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TEACHERS TO PACMAN: DON'T LOOK AT US IF PINOYS LACK PATRIOTISM

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If a student turns out to be a less patriotic member of society, who do you hold responsible for it?

Don't look at the teacher, says a group of mentors.

Rather than blame the country's educational system for the supposed lack of patriotism among Filipinos, the Teachers' Dignity Coalition (TDC) is asking government officials to examine themselves first and see whether their actions are worthy of emulation.

According to Benjo Basas, national chair of TDC, it is not fair to always criticize schools and teachers if a person does not turn out to be an upright or exemplary citizen.

"Why is it that all of a child's shortcomings is the fault of the teacher? Is the teacher the only one who has a stake on the child when, in fact, it's the work of the whole community?" Basas told the Inquirer.



Manny Pacquiao —LYN RILLON

Sen. Manny "Pacman" Pacquiao said on Wednesday that he was considering filing a bill that would seek to include a subject on patriotism in schools.

Without further going into details, he said there was a need to teach patriotism as most Filipinos nowadays not only "betray their fellowmen but also their country."

"[W]e should teach patriotism so we could have loyalty to our country," he said in a mix of Filipino and English.

Though patriotism is already being taught in schools, Basas said they still welcomed Pacquiao's effort to infuse a much stronger emphasis on patriotism into the educational system.

He pointed out, though, that for this to become effective, government officials should first practice it.

It is also ironic, he said, that such a policy is being proposed at a time when the administration's current priorities, as well as its stance on issues, appear to be unpopular among the people. As an example, he cited the efforts to change the Constitution and the "defeatist policy" on the West Philippine Sea.

"They want to teach patriotism and yet with China's encroachment [on our territories] it appears that it's OK with them. It's not just about [knowing the Filipino] language or displaying the flag. It's how you would defend your country's sovereignty in the face of growing aggression," he said. INQ

* TEACHERS
* PATRIOTISM