum of the Philippines as mandated by Article XIV, Section 6, Philippine Constitution 1987. Transferees from foreign countries and as well as students from international schools shall undergo a program that will help them hasten their learning of the Filipino language as directed by the Department of Education (DECS before) in its DECS Order No.26, s.1994. There is a great need for all the students in the Philippines, whether a Filipino or a foreigner, to learn the Filipino language because it is mandated by the curriculum and it is much needed as they stay in the Philippines.

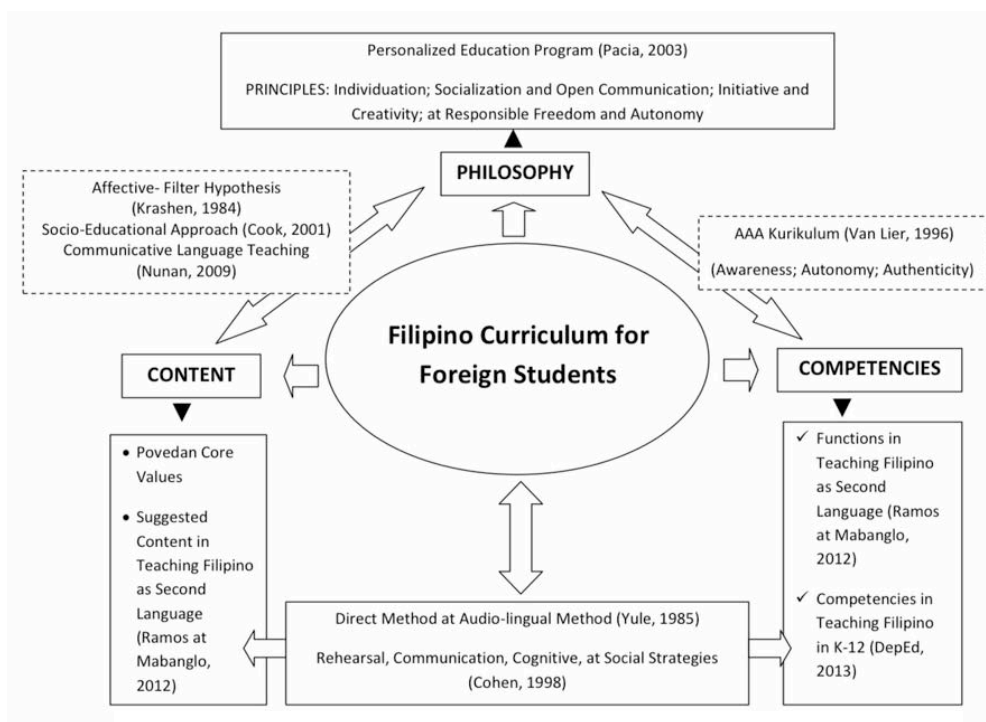
In Saint Pedro Poveda College, there is a program that helps the foreign students to cope with the requirements of the Department of Education (DepEd) in learning the Filipino subject. However, there are significant factors that hinder the achievement of the program's purpose. First, there is a 'colonial mentality' in most of the Filipino families, especially those who belong to the upper class. This mentality creates a thinking that Filipino is an inferior language and only used by the lower class. Second, the students are not interested in the subject because most of the things they hear, see, or read are in English. Lastly, the current program of Special Filipino Class (SFC) did not undergo a study that may produce students that either have a weak foundation or have a slow progress in learning the Filipino language.

The main objective of the program is to provide assistance to students who speak foreign languages as they learn the Filipino language. The other objectives mainly focus on looking into the learners' needs; identifying and distinguishing the competencies that shall be developed by the curriculum; and evaluating the effectiveness of the curriculum of SFC to the students.

The following three main points became the foundation for developing the curriculum: (1) philosophy to establish, (2) competencies to develop, and (3) content to teach. To meet the objectives set for the study, further research was done through different literature that may help in the development of the curriculum as seen in Figure 1.

The study, which is qualitative in nature used a descriptive-developmental method. Since the major objective of the study is to create a suitable curriculum that caters the students' needs that will help them gear up to the 21<sup>st</sup> century learning through motivating second language learning approach, focus group discussion (FGD) and the survey were used to gather data among teachers and students of SFC under the High School Department. Topics that need to be developed by the curriculum were

identified by the teachers and students of SFC (AY 2015-2016). Thus, the curriculum was drafted. To make it more inviting for the students, challenging, interactive, and technology-oriented activities were made. Several activities were designed for each lesson to fit with students' varied interests and intelligences.



**Figure 1: Conceptual Framework**

Authentic materials were utilized to make learning more meaningful. Commercials, television shows, newspaper clippings, back label recipes are some of the materials used to show how Filipino language can be used in our daily lives. On the other hand, some of the activities were designed to make different iOS and Android applications and websites as useful tools in participative and interactive learning.

To arrive with the result of the study, a trial of a lesson from the curriculum that is appropriate for their level was done by the students of SFC (AY 2015-2016). Also, the teachers of SFC were able to review and make some comments and suggestions about the first draft of the curriculum. These recommendations were used to revise the curriculum. An evaluation of the entire curriculum was made by three specialists (Filipino language; Filipino subject Curriculum; Curriculum specialist).

For the curriculum's first objective which is to identify the needs of the foreign students in learning the Filipino language, the students and teachers agreed with different mean results that the lessons, concepts, and skills that are significant in their daily interaction are in the developed curriculum as shown in Table 1. Students also aim to cultivate deeper understanding of emotions in different situations happening around them in its cultural value.

The results of the needs analysis were validated by the teachers of SFC emphasizing on the Socio-Educational Approach of Cook (2001) regarding proper responding and expressing of ideas in different situations. The alignment of the curriculum was done in such a way that it followed the spiral curriculum design as shown in Table 2 regarding the focus of the different levels of the curriculum.

Skills	Mean	Interpretation
Speaking	3.63	Agree
Reading	3.60	Agree
Writing	3.03	Partially Agree
Listening	4.37	Agree
Watching	4.11	Agree
<b>Overall Mean:</b>	3.75	Agree

**Table 1:** Overall Interpretation of Needs Analysis (Students)

Level	Main Points
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To use the Filipino language (FL) to express thoughts and emotions in simple everyday conversation</li> </ul>
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To use FL to get to know more about the people they interact with and have a deeper understanding of others</li> </ul>
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To see the relationship between different statements and to share ideas that can be useful for others</li> </ul>

**Table 2:** Focus of the Different Levels of the Curriculum

For the second objective of the curriculum which is the enumeration of competencies and identification of possible strategies and activities for each lesson, the researcher conducted an interview among the students of SFC apart from the survey on students' needs and further research on the essential competencies in second language learning. The results of the interview among the students highlighted the following strategies in the lessons they discussed that they find helpful to their learning: (1) learning FL alone or with a partner rather than in a big group; (2) using written materials, pictures, and different forms of media in their discussion; (3) checking of understanding through written exams and interactive games aside from dyads; and (4) understanding the culture that is incorporated with learning the FL in arts, beliefs and traditions. Lastly, the third objective was to evaluate the results of the curriculum. The result of the evaluation is shown in Table 3, as well as the comments and suggestions from the different groups of evaluators. Overall, the devised curriculum is favourable, if not highly favourable for the evaluators that make it a useful development in the field of teaching Filipino as a second language.

Evaluators	Evaluation
<b>Students</b> 3.67- Favourable	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Vocabulary words and examples sentences help a lot so that they can use the words properly in communicating with others.</li> <li>✓ Reading materials and videos are vital part of the lessons.</li> </ul>
<b>Teachers</b> 4.53- Highly Favourable	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Enhancing the use vocabulary words by creating more venues for the students to use it. (Application)</li> </ul>
<b>Experts</b> 4.01- Favourable	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Various activities were made to assess the understanding of the students.</li> <li>✓ The Filipino sayings, if used properly can be a good spring board for deeper understanding of Filipino culture and to develop good values among students.</li> </ul>

**Table 3:** Results of the Evaluation of the Curriculum

### Conclusion

The developed curriculum made the researcher realize the following conclusions: 1) For the students of Filipino as a second language (L2), the most important part of learning L2 is to interact with people using the language and understand the emotions that goes along with how they deliver the message; 2) Teachers play a vital role in making learning an interesting, memorable and worthwhile experience for the students without sacrificing the content or the competencies that are needed to be attained; 3) As the level of understanding and skills in L2 increases, there is a wider array of content that teachers can use to teach the language; 4) Vocabulary, values, and culture are the three main areas the teachers need to focused on as they teach Filipino as a second language; and 5) Teaching second language to foreign students can be interesting, especially in the part of students if we try to incorporate technology in how we teach our lessons; making it interactive and participative challenges and tests the creative thinking skills among the students employing technology as an effective tool in teaching the students of today- the ‘Millennials’.

Based on the conclusions made from the study, the following are the recommendations for further and future research: 1) Make a research that focuses on strategies that can be used for the different needs and intelligences among students of foreign languages; 2) Create a list and make use of new applications or websites that can be utilized to promote an interactive and participative teaching-learning experience; 3) Strengthen the partnership among the family, school, and community in forms of gatherings, seminars, symposiums, and others to create a strong support group for the students; and 4) Produce a tracer study for students who undergo the SFC to see the implications or impact of the program in their chosen fields.

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