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# Triumph for Bong; We need science schools (Part 2)

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In my column before the slated Senate hearing on Special Assistant to the President Christopher Bong Go I made it the last item. He had many defenders and supporters and they knew he was innocent. His unflappable personality and calm demeanor drew spontaneous applause – “I did not intervene in the acquisition of the frigates from Hyundai.” He did not have any documents or stories to tell only a simple statement of truth. On the other hand Trillanes had a kilometeric accusation with documents and conversations no one bothered or cared to believe in. The winner of that hearing indubitably was the unflappable Bong Go.

As promised here is the second part of the article, Why we need science schools? Lourdes del Rosario, an accomplished diplomat now devotes her time to the education of science and technology in their family school in Angeles City – Pax (Peace) et (and) Lumen (Light) International Academy even if we knew that it would not be a popular choice.

“Our reasons for being also include introducing all interested parents to a school choice where the beauty and ‘ease’ of science and mathematics can be introduced to their children who enter our school. And hopefully, by getting enough exposure to mathematics

and the scientific method, these ordinary students (average to above average) who will not otherwise get into a science high school will get used to using data or requiring data before making any decision. And later in their lives, instead of making their decisions from the base of emotions, they can make decisions based on facts or truth. And on a social level, we hope that a community who will not just accept custom or tradition (at times, superstition) if these are not based on truth, will emerge from a small provincial city and will think of planning the future of their community.

And in doing all the above, we believe that the time will come when many individuals will learn to connect the dots in all that they do. For instance, an archipelago, like the Philippines, which spans a bigger water area than land area, should make its students be more marine science conscious.

Our objective is to prepare our students for the highly technological future. While we acknowledge that at present there may not be enough jobs to keep HS science and math majors in their path, we know that science and mathematics are much more needed now. Though it may not yet be true or evident in the Philippines, it has been reported that majority of the top ten jobs did not exist 10 years ago and will continue to emerge.

All these new jobs will need a solid background in science and mathematics. And all workers in all fields should be technologically adept.

\* SCHOOLS

\* EDUCATION

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The educational system needs to train the young generation for the future from a strong and pervasive science and math platform.

Beyond meeting the requirements of future jobs that majority of us do not know anything about, my family believes that in setting up a science and math school for Kinder to Grade 10, we can perhaps assist in the preparation of a community of average people who will develop the habit of thinking in scientific and logical way because unlike science high schools – whether under the PSHS system or the cities' system – our school does not require a competitive exam to get in.

Pax et Lumen is perhaps a prototype of what a K to 10 science and math school should be and that more private schools will follow the trend.

Small classes (as small as six in a class in the HS level) are key in our mission. But we like to point out that our students cannot hide behind big classes. They know that they have to be ready as they know that they will be asked to recite more than three times or to report almost weekly. At Pax et Lumen, the substance of learning is more important than the form and ritual of it.

What makes our school also unique is that science and math are introduced as early as kindergarten. And we give "science and math scholarships" to students for their good grades in science and math starting Grade 2 onward.

Our science and math classes have almost double classroom contact hours. The government requires 200 minutes or 3.33 hours. Our total class hours daily are therefore longer as our school calendar is often longer by at least two weeks annually. So when our students transfer out, they stand out in their advance skills in science and math.

We take every opportunity to tell the parents that Pax et Lumen is really about academics and not about "making money" as attested by the various scholarships offered from Grade 2 to 10. With a small population of 125, more than half of the students earn some kind of scholarship as a form of recognition for their achievements.

And if we are not out to make money, how do we keep going? With great difficulty, we laugh, as we have simplified our family needs and lifestyle, and we keep a close watch on our school expenditures. But believing that we are contributing to building children's futures in a fast-changing world, that we are contributing in a very small way to building a provincial community of science and math-oriented individuals, and that we may be slowly creating a public realization of the need for the disciplines of math and science in order to live more productive and meaningful lives, then our so-called financial sacrifice is really worth it.

Kudos to this family who understands that education is necessary for nation-building. They deserve to be helped.