

**Fundamental Aim of Education:
Locating Its Criteria via Philosophical Inquiry**

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Abstract

Educational discourse is replete with ‘aims-talk,’ i.e., there is a manifold of proposals, pronouncements, and positions on answering this perennial question: *what is the fundamental aim of education* (hereinafter FAE)? But instead of attempting to answer it directly, which is a substantive question, a more foundational issue is raised and answered in this paper, viz., the meta-question *what set of criteria must be used to determine whether something is a tenable fundamental aim of education?* It is done so through a *philosophical reconstruction* of the works of selected philosophers of education on the issue of the aims of education, and the output is a set of ten (10) criteria. A putative FAE that satisfies these ten criteria qualifies for the label fundamental aim of education. Also, two supplementary justifications are argued that support the tenability of the proposed ten criteria, namely, through the notion of *fundamental needs* and the *viability meta-criterion*. In addition, this work can be used in assessing the existing FAEs of the Philippine basic educational system because *it is one thing to declare them as is, and another to declare them with the provision of robust justifications* (of which the ten criteria can serve to be so). Lastly, the study, though theoretical in nature, will greatly aid the teachers on the ground by equipping them with a set of criteria that can aid them in deciding whether what their school administrators, local experts, or certain politicians are claiming to be the fundamental aims of education are actually so. Being able

to articulate their preferences with corresponding robust justifications (of which the ten criteria can serve to be so) is none other than teacher empowerment.

Keywords: fundamental aim of education, criteria, justification, philosophy of education, philosophical inquiry

Educational discourse is replete with ‘aims-talk,’ i.e., there is a manifold of proposals, pronouncements, and positions on answering this perennial question: *what is the fundamental aim of education?* Words such as *central*, *primary*, and *ultimate* are used as well. Books, whether anthologies or monographs, and journal articles have been published in pursuit of exploring and answering the said concern. But instead of attempting to answer it directly, which is a *substantive question*, a more foundational exploration will be addressed in this paper, viz., *prior questions* or *meta-questions*. Jonas F. Soltis clearly explains this type of question: “We will call them prior questions or conceptual questions to distinguish them from factual or valuation questions. They do not ask for the facts of the case, nor do they require some value decisions to be made. They are questions of meaning and, as such, generally are non-substantive; that is, they do not deal with the factual or valuation substance of the topic. Rather, they are questions that seek conceptual clarity before commitment to the substantive exploration of a topic” (Soltis, 1978, pp. 14-15). One meta-question raised from the substantive question *what is the fundamental aim of education* is this: *what set of criteria must be used to determine whether something is a tenable fundamental aim of education?*

The purpose of engaging in this research is, first and foremost, to contribute to the existing literature on the *philosophy of educational aims* by answering the aforesaid meta-question through the philosophical methodology to be employed. As mentioned, most works are focused on answering the *substantive question*, but not much on the said meta-question, all the more, on answering the said meta-question via the methodology to be used. (There are several available works on answering the question *what is the fundamental aim of education*, which is a

substantive question, but not much on the meta-question ‘must there be a fundamental aim of education?’)

Another reason for conducting this research is to provide a critical wherewithal to the teachers on the ground with regard to the issue of aims of education. Most of them (if not all) are bombarded with ideas and conceptualizations on what the *fundamental aim of education* (FAE) ought to be, and this exposure is explainable by what they hear from ‘experts,’ school administrators, stakeholders, etc. In the absence of a critical norm for the teachers to be able to assess what they receive externally, they will easily be swayed by this paternalistic approach to education. If the teachers, however, are cognizant of a set of *criteria* for them to use in assessing whether a putative FAE (especially the ones they hear or given to them) is genuine or a façade, then they will be able to critically discriminate the two. In this way, it is hoped, that by reading this research, teachers are empowered in theory, and this would manifest in their respective practices.

General Approach of the Research

The following were the general steps taken. First was to select representative works of philosophers and philosophers of education who explicitly wrote books or journal articles on what the fundamental aim of education is. Second was to pinpoint the answers of these philosophers. This can be done using the methodology called *philosophical reconstruction*. It is important to not only pinpoint the explicit articulations of these representative philosophers on the said issue, but also to locate the justifications they have provided for their claims. The probe for making clear what the position is, together with the justifications behind, is what is meant by to reconstruct something philosophically. Third, from the reconstructions made, especially from the justificatory component, the meta-question was answered. It was done by deducing some principles that can be used for concretizing the criteria of the FAE, and by generalizing from the works of philosophers who specifically wrote on the topic of the aims of education, viz., Jacques Maritain (1882-1973), Alfred North Whitehead (1861-1947), Harry Brighouse, Colin Wringe (1937-), and John Dewey (1859-1952).

Although the extrapolated principles for determining the criteria of the FAE are already justified by the fact that they have been argued for individually by the philosophers to be cited, the researchers think that there is still a need to bolster the selection of these principles. Doing so is done in two (2) ways. First is through, albeit briefly, the idea of *fundamental needs* by Garret Thomson (1987), i.e., some of the criteria have to be present in any enterprise that is considered educational because the absence of which would categorically lead to an impairment of the overall well-being of the student. Second is the idea that each of the criterion overlaps with the other criteria. The overlap is an important way of bolstering the selection of the criteria because such proves that they complement one another and/or they do not contravene one another. This is through a philosophical exposition of Evelina Orteza y Miranda's *moral autonomy* (1990; 1999), an analytic Filipino philosopher of education, which displays a seamless combination of three irreducible yet intersecting criteria.

Explanation of the Philosophical Methodology Utilized

What needs to be understood at the onset is that no philosopher or educational theorist reflects in isolation from the works of other thinkers. Hence, it is important to be able to assess, from the vantage point of validity, the argumentation provided by others. For a specific position, a theory, or a knowledge-claim, reasons and justifications are provided to support the main contention. It is not clear, however, in many writings what the purported evidentiary supports are given. Thus, there is a need to engage in a more explicit kind of uncovering the reasons and assumptions in place. Katarina Holma, in her essay *The Strict Analysis and the Open Discussion* (2010) provides a clear articulation of what occurs. She says: "In methodological terms, the crucial feature of [this] approach is an emphasis on the role of a thoroughgoing process of analysis and synthesis. Stressed here is the significance of a deep understanding of the concepts, arguments, and ideas of the explored topic before entering into the dialogical, critical or supplementary part of the research. The process of disassembling and reassembling (i.e.,

philosophical reconstruction) is the way of gaining access to a new, more profound understanding of the issue, and it thus creates possibilities for achieving the researcher's own philosophical perspectives and insights on the topic under consideration" (Holma, 2010, p. 11). Further, she says that "before one's own criticism and argumentation is implemented, it is important to sympathetically explore and understand the philosopher under study" (Holma, 2010, p. 11).

Although Holma's approach is already explicit, a 'more specific' set of procedures was borrowed from Alec Fisher's *The Logic of Real Arguments* (2004). Hereunder are the procedures.

The following method will help to determine its conclusion(s), its reason(s) and the structure of its argument(s):

- (1) Read through the text to get its sense, circling all the inference indicators as you go.
- (2) Underline any clearly indicated conclusions, and bracket any clearly indicated reasons. (It helps at this stage if one tries to summarize the argument.)
- (3) Identify what you take to be the main conclusion and mark it C. (There may be more than one.)
- (4) Starting with C, ask 'What immediate reasons are presented in the text for accepting C?' or 'Why (in the text) am I asked to believe C?' Use inference indicators to help answer the question. If the question is hard to answer because the author's intentions are not transparent (i.e., they are neither explicitly shown by argument indicators nor obvious from the context), then ask the *Assertibility Question*,

What argument or evidence would justify me in asserting the conclusion C? What would I have to know or believe to be justified in accepting C? Having done this, look to see if the author asserts or clearly assumes these same claims (reasons). If he does, it is reasonable (and accords with the Principle of Charity) to construe him as having intended the same argument. If he does not, you have no rational way of reconstructing his argument (on the basis of the text alone). For each reason, R, already identified, repeat the process

described in step (4) above. Do this until you are left with only basic reasons and then display the argument(s) in a clear way (say, by means of a diagram or in linear form) (Fisher, 2004, pp. 21-22).

The linear form that Fisher is characterizing above in displaying the unpacked reasons is similar to what Michael C. Rea regards as one of the prescriptions in any work of analytic philosophy: “Write as if philosophical positions and conclusions can be adequately formulated in sentences that can be formalized and logically manipulated” (Rea, 2009, p. 5).

Before delving into the study, the authors of this research shall answer a possible objection that could be made by the critical reader. In responding to aforementioned meta-question, namely, *what set of criteria must be used to determine whether something is a tenable fundamental aim of education*, works of five (5) representative philosophers who have explicitly written about the aims of education are consulted. The rejoinder could have this structure: *what is the basis for choosing this thinker from that one?* It is a valid query because the philosophers selected shall definitely influence the answer to the meta-question. In reply, the works selected would have to have, at least, titles that bear the issue at hand. If the terms ‘aim,’ ‘objective,’ ‘purpose,’ and kindred matters are absent in the title, they are not consulted. Another one is that the philosopher consulted should have been recommended, named, or recognized by another philosopher or thinker. The act of recognition gives credence to the integrity of the philosopher working in the area of the issue at hand.

Jacques Maritain’s *The Aims of Education*

Thomist philosopher Jacques Maritain wrote a book entitled *Education at the Crossroads* (1943), and in it he included a chapter on *The Aims of Education*. To provide credence for selecting Maritain, Jean-Louis Allard published a book entitled *Education for Freedom: The Philosophy of Education of Jacques Maritain* (1982). A book specifically for the thinker’s philosophy of

education is more than enough recognition needed to warrant the inclusion of Maritain in the works consulted.

The first explicit articulation of the issue is in the statement “The chief task of education is above all to shape man, or to guide the evolving dynamism through which man forms himself as a man” (Maritain, 1943, p. 1). It is important to take notice of Maritain’s emphasis on the phrase shaping or forming man *as a man*. He distinguishes two things here. First is that education is not aiming “to shape the Platonist man-in-himself.” Does this mean that education is supposed to focus on the individual? He qualifies the meaning of *individual* here: that the individual belongs to certain categories, viz., “being a child of the twentieth century, an American-born or European-born child, a gifted or a retarded child... [or] a civilized man... a Frenchman nurtured in Parisian intellectual circles” (Maritain, 1943, p. 1). These are noteworthy distinctions that Maritain has provided in thinking about the aims of education or even the fundamental aim of education. Thus far, hereunder are some principles that can be extrapolated from Maritain’s distinction between ‘the Platonist man’ and ‘the individuality as a modality of a category.’ **JM1** and **JM2** are warranted by the distinction made.

- JM1** *Specifying the aim of education requires that the individual, not just the idea of man or the form of man, be given consideration.*
- JM2** *Specifying the fundamental aim of education is about the individual as man himself (or herself), in contrast to the different modalities or categories that the individual belongs to. The aim of education could tap into these modalities, e.g., the individual as a Filipino citizen. The fundamental aim of education, in contrast, taps into the individual as man himself (or herself).*

The flow of Maritain’s explication is that after proving the need to philosophize about man in himself (or herself) in order to ascertain the aim of education, he then itemizes two general views of man available in the market, viz., the scientific view and the philosophical-religious view. He proves that the latter, though important and needed, is a limited way of understanding man. Hence the latter; and he eventually provides a definition of ‘man’ borrowed from the Greek, Jewish, and Christian viewpoints. From

this, he infers the idea of personhood, and eventually the possession of supreme dignity. After a lengthy characterization of man's nature as man, he now states 'a more precise manner the aim of education': "The aim of education... is to guide man in the evolving dynamism through which he shapes himself as a human person – armed with knowledge, strength of judgment, and moral virtues" (Maritain, 1943, p. 10). To reiterate, Maritain's strategy in determining the aim of education, or even the fundamental aim of education, is to consider the nature of man as man. This inference is supported by what he says: "In order to get a complete idea of the aim of education, it is necessary to take into closer consideration the human person and his deep natural aspirations" (Maritain, 1943, p. 10).

Speaking of man's aspiration, for Maritain, "the chief aspiration of a person are aspirations to freedom – I do not mean that freedom which is free will and which is a gift of nature in each of us, I mean that freedom which is spontaneity, expansion, or autonomy, and which we have to gain through constant effort and struggle... It is the desire for inner and spiritual freedom" (Maritain, 1943, pp. 10-11). He echoes Aristotle's view in expounding what he means by 'aspiration to freedom,' namely, "independence which is granted to men by intellect and wisdom as the perfection of the human being" (Maritain, 1943, p. 11). In previous pages, he refers to this internal freedom as 'self-determination.' Given that this is the deepest aspiration of humans, and that education has to, somehow, equip the learners with the proper tools in order to actualize such an aspiration, then "the prime goal of education is the conquest of internal and spiritual freedom to be achieved by the individual person, or, in other words, his liberation through knowledge and wisdom, good will, and love" (Maritain, 1943, p. 11).

There are two things that must be kept in mind with regard Maritain's position. First is the move that he roots the idea of 'the prime goal of education' from 'the chief aspiration of a person.' Second is that 'the chief aspiration of a person' is 'internal freedom,' 'independence,' or 'self-determination.' Given these, two questions are borne in mind: *why locate the*

fundamental aim of education from the ultimate aspiration of a human being, and why is the primary aspiration of a human person found in internal freedom. To answer the latter, Maritain holds that the satisfaction of this deepest human aspiration leads to ‘the perfection of the human being.’ This is not an uncontroversial position because many human systems exist for this end. He regards the exercise of ‘internal freedom’ as ‘immanent,’ and it is these ‘immanent activities’ that “perfect the very subject which exerts them” (Maritain, 1943, p. 11). Thus, the other question, i.e., the former one, can now be answered. If it is the satisfaction of man’s deepest aspiration through the exercise of ‘internal freedom’ that leads him toward perfection, then it is just apt that education should be concerned with equipping the individual with the proper devices by which he can exercise his ‘internal freedom,’ which eventually leads toward his perfection. In other words, education must be able to contribute toward the individual’s perfection.

JM3 *Determining the fundamental aim of education is located in the individual’s chief aspiration, viz., aspiration to freedom.*

JM4 *The fundamental aim of education is to equip the individual with the wherewithal to be able to exercise ‘internal freedom’ or ‘self-determination’ because it is through the practice of this freedom that perfection is attained.*

Maritain adds that the chief aspiration toward internal freedom is not the only desire that humans exhibit; there is another one. He says that “the second essential form of this desire is the desire for freedom externally manifested, and this freedom is linked to social life and lies at its very root” (Maritain, 1943, p. 14). He argues for this desire to exercise freedom that is ‘externally manifested’ by claiming that “society is natural to man in terms not only of animal or instinctive nature but of human nature, that is, of reason and freedom” (Maritain, 1943, p. 14). This can be referred to as *external freedom*, in contrast to *internal freedom*. Given so, he applies this now to education and states that “it is obvious that man’s education must be concerned with the social group and prepare him to play his part in it.” He continues: “Shaping man to lead a normal, useful and cooperative life in the community, or guiding the development of the human

person in the social sphere, awakening and strengthening both his sense of freedom and his sense of obligation and responsibility, is an essential aim. But it is not the primary, it is the secondary essential aim” (Maritain, 1943, pp. 14-15). It is clear that if man were alone, i.e., he would not have this so-called ‘desire for freedom externally manifested.’ But man lives with fellow human persons, and such is even natural to him. Hence, as Maritain makes visible in his argumentation, if this is another deep human aspiration, then education’s role is to prepare the individual for a ‘useful and cooperative life in the community.’ And to make the task of education much clearer, it is to develop his sensitivity toward the wedge between ‘the sense of freedom’ and the ‘sense of obligation and responsibility.’ In the subsequent paragraph, he calls this “an awakening of civic understanding and civic virtues” (Maritain, 1943, p. 15). Thus, here is another principle inferred from his corpus.

JM5 *Specifying the fundamental aim of education must include preparing the individual to the communal life, specifically being able to balance the sense of freedom, and the sense of obligation and responsibility.*

The two subsequent paragraphs shall give brief characterizations of two more important points about the aim of education as borrowed from Maritain: *judgment in democracy* and *capacity for life-long learning*. First is his defense of a particular kind of education that is necessary in a democratic society, viz., *liberal education*. He contrasts liberal education to ‘specialization,’ and albeit he does not diminish the importance of the latter, he argues that it must be ‘compensated’ by the former. He says that “the overwhelming cult of specialization... represents a great peril for the democracies... because a complete division of the human mind and activities into specialized compartments would make impossible the very ‘government of the people, by the people, and for the people’” (Maritain, 1943, p. 19). Maritain’s argument for this lies in the question he posits: “How could the common man be capable of judging about the good of the people if he felt able to pass judgment only in the field of his own specialized vocational competence” (Maritain, 1943, p. 19)?

To reconstruct the argument: (1) An individual living in a democratic society must be capable of judging about the good of the people. (2) Such a good judgment is not possible if specialization were the only thing the individual is 'educated' in. (3) It is through liberal education that such capacity for judgment is made possible. (4) Thus, it is needed in a democratic society. Although Maritain implies (3), it can be argued for strongly. Hence, the entire argument is strong.

JM6 *The aim of education must include equipping the individual toward a democratic communal life, and that this arsenal has to do with the ability to judge whether something is good for the people, not just an individual.*

Second is his disavowal of a certain belief that *education* is equivalent with *schooling*. He states: "School and college education is only a part of education. It pertains only to the beginnings and the completed preparation of the upbringing of man, and no illusion is more harmful than to try to push back into the microcosm of school education the entire process of shaping the human being, as if the system of schools and universities were a big factory through the back door of which the young child enters like a raw material, and from the front door of which the youth in his brilliant twenties will go out as a successfully manufactured man" (Maritain, 1943, pp. 25-26). On the contrary, he states that "our education goes on until our death." The distinction Maritain introduces here engenders the concept of *life-long learning*. It is not the case that learning only happens at school. Education is beyond the confines schooling, or of a state-based mandated education. The last principle is this:

JM7 The aim of education must include inculcating to the individual certain tendencies and dispositions such that she is capacitated toward life-long learning.

Alfred North Whitehead's *The Aims of Education*

One of the obvious works is philosopher Alfred North Whitehead's *The Aims of Education and Other Essays* (1967), with a chapter bearing the same title. Steven M. Cahn has included the exact essay to be scrutinized here in his edited work *Philosophy of*

Education: The Essential Texts (2009). Hence, the work has been named by at least one philosopher who has produced a book on philosophy of education.

If there is one clear principle to be inferred from Whitehead's essay, it is his frequent animadversions against *inertness* in education. He says that "in training a child to activity of thought, above all thing we must beware of what I will call 'inert ideas' – that is to say, *ideas that are merely received into the mind without being utilized, or tested, or thrown into fresh combinations...* Education with inert ideas is not only useless: it is, above all things, harmful" (Whitehead, 1967, pp. 1-2). He even claims that "the central problem of all education... [is] the problem of keeping knowledge alive, of preventing it from becoming inert" (Whitehead, 1967, p. 5). Those that are to be learned by the student at school must be ideas that are useful. If it is not useful, then it has no place in the curriculum. To illustrate his position, he argues that the area of the study of literary pieces of the past must be useful because "the only use of a knowledge of the past is to equip us for the present... no more deadly harm can be done to young minds than by depreciation of the present" (Whitehead, 1967, p. 3). In the area of science, he recapitulates the same criterion of utility. He states:

The first thing to do with an idea is to prove it. But allow me for one moment to extend the meaning of 'prove.' I mean to prove its worth. Now an idea is not worth much unless the propositions in which it is embodied are true. Accordingly, an essential part of the proof of an idea is the proof, either by experiment or by logic, of the truth of the propositions. But it is not essential that this proof of the truth should constitute the first introduction to the idea... In our first contact with a set of propositions, we commence by appreciating their importance... These two processes of proof, in the narrow sense, and of appreciation, do not require a rigid separation in time. Both can be proceeded with nearly concurrently. But in so far as either process must have the priority, it should be that of appreciation by use (Whitehead, 1967, p. 3).

He also adds that “what is proven should be utilized, and that what is utilized should – so far as practicable – be proven” (Whitehead, 1967, p. 4). In the area of geometry, he posits that the learning of it should extend beyond mere geometrical ideas. He says:

In an industrial neighborhood, machinery and workshop practice form the appropriate extension. For example, in the London Polytechnics this has been achieved with conspicuous success. For many secondary schools I suggest that surveying and maps are the natural applications. In particular, plane-table surveying should lead pupils to a vivid apprehension of the immediate application of geometric truths. Simple drawing apparatus, a surveyor’s chain, and a surveyor’s compass, should enable the pupils to rise from the survey and mensuration of a field to the construction of the map of a small district (Whitehead, 1967, pp. 10-11).

For Whitehead, not only must the teaching of the different subject areas be made *useful* or practical to the students, but education in itself is “the acquisition of the art of the utilization of knowledge” (Whitehead, 1967, p. 4). He is not saying that the incumbent subject areas be removed because of their seeming inertness. It will have to be the teacher’s task to make them useful, and he admits that such is not an easy one to apply. What is taught must be useful to the students, or made useful to them, and eventually they are to be equipped with the ‘art of utilizing knowledge.’ If a school-leaver is incapable of utilizing what he has learned at school, then the individual is not truly educated at all. This is why he says, at the beginning of this work, that “a merely well-informed man is the most useless bore on God’s earth” (Whitehead, 1967, p. 1). Someone who is knowledgeable or well-informed but unable to utilize what she knows is not a mark of a truly educated person.

Lastly, he proposes something that ensures the seamlessness of what he has argued thus far. He says that “the solution which I am urging is to eradicate the fatal disconnection of subjects which kills the vitality of our modern curriculum. There is only one subject-matter, and that is Life in all its manifestation” (Whitehead, 1967, pp. 6-7), and Whitehead calls

'Life' as the "route from Chaucer to the Black Death, from the Black Death to modern Labor troubles, [connecting] the tales of the medieval pilgrims with abstract science, both yielding diverse aspects of the single theme" (Whitehead, 1967, pp. 8-9), and ensuring "the seamless coat of learning" (Whitehead, 1967, p. 11). To ensure that what is taught to students is not categorized as an *inert idea* is to underscore that the content of the curriculum, and even the manner of teaching it, has to do with Life itself. To not offer to students any sort of connection of the subject areas taught to Life itself, to the here and now, is to emphasize the 'fatal disconnection' that Whitehead has been arguing against; it is to cower still within the inertness that education is currently fixated on. Whitehead has provided a qualification to his argument of always making an educational item useful. Everything to be taught must be useful in the life of the learner.

ANW *Specifying the aim of education, particularly in the realm of determining the content of what is to be taught and how it is to be taught, must be filtered by the principle of usefulness in the life of the student.*

Harry Brighouse's Educational Aims

Philosopher of education Harry Brighouse published a book entitled *On Education: Thinking in Action* (2006) with an entire unit on 'Educational Aims' that constitutes four chapters. Stewart Mayers, in his review of Brighouse's book with the title *Contemplating Education's Purpose*, says that it "deserves to be read" (2008).

In the *Introduction*, Brighouse explicitly states that he intends to "elaborate and argue for a set of principles that schools, policymakers, and educators should adopt... [and that] these principles center on the interests of children, rather than those of the wider society, business corporations, churches, or, for that matter, parents" (Brighouse, 2006, p. 2). To move forward, in the 1st chapter, he argues that *autonomy* "is important enough to justify a requirement that all children be subject to an education designed to facilitate it" (Brighouse, 2006, p. 15). The reason for

this, according to, Brighouse, is that, first, autonomy enables people to have flourishing lives; second, education's task is to facilitate the development of anything that contributes toward the attainment of a flourishing life. Thus, the critical reader of Brighouse's book can ask these two foundational questions: *how does autonomy enable the individual toward a flourishing life*, and *why must the fundamental aim of education be an avenue toward the attainment of a flourishing life?*

HB1 *The content of the fundamental aim of education must be contributory toward the realization of a flourishing life.*

Brighouse continues that there are two components in a *flourishing life*. First is that “for a life to be truly worthwhile, it must contain objective goods” (Brighouse, 2006, p. 15). These are ‘objective valuable goods’ that the possession of which contribute toward making the individual’s life worthwhile or flourishing. Although Brighouse admits that the list of these objective goods is somewhat controversial, he is adamant that it is not controversial to claim that there are objective goods such as ‘raising children,’ ‘studying great literature,’ and ‘mastering difficult and complex skills.’

Is the possession of these objective goods sufficient enough to label someone as having a flourishing life? Brighouse argues negatively. He says that “having objectively good things in one’s life is not enough for a flourishing life... for somebody actually to flourish, they have to *identify with the life they are leading* (Brighouse, 2006, p. 16),” i.e., ‘they have to live it from the inside.’ He argues that though one possesses an objective good, yet it is possible that one is not led to a flourishing life because *one does not identify with this good*. For example, a child who is reared in a particular environment, and suppose that such is objectively good, might not yet be living a flourishing life because she cannot identify with it, the way her parents have identified with it and have lived a worthwhile life because of it.

If it is education's aim to enable the individual to achieve a flourishing life, then a state-based education must include in its curriculum that which enables the learners to attain such. It would have been effortless if there were a distinctive life that could

be called worthy, and applicable to all individuals. If such were the case, then education could definitely pinpoint in what way it ought to rear all individuals such that they all attained it. This, however, is not the case. Most of the time, what is considered a flourishing life by one is not considered a genuinely flourishing life by another. Do take note of the second component, which is 'to identify with it.' The root of this phenomenon, an incontrovertible fact, is what Brighouse calls 'the plurality of personal constitutions.' It signifies that individuals have different personalities, preferences, selections, dispositions, etc. Thus, the state cannot dictate what is to be a good life for its citizens. What it can do, on the contrary, is "to enable people to live well by their own judgments" (Brighouse, 2006, p. 18), and this is accompanied by 'the skills of rational reflection.' Brighouse even adds that "the basic methods of rational evaluation are reliable aids to uncovering how to live well, and they are the only such aids that can be identified and taught" (Brighouse, 2006, p. 19). To recapitulate, an individual must be equipped with the capacity for rational evaluation and rational reflection so that she is able to decide based on her own judgment which goods to pursue, and which to identify with. This is the formula to a flourishing kind of life. Therefore, the aim of education is 'autonomy-facilitation,' and without which no flourishing life will ever be achieved.

HB2 *The aim of education must be respectful of the fact of 'the plurality of personal constitutions.' Any aim of education that does not respect this is a facade.*

HB3 *The aim of education must instead enable the individual to achieve a flourishing life as a result of his/her judgment since the content of a flourishing life cannot be decided and dictated communally. (This follows from **HB2**.)*

Following from the precept that education should be able to equip the individual with the necessary tools for her to achieve a flourishing kind of life, Brighouse, in the succeeding chapter of the book, argues that it also requires that the individual is able to participate economically, i.e., "paid employment is necessary in order for us to flourish" (Brighouse, 2006, p. 28). First, he argues

that “schools should develop children's capacities for economic self-reliance” (Brighouse, 2006, p. 28). Second, he refutes the position that is gaining currency, which is that just because one of education's task is to equip the students for economic participation, then education's function is to satisfy the economy's imperatives. Brighouse argues that there is no such implication, i.e., though “schools do have an obligation to ensure that children can be economically self-sufficient, they should not try to fit their mission to the needs of the economy as a whole... schools should orient themselves to the needs of the children who will have to deal with the economy, and not to the needs of the economy itself” (Brighouse, 2006, p. 21).

He argues for the first by providing three reasons that individuals must be prepared for work. First is that human beings need to be able to procure certain things that would contribute to human flourishing. Food is necessary, and it will not be accessible, in most cases, without the means to acquire it. Hence, work is needed, or paid employment. The second reason is that work contributes toward an individual's sense of well-being, and eventually this subjective sense has an effect on the total human flourishing of the individual. Brighouse states: “Income is not the only valuable reward that work brings. People also attain status through their work, both in the competitive sense that social respect is distributed unequally among occupations, and in the self-regarding sense that people think of themselves differently as paid workers if they are unemployed” (Brighouse, 2006, p. 29). Furthermore, people also find a sense of satisfaction with the work they do, especially if it interests them; and they also develop friendships. Both of these are needed toward the achievement of human flourishing. Lastly, humans need to become self-reliant economically because “self-respect is bolstered by the sense that one is pulling one's weight, rather than free-riding on the efforts of others” (Brighouse, 2006, p. 31), and “for most of us it is hard to maintain that sense without having paid employment for a substantial part of our lives” (Brighouse, 2006, p. 33). The three reasons mentioned here are the ones Brighouse offers in support of the thesis of the need to educate individuals for economic participation.

Brighouse then refutes the supposed implication stated earlier, i.e., since education must equip students for work and

employment, it follows that education should “think of [itself] as preparing pupils to fit any particular ‘slot’ in the economy” (Brighouse, 2006, p. 34). He specifically asks this question: “Why, in the light of the fact that we have an obligation to... [equip] children for paid employment... is it wrong for us to infuse the education system with the imperatives of the economy” (Brighouse, 2006, p. 35)? He reasons that this move is tantamount to “restricting the education of some children simply for the sake of long-term growth of the economy” (Brighouse, 2006, p. 36). The problem of this restriction for the sake of the economy is that “it constitutes using those people for the sake of others, and without any compensating benefit accruing to them” (Brighouse, 2006, p. 36). This is not an exercise of justice. A rejoinder such as this could be provided: if the economy is strong, everybody shall benefit from it. The problem of this, according to Brighouse, is that it “obscures another [important truth], which is that the person being educated matters in her own right” (Brighouse, 2006, pp. 37-38). The individual’s well-being must be the primary focus in an educative enterprise, and any accruing benefit or consequence for others than the individual must come secondary. As he mentions, “the central point of educating someone is for her own benefit... to enable her to live a more rewarding life over which she will have more control,” and not primarily to “educate her to benefit others and produce much-needed economic growth” (Brighouse, 2006, p. 37).

HB4 *Specifying the content of the fundamental aim of education must address the need to equip the learner for economic participation because such is necessary toward human flourishing.*

The previous articulations of Harry Brighouse have emphasized on the individual, but in the last chapter of this unit he indicates the need to explicate an aim of education that is “usually justified by its benefit to other people” (Brighouse, 2006, p. 62). However, he immediately qualifies that this gain is not exclusive to other people because once a society has *good citizens* this will expand to the individual, too. Brighouse also adds that “the good citizen... is not completely inattentive to her own

interests” (Brighouse, 2006, p. 62), thereby dispensing with the idea that a good citizen and a good individual are mutually exclusive. Thus, he commences by characterizing what constitutes *good citizenship* in three ways that are all *dispositional*. (It is interesting to note that Brighouse’s characterization of a good citizen is dispositional.)

The first is the “disposition to abide by the law... [or] should be disposed to obey laws that are passed by the government, even when she disagrees with those laws, and even when she believes those laws are unjust” (Brighouse, 2006, p. 64). He, nevertheless, states that this disposition is ‘overridable’ because disobeying the laws passed by the government is sometimes justifiable depending on whether the aim of such leads to a much greater good. The actuation of this disposition not only is beneficial to the individual, but also to others.

The second is the “disposition to engage in political participation through legal channels to achieve justice and in pursuit of... one’s own interests that is legitimate to pursue” (Brighouse, 2006, p. 64). This disposition is comprised of two components depending on the aim of engaging in political participation, viz., to achieve justice and in pursuit of one’s own interests. To expound on the first, if one who is disposed toward this engagement encounters injustice, that individual will do what she can to mitigate, if not extinguish, the injustice being served on other people. But the qualification is that she does so ‘through legal channels.’ As an illustration, the comic book superhero *The Batman* is someone who is sensitive to the injustices that are prevalent in his society. He, furthermore, is disposed to do something about it. But he does not do so ‘through legal channels;’ hence, according to Brighouse’s characterization of a good citizen, this cape crusader is not one. That is the reason he is referred to as a vigilante. (Encarta dictionary defines it this way: somebody who punishes lawbreakers personally rather than relying on legal authorities.) With regard to the second component, he acknowledges the fact that all individuals possess ‘self-interested interest.’ The individual who engages himself in political participation in pursuit of his interests is considered a good citizen only if the pursuit itself is legitimate. The engagement in a political activity of a mother of a child with special needs is considered legitimate; whereas a mining company lobbying for the

relaxation of some environmental constraints for more profitability is not legitimate.

The third, which Brighouse considered as 'more controversial in political and academic debates,' is "the disposition to engage in political participation in a spirit of respect and a willingness to engage in public reasoning" (Brighouse, 2006, p. 67). He borrows the idea of Amy Gutmann and Dennis Thompson called 'norm of reciprocity' to explicate this disposition. The account goes like this: "Any claim fails to respect reciprocity if it imposes a requirement on other citizens to adopt one's sectarian way of life as a condition of gaining access to the moral understanding that is essential to judging the validity of one's moral claims" (Gutmann & Thompson, 1996, p. 57). Brighouse describes this norm this way: "When we engage in politics using public reasoning, we should not make claims and argument that cannot be accepted by others unless they already hold fundamental moral commitments about which we expect reasonable people to disagree" (Brighouse, 2006, p. 67). The example he gives is the debate about abortion. The norm is violated if the reasons against it provided by one partisan is explicitly founded on 'divine revelation,' which the other group might not embrace. If this is the way how reasoning is executed, then it is not properly called *public*. But if "I am able to give reasons well grounded in the values people with quite different moral understandings share, I am abiding by the norm" (Brighouse, 2006, p. 67). The norm of reciprocity acts as a gauge and boundary for any individual who intends to engage in a public debate within a democratic society, i.e., to not utilize reasons that presuppose moral standards not shared by everybody. If the injunction is recognized, then *public reasoning* is attained. (Harry Brighouse explicates that the "justification [in public reasoning] has to be one that [everybody] can, at least, if they are reasonable, understand and could, in principle, come to share by the free exercise of their own reason" (Brighouse, 2006, p. 68). He argues that the violation of the above is tantamount to coercion, which is basically wrong.)

HB5 *Specifying the content of the fundamental aim of education must include something that not only benefits the individual directly but also others through the individual.*

HB6 *The fundamental aim of education must also address the dispositional element of the learner.*

Formulating the Criteria of FAE from the Deduced Principles

JM1 and **JM2** seem to evince that the idea of FAE must be connected to human nature itself. To borrow Aristotle's distinction between substantial property and accidental property, i.e., the latter's absence does not affect the nature of humanity, whereas the former's absence definitely changes its very nature. Thus, if X is a set of the substantial properties of human individuals, then anything that is not connected to X cannot be an indication of the FAE. In other words, FAE is a direct reflection of humanity's substantial property, or that without which an individual cannot be human. The FAE must be rooted in the distinguishing mark of human beings, whatever it is. The principles of **JM3** and **JM4** indicate that the exercise of 'internal freedom' or 'self-determination' is a manifestation of man's innermost aspiration. It can be said that **HB3** refers to the same 'autonomy.' **HB1** evinces that the FAE is something that should contribute directly toward the attainment of a flourishing life of the individual. **ANW** and **HB4** stipulate that the FAE is something that is useful for the economic participation of the individual.

Principles **JM5**, **JM6**, and **HB5** all point to the importance of equipping the individual toward a communal kind of life, i.e., the individual is furnished with a balanced sensitivity between freedom and obligation, the ability to judge what is good for other people, and the desire to perform actions and decisions that not only benefit herself, but also others. Given that the society being referred to here is democratic, then the FAE must furnish the individual with the wherewithal for a democratic society, or how to be a good citizen in a democratic society.

JM7 and **HB6** state that the FAE must also give importance to the formation of the dispositions of the students. This is to contrast itself to the typical knowledge-based view of education. Philosopher of education Hugh Sockett describes

disposition as a “property of the agent, manifest[s] only in intentional action, and function[s] as predictions about human actions” (Sockett, 2009, p. 292). As an initial characterization, to say that an agent is disposed toward X means that X is something that naturally comes out of her; thus, the possession of a disposition is predictive of the agent's action. In other words, it can be predicted that the agent would actuate X because she is disposed toward X. A focus on the cultivation of certain dispositions is proper to any FAE.

Although the next criterion to be proposed is not something directly generalized from the extrapolated principles, there is a warrant for the idea of *common good*. Since one of the criteria of the FAE is that it equips the individual toward living with others well, and it is said that the primary function of a society (which is composed of individuals) is the promotion and sustenance of the common good, then it makes sense that the FAE must somehow address it. The proposal is that the FAE must be a common good. Political philosopher J. Budziszewski states that “a good is common when one person's gain is not another's loss” (Budziszewski, 2014, p. 27). Suppose that X is a FAE, then the growth of learner A in X will not have much of an effect on the growth of learner B in X. All the more, the growth of all students in X will not affect the growth of X in any of these students. Learner A possessing more of X will not lessen the possession of learner B. This is the idea of common good. As a contrastive point, philosopher of emotion Martha C. Nussbaum defines a *zero-sum good* as “goods in short supply, where one person's possession threatens another person's chances” (Nussbaum, 2018, p. 139). It can be said that a common good is not a zero-sum good because one's possession of the former does not affect the other's possession of it. In other words, the FAE must be constitutive of a common good. Since it is something that is for everybody, the FAE must be something that should not discriminate against anyone, no matter what. And this shall only happen if it is constitutive of common good.

An initial characterization of FAE is that it is that which is aimed to be achieved for the individual through the intervention of

education. Whatever it is, it must address the following for it to be considered a FAE. Hereunder are the generated criteria of any fundamental aim of education:

- (1) *it must be about a substantial property of human beings,*
- (2) *it must enable the individual to exercise genuine autonomy,*
- (3) *it must contribute directly toward the attainment of a flourishing life,*
- (4) *it must be useful in such a way that it makes possible economic involvement,*
- (5) *it must furnish the individual for a life in a democratic society, and toward becoming a good citizen,*
- (6) *it must touch on the formation of certain dispositions, and*
- (7) *it must be a common good.*

The Concepts “Aim” and “Fundamental Aim of Education” (FAE), and the Distinction between the *Primary* and *Secondary* Criteria of FAE

The previous paragraphs have dealt with some proposals on the content of the set of criteria of the fundamental aim of education, but the very concept of ‘aim’ has not really been critically assessed yet. If one contrasts the functions of a policeman from that of an educator, or a medical doctor from that of a teacher, there is immediate clarity on what constitutes the tasks of a policeman or a medical doctor. The function of a police officer is to ensure that there is law and order within the society, and one of the ways by which she does so is to prevent and solve crimes. The clarity is obvious – the same with the function of a medical doctor, viz., to provide treatment to patients struggling with medical illnesses. Apparently, this obviousness is not found in the teacher’s task; all the more, there are several that the teacher can aim at, and this multiplicity of putative aims is something that is still being debated upon by educationalists and practitioners. Hence, there is a need to make sense of the aim/s of education. The best way to begin so is to consider the concept of *aim*.

Philosopher of education Colin Wrings, in his book *Understanding Educational Aims* (1988) articulates his view of

'aim' by, first, contrasting it against two other concepts, viz., 'ideals' and 'objectives.' With regard to *ideal*, this has assumed a negative connotation because its other noun form, *idealist*, has "become synonymous with an impractical dreamer" (Wringe, 1988, p. 7). If this connotation is applied in education, an ideal is something that cannot be attained, or it is just plain impractical. But Wringe argues that something is an ideal not because it is something that cannot be reached; all the more, he states that aims are not "susceptible to complete fulfillment" (Wringe, 1988, p. 8). An ideal is rather "the embodiment of perfection in an imperfect world, [and its] espousal readily lays one open to the charge of being a fool, a fanatic, or a hypocrite" (Wringe, 1988, p. 8). In contrast, an aim is neither impractical nor perfect.

As regards the concept of 'objective,' Wringe states that this usually refers to "specific pieces of learning which we intend to see achieved at the end of a piece of classroom activity, a particular lesson or number of lessons, or even at the end of a longer unit of work" (Wringe, 1988, p. 10). In the parlance of the Philippine educational system, this refers to the outputs intended (in observable behavioral terminology, e.g., *to classify* as against *to know*) as stipulated by the teacher in his lesson plans prior to the teaching execution. A quick glance at any curriculum guide for the Basic Education subjects would show the presence of *objectives*. For example, in the curriculum guide to the senior high school subject *Introduction to the Philosophy of the Human Person*, two objectives under Part 2 are: *distinguish opinion from truth*, and *analyze situations that show the difference between opinion and truth* (2016). The verbs used in each competency are 'distinguish' and 'analyze,' and both are observable behavioral terminologies.

Wringe's point with regard to the limitations of objectives in the entire educative domain is worthy of citing verbatim. He says: "When we think of really successfully educated people it is difficult to see their most important qualities and characteristics as being the result of the mere accumulation of a large number of separate, consciously identified, individual items of learning" (Wringe, 1988, p. 12). He argues that the paradigmatic examples of genuinely educated persons are such not only because of *the*

mere accumulation of a large number of separate... individual items of learning. There seems to be more to Jericho, as someone who exhibits the marks of an educated person, than his ability to X-ing all the objectives (or *competencies*) he has acquired through schooling. To use the example above, Jericho is more than being able to *distinguish opinion from truth*, and he is more than a mere buildup of all the competencies he has learned. This intuition is a strong one: education is more than the mere accumulation of competencies. Given so, there must be another set of specifications, not in objectival structure, that would determine the constituent of the educated person. Furthermore, Wringe also argues that “the teacher’s current objectives... cannot be the ultimate guide of his conduct, for if that were the case, we should not be able to understand why these objectives should be chosen rather than others. The choice of one’s objectives themselves must obviously be governed by further considerations of another kind” (Wringe, 1988, p. 13). There must be something else that would justify the very selection of the objectives in all the curriculum guides.

So, what are aims, according to Wringe? He states that “the essential logical feature of aims is that, [in] contrast with objectives, they are of an open-ended, on-going kind” (Wringe, 1988, p. 14). Once Jericho is able to distinguish opinion from truth, the objective has been reached already. An aim, on the contrary, is something that is continuous, not in the way that there is no end or it cannot be reached but “because of [its] open-ended nature” (Wringe, 1988, p. 14). An example is the *promotion of scientific undertakings in a society*. Its open-ended property is conspicuous, unlike the previously mentioned objectives. Thus, if something is open-ended, then it qualifies as an *aim*. Moreover, the promotion of scientific endeavors is not impractical nor impossible to achieve, thereby it is not an *ideal*, and can qualify as an aim as well.

From the discussion of Colin Wringe’s thoughts, two more criteria for the FAE can be deduced, and articulated. As cited above, he argues that there must be something else that would provide justification to the selection of the objectives found in the curriculum guides. From this, the FAE must possess *justificatory power* such that it is able to adequately provide justification to certain acceptable theories, ideas, and practices within education.

If the supposed FAE is not able to justify these educational intuitions, then it is not fit to be labeled FAE. Another is that he mentions that the logical nature of aims is their being ‘open-ended.’ Thus, the FAE must exhibit an open-ended property, yet neither impractical nor impossible to achieve. Hereunder are the two added criteria:

- (8) *it must possess justificatory power such that it is able to justify accepted educational intuitions, theories, ideas, and objectives (or able to justify the contents top-down), and*
- (9) *it must be open-ended.*

As a supplementary explication for FAE’s *justificatory power*, epistemologist Jonathan E. Adler argues in *Knowledge, Truth, and Learning* (2003) that the transmission of knowledge is a fitting aim of education. He argues that “it is capable of justifying various basic educational practices” (Adler, 2003, p. 285). The idea being borrowed here is that an aim of education is aptly labelled so if and only if it possesses justificatory power, similar to the proposal above.

Another important addition to the analysis of *aim* is from the philosopher John Dewey. He includes a chapter specifically entitled *Aims in Education* in his magnum opus *Democracy and Education: An Introduction to the Philosophy of Education* (1944). His conceptual analysis of *aim* begins with the distinction between *mere results* and *ends*. While both refer to an outcome, in the former, he states, “there is nothing in the outcome which completes or fulfills what went before it” (Dewey, 1944, p. 101) but in the latter there is a “true termination or completion of what has preceded” (Dewey, 1944, p. 101). The example he gives for a mere result is that the grains of the sand in a desert change when the wind blows, whereas the outcomes of the activities of bees are ends because there is completion of what precede them.

With the above dichotomy, Dewey defines aim as “foresight in advance of the end or possible termination” (Dewey, 1944, p. 102), and he supplements the definition this way: “an aim implies an orderly and ordered activity, one in which the order consists in

the progressive completing of a process” (Dewey, 1944, p. 102). It does not follow that just because there is continuity toward completion present in the activities of the bees that the bees have aims. The continuity as completion or termination of activities is best explainable by instinct or design. But for creatures that have the capability to engage in foresight, the end of their activities can be said to be linked with aims.

Dewey then articulates the *foresight function of aim* in three ways. First is that the function “involves careful observation of the given conditions to see what are the means available for reaching the end, and to discover the hindrances in the way” (Dewey, 1944, p. 102). Second is that the foresight function of aim “suggests the proper order or sequence in the use of means, or it facilitates an economical selection and arrangement” (Dewey, 1944, p. 102) of the means. And lastly, the functions “make choice of alternatives possible, viz., if we can predict the outcome of acting this way or that, we can then compare the value of the two courses of action; we can pass judgment upon their relative desirability” (Dewey, 1944, p. 102). In summary, an aim serves as a function in these three ways: (1) *it makes one observant and sensitive of the means and the hindrances toward the achievement of the end*, (2) *it suggests the proper order or sequence of the means, or it economizes the order or sequence*, and (3) since it makes possible alternatives, *it rationally enables one to either pursue one or the other*. The presence of an aim in an activity makes the latter an *intentional or purposeful* activity, in contrast to an unintentional one. With the above in mind, Dewey concludes “that acting with an aim is all one with acting intelligently” (Dewey, 1944, p. 103).

To connect these Deweyan ideas to the issue at hand, viz., the search for a set of robust criteria of FAE, an aim functions as an *arbiter*, as something involved in making judgments, or in decision-making. This is obvious in having the sensitivity to which means to pursue to attain the end, to which hindrances to avoid, and in economizing the diverse processes involved, etc. The added criterion is:

- (10) *it must be capable of providing clear, doable, and economical directions for implementation.*

Admittedly, there are a lot of ideas that can be unearthed from Dewey's *Democracy and Education*, but one last thing shall be borrowed, which will be the basis for the proposed distinction between the *primary criteria* for FAE and the *secondary criteria*. He states that "an educational aim must be founded upon the intrinsic activities and needs of the given individual to be educated" (Dewey, 1944, pp. 107-108). Thus far ten criteria have been itemized as extrapolated from the works cited through the methodology of philosophical reconstruction. If **(1)** to **(10)** shall be scrutinized, and Dewey's suggestion will be involved, it is clear that there are those that can be subsumed under *intrinsic activities and needs* of the individual to be educated, and those that are not subsumed therein. The researchers suggest that the set of criteria that can be subsumed under *intrinsic activities and needs of the individual* be labeled the *primary criteria for FAE*, and those that are not be called the *secondary criteria for FAE*. It is clear that **(7)** to **(10)** do not aptly refer to the intrinsic activities and needs, nevertheless, they are legitimate criteria for FAE.

Another important concept that requires scrutiny is the one that has been mentioned all throughout this work, viz., *fundamental aim of education* or FAE. Something is *fundamental* if and only if it is basic to any structure, organization, activity, scheme, project, etc. The analogy for explaining it is to imagine that one is in the middle of the ocean, and one throws a piece of rock onto it. The rock goes deeper, and deeper until it reaches the bottom of the ocean or bedrock. That bedrock is what is meant by *fundamental*, which is that *none is deeper than that*. In the same manner, if something is labeled FAE, it means that *no other aim* is 'more fundamental' or 'more foundational' than it. It serves as the bedrock of aims.

It is also recognized that the concept of FAE does not indicate that there is a singularity of aim, or that there is only one aim. It is possible that there is more than one. The concept of FAE does not logically preclude the existence of a plurality of FAEs. Suppose there are two aims, and supposed that these two are FAEs, it means that both hold equal footing with each other, i.e., that the one is *not more basic* than the other. Furthermore, the

concept of FAE does not logically exclude the existence of other aims; all the more, it is open to the idea that there are several recognized FAEs. What it posits is that among the plurality, there exists an individual or a set of aims that is called fundamental, or basic. It is important to take note that, logically speaking, the concept of FAE does not necessarily imply one FAE. It is open to a plurality of FAEs. However, it is a different response once the issue is decided empirically. These two approaches have to be distinguished.

Another important qualification is the usage of the *definite article* ‘the’ as affixed to FAE. At first glance, the inclusion of this definite article seems to imply that there is *only one* fundamental aim of education. The interpretation of the inclusion of a definite article pointing to a singularity seems to be misguided. As Greenbaum and Nelson (2002) state, the distinction between an indefinite article and a definite article is about reference. ‘The’ is used when it is “intended to convey enough information to identify what [is] referred to” (Greenbaum & Nelson, 2002, p. 108). It is used when “something [is] uniquely identifiable by the speaker and hearer from their general knowledge or from their knowledge of the particular situation” (Greenbaum & Nelson, 2002, p. 108). For example, the statement ‘The President is about to deliver his address later this afternoon.’ For the speaker and the hearer, the reference of ‘the president’ is clear to both.

Given so, the issue of which article is to be used for FAE-discourse, whether ‘the’ or ‘a/an,’ shall not be addressed in this work since, as mentioned above, the concept of FAE does not logically entail that there cannot be more than one aim. It is possible that there are two. Hence, the ‘the-a/an’-cum-singularity/plurality concern is a non-issue.

Hereunder is the categorization:

A. Primary Criteria for FAE

- (1) it must be about a substantial property of human beings
- (2) it must enable the individual to exercise genuine autonomy
- (3) it must contribute directly toward the attainment of a flourishing life

- (4) it must be useful in such a way that it makes possible economic involvement
- (5) it must furnish the individual for a life in a democratic society, and toward becoming a good citizen
- (6) it must touch on the formation of certain dispositions

B. Secondary Criteria for FAE

- (7) it must be a common good
- (8) it must possess justificatory power such that it is able to justify accepted educational intuitions, theories, ideas, and objectives (or able to justify the contents top-down)
- (9) it must be open-ended
- (10) it must be capable of providing clear, doable, and economical directions for implementation

Supplementary Justifications for the Proposed Criteria of FAE

The attentive reader might object that the set of criteria proposed above lacks justification. The rejoinder to the objection is that they have already been justified by the philosophers cited, though individually. The critic might also object that they have been haphazardly selected. This portion of the research aims to undermine these objections in two ways.

First is through an appeal to the concept of *fundamental needs* as proposed by philosopher Garrett Thomson. Some of the proposed criteria for FAE shall be given supplemental justification by proving that they are categorized as fundamental needs, viz., those that we cannot do without as human beings, thereby having an overriding power in such a way that any educational system that does not, at the very least, give adequate attention to some of the aforementioned criteria is guilty of providing education not fit for humans at all. The last motion cements the idea that these criteria truly are the norms for deciding whether a putative fundamental aim of education is genuine. Thus, this justification ensures that criteria (2) to (5) are *indispensable* to any human being, and by inference, to any system or activity that is considered educational. (Following Dewey's proposal, criteria (2)

to **(5)** can be roughly considered needs of any human being, and **(1)** and **(6)** are categorized under intrinsic activities.)

Thomson describes the concept of *need* as being well-suited “for evaluating any human concern”, and a “potent and apt instrument for evaluating social policy and individual concerns and ideals.” This evaluative predilection of the concept makes it fitting for judiciously deciding whether something is FAE. The following are the characterizations provided by Thomson (1987, p. i):

- i. Needs are objective in the sense that is a discoverable matter of fact what needs people have and this fact has an intrinsic bearing on what we ought to do. ‘Need’ allows us to pass from an ‘is’ statement to an ‘ought.’
- ii. Needs are unimpeachable values. We cannot say truly that people ought to have different needs, and hence needs provide a bed-rock for evaluation.
- iii. Needs are a matter of priority. What we need is something which we cannot do without, and hence is an overriding reason.

(i.) is comprised of three ideas, viz., that needs are objective, that needs are discoverable matters of fact, and that needs have an intrinsic bearing on what we ought to do. The succession of argumentation is clear and linear. At first glance, it can be emphatically mentioned that the concept of need will be helpful in providing a robust characterization of the criteria of FAE. If the conceptual link can be provided, viz., that the set of criteria of FAE is a need, it means that it is said to be objective, to be discoverable matters of fact, and has an intrinsic bearing on what we ought to do, i.e., anything that is considered educational cannot not give its attention to this set of criteria. Another characterization provided by Thomson is (ii.), which states that the concept is the foundation for an evaluative activity. The set of criteria being characterized is meant to be evaluative, i.e., if a putative FAE does not pass the requirements of this set (as being founded on the concept of need), then dismissing its claim of being an FAE is the proper response. Lastly, as articulated in (iii.), the concept of need is something which we cannot do without, thereby possessing an “overriding reason.” It is very much

reflective of the conceptual purpose of FAE. Something is said to be FAE because it possesses an overriding reason, which means that given X and Y, if X is a FAE, then it is just proper that it be given priority over Y. There is no other concept that best characterizes FAE as *need*. Hence, it is justifiable that Thomson's characterization of *need* is borrowed; but he adamantly states that "all three claims require explanation, argument, and qualification" (Thomson, 1987, p. ii).

One of the ways he does so for the three characterizations above is to argue that "not all needs are instrumental; [that] the notion of a fundamental or non-instrumental need is a normative concept because it pertains to serious harm" (Thomson, 1987, p. ii). This serves as warrant for the three propositions above. In other words, albeit it is commonly viewed that all needs are instrumental, viz., "that one can only need something for a particular purpose or goal" (Thomson, 1987, p. 2), he "contend[s] that the verb 'need' does have a normative as well as a non-normative meaning... [and] that not all needs are instrumental" (p. 2). It is interesting to point out that he argues so "by a proper classification of the usages of 'need,' a classification which recognizes that the verb can be both normative and non-normative" (Thomson, 1987, p. 2). In other words, a proper taxonomic review defuses the opposing claim, thereby proving the affirmative position.

Thomson asks the reader to consider the following statements:

- (a) In order to conduct electricity an element needs a free electron.
- (b) To be female one needs an XX chromosome.
- (c) To die, one's brain needs to stop working.
- (d) Britain needs the fresh start of the Alliance.
- (e) I need your love.
- (f) This child needs food.

All of these propositions use the verb 'need,' but the way the term is used varies in two ways. On the one hand, **(a)**, **(b)**, and **(c)** "only indicate that one state of affairs is a necessary condition for the obtaining of another. They simply indicate a certain

relation of necessity and does not recommend. In this sense of the verb, to say that X is needed is to say that X is a necessary condition" (Thomson, 1987, p. 3). On the other hand, **(d)**, **(e)**, and **(f)** "are normatively strong [that is] their practical force is clear and this force is due to the term *need*" (Thomson, 1987, p. 4). Thomson characterizes this second manner of using need this way: "The normative claim 'A needs X' implies that X is practically necessary, that is, indispensable or unforfeitable... [Thus,] the lack of X must be seriously bad or damaging, and consequently there must be very good reasons for having X" (Thomson, 1987, p. 4). The idea of *indispensability* or unforfeatability of the concept of need leads to the notion of *harm*. Thus, it is a contradiction to say that A needs X but the absence of X shall not result in any harm whatsoever to A.

Another classification that Thomson provides is that of the instrumental need and non-instrumental need. An instrumental need "is always relative to some purpose or goal. To say that a person A has an instrumental need for X is to assert that X is necessary for the completion of some goal or aim of A's" (Thomson, 1987, p. 7). From this, he concludes that the notion of instrumental need does not possess a normative element. If A claims to need X to ϕ , what it only means is that X is necessary only within the purview of the aim ϕ , and nothing is said about the importance of ϕ . This is why it is possible to say that in the proposition 'Sandra needs money to be able to buy and consume illegal drugs' that the importance of money is only present within the confines of procuring and consuming illegal drugs, but does not necessarily say anything about the value of acquiring and consuming illegal drugs. This concept of instrumental need is totally different from the practical necessity, indispensability, or unforfeatability of 'A needs X,' without any qualification and instrumentality. Hence, "A has an instrumental need for X does not entail the normative claim A needs X" (Thomson, 1987, p. 7). In other words, the idea of indispensability or practical necessity expounded above is not seen in an instrumental need. So, where does the normative component of 'need' lie?

From this, Thomson introduces the concept of *fundamental need* (FN) as the term that encapsulates the normative component of need, in contradistinction to *instrumental need* (IN). He characterizes FN as being "practically necessary for

A [that] he cannot do without it, [that] his life will be blighted or seriously harmed without it... It relates to the overall quality of a person's life rather than to a particular goal that he happens to have" (Thomson, 1987, p. 8). If X is an IN, it means that its importance is only relative to a certain goal, viz., X is needed to ϕ , and says nothing about its intrinsic importance, viz., it does not mean that X is intrinsically needed. But if X is a FN, it means that the absence of which would seriously impair the life A, i.e., the overall quality of life of A will be placed in jeopardy or harm.

Furthermore, Thomson argues that "fundamental needs are inescapable... [thereby leading] to a deeper understanding of the concept of a fundamental need and its links with human nature" (Thomson, 1987, p. 23). Something is inescapable if "on pain of death or some other form of serious harm, we have no alternative but to obtain what we need" Thomson, 1987, (p. 27). In other words, X is inescapable if "our choice is restricted to only two alternatives, the reasons against one of these being so strong, that we have no practical or rational alternative but to seek what we need" (Thomson, 1987, p. 27). Suppose 'food' is that which is being determined whether a FN. *Does this item inevitably force upon the idea of only having two alternatives?* It does strongly lead to that one. The next question is: *Is the negative disjunction (its absence) so formidably strong that it leads to affirming its positive counterpart (its presence)?* It is so because the negative is its absence, thereby leading to hunger, and eventually death, which is the ultimate antipode of well-being. Thus, there is no choice but to acquire food. If the answer to both questions is affirmative, then food is considered a FN, by virtue of its being inescapable. And in connection to FN being an essential function to practical reasoning, Thomson states that "the concept of a fundamental need restricts the viable courses of action down to only one, that is seeking what we need" (Thomson, 1987, pp. 27-28).

Given the above short explication of the concept of FN, the proposed criteria **(2)** to **(5)** of FAE can be said to be FNs because their absence would emphatically impair the overall quality of the life of an individual.

- (2) it must enable the individual to exercise genuine autonomy
- (3) it must contribute directly toward the attainment of a flourishing life
- (4) it must be useful in such a way that it makes possible economic involvement
- (5) it must furnish the individual for a life in a democratic society, and toward becoming a good citizen

Also, the opposite of any of these said criteria is so problematic that it is just inescapable that all have to be present in an individual's life. For the authors of this paper, it seems that there is no *a priori* reason for disagreeing that the exercise of *autonomy*, attainment of a *flourishing life*, involvement in *economic development*, and becoming a *good citizen* are not FNs. All the more, there are strong *a posteriori* reasons for saying that the absence of these four (4) in the life of an individual would be detrimental. Not being able to exercise genuine autonomy in her decisions, actions, and entire life is tantamount to not being able to exercise one's fundamental rights; all the more, it is contrary to human nature. In addition, the opposite of a flourishing life is destructive to an individual. Hence, there is no choice but to ensure that she is equipped with the wherewithal to be able to attain it. Another is that if someone is ill-equipped in economic involvement (and eventually work), it will have devastating effects on his over-all quality of life, namely, not being able to provide the basic necessities in life such as food, shelter, and clothing for himself and his family. Lastly, if human beings inevitably share common spaces, allocate limited resources, and depend on one another for sustenance, growth, survival, and even flourishing, then it will be injurious to them if they are not able to do so; thus, they really have to learn how to live with one another and be good citizens. Thus, criteria (2), (3), (4), and (5), by virtue of their being *fundamental needs*, are FAEs. (It can be argued, though, that the abilities and inclinations for economic involvement and being a good citizen are not *fundamental* in the sense that these are needed only in capitalistic and democratic societies. This is a valid point. But the fact still remains that the societies which contemporary people find themselves in are capitalistic and democratic, hence they need a set of certain abilities and inclinations to be able to function well therein.)

The second way of bolstering the selection is to prove that these criteria do overlap with one another, viz., *not only do they not contravene one another, but they also complement one another*. The idea of intersection (or overlap) is significant because it acts as a background defense to the tenability of the itemized criteria. An analogy for this is when a newly-elected president of a country would have to form his cabinet members, and the ideal is that all of these individuals would have to work cooperatively with one another for the betterment of the entire country. It would be problematic, by and large, for the country if these individuals were disjointed, fractured, unconnected, and incongruous with one another. Although it is possible that the president and his cabinet members would be able to man the entire country for progress despite the members being disunified, but it would be a background advantage if all the members, generally speaking, do not contravene one another and/or they complement one another. In the same manner, if it can be shown that these criteria do not contradict one another, or that they actually are jointly complementary, then this is a background defense to the tenability of the selection.

This portion of the research would only name three criteria that *overlap* with each one another (viz., *autonomy, being a good citizen, and disposition*), and that this intersection is connected to another widely accepted concept in education today, viz., *moral autonomy*. The concept of *moral autonomy*, which is an overlap of the criteria of *autonomy, being a good citizen, and disposition*, will be explored through an exposition of the works of Filipino philosopher of education Evelina Orteza y Miranda. In other words, if it can be shown that there is *at least one* concept that is accepted as clear, internally consistent, and relevant in education today (*moral autonomy*) and that is generated through an overlap of at least three criteria (*autonomy, being a good citizen, and disposition*), then this is sufficient already to prove that the itemized criteria *do not contravene one another*. Lastly, some pertinent implications would be indicated for the subjects *GMRC* and *Values Education* in the Philippine basic education system.

With regard to *moral autonomy*, Miranda is not the only philosopher of education who has argued for it as a tenable aim of

education. Another is Kurt Baier in his article *Moral Autonomy as An Aim of Moral Education* (1973). Also, with regard to naming another overlap, there are other highly accepted and pertinent concepts within education that are connected to the itemized criteria in two or more ways. This only shows that these aforementioned criteria are viable because they are obviously present in these concepts that abound in education. This can be called the *viability meta-criterion*, which the researchers think that the ten criteria have adequately satisfied, thereby acting as supplementary justification. Another paradigmatic example is *critical thinking* (which has been highly supported to be consequential in education). Criteria (1), (2), and (6) are seamlessly displayed in this educational concept. In other words, criteria (1), (2), and (6) overlap together in *critical thinking*.

To return to *moral autonomy*, under the *primary criteria for FAE*, these three are categorized therein: “(2) it must enable the individual to exercise genuine autonomy,” “(5) it must furnish the individual for a life in a democratic society, and toward becoming a good citizen,” and “(6) it must touch on the formation of certain dispositions.” Miranda argues that in open and pluralistic societies such as the Philippines, it is imperative that citizens are educated such that they become autonomous because there exists a plethora of ‘competing views on public good,’ ‘individual well-being,’ or what constitutes good governance. Citizens should be equipped such that they are able to decide on their own which to embrace or acquiesce from among these disparate views because their selections or answers do have considerable effects on their lives (Miranda, 1990, p. 103).

Etymologically speaking, autonomy has something to do with two concepts, viz., the *self* and the *law*, and an autonomous individual is someone who is 'self-ruling.' She expounds more the meaning of 'autonomous' by distinguishing the *three senses of own*, particularly how the self 'owns' the law. First is that the self “has freely adopted some rules which now are one's own” (Miranda, 1990, p. 104). This implies that these laws are not generated by the self, but are adopted by her in a free manner. Beth who migrates to another country will have to embrace the existing laws of her adoptive country. These laws are not made by her, but she makes them her own by accepting them, thereby there is a sense of ownership in taking on these existing laws,

whether she approves of them or not. Following these laws, as seen in her everyday life, is an act of autonomy because there is no 'coercion, threat, or external pressure.' The second way of looking at it, though a bit similar with the first, is that the self "may come to own or acquire something in such a way that it is not integrated into but is independent of [the self's] total frame of mind" (Miranda, 1990, p. 104). The similarity with the first is that there exists an external set of laws, whose existence is not engendered by the self, yet owned by the self by embracing them. The difference is that whereas the first is a total embrace of the laws such that the self is changed through it, the second, however, is a temporary adoption of the laws, and that it does not really have much of an effect on the self. Miranda gives the analogy of a piece of information that is memorized and understood (a.k.a. adopted) for the sake of passing an examination, and right after it, the said information is easily dispelled from memory and the mind. The temporary adoption "leaves [the self] no better or worse off" or "is not integrated into but [stays] independent of [the self's] total frame of mind" (Miranda, 1990, p. 104). The third means the self is "the originator or source of rules. It is not that [the self] acquires or chooses these rules from among those already existing but, rather, forms his or her own rules" (Miranda, 1990, p. 104).

Thereafter, Miranda avers that neither the first nor the second sense is full autonomy. The third sense, however, is the one that best characterizes autonomy. But she opines that this view of autonomy, though genuine, could result in something devastating because "adhering to and acting on one's rules, solely on the ground that they are one's own, is *subjectivism* in the extreme and could lead not to increased autonomy but *anarchy*" (Miranda, 1999, p. 331). She supports this by saying "if the instance of [this autonomous individual] were to be universalized, a chaotic rather than an autonomous state would clearly be the result" (Miranda, 1990, 1990, p. 104). Hence, there must be something else that needs to be added to autonomy that would serve as its counter-balance because a full-fledged *unregulated* autonomy would eventually result in anarchy. An autonomous individual is not necessarily a morally autonomous individual.

She, then, states that the heart of morality is “the need to take into account other people’s interests as seriously as one’s own when coming to a decision the consequences of which could affect others” (Miranda, 1999, p. 337). She puts the same thought in this manner in another work: “At the heart of morality is the question: How ought I to live, considering that there are others like me, with similar feelings, pains, interests, hopes and dreams” (Miranda, 1990, p. 114)?

Although there is much else that Miranda discusses in her two articles, what is relevant to the current discussion is that *autonomy*, if this is to be an aim of education (which she does assert), must be couched within the concept of the *interest of others*. She emphasizes that in a pluralistic society, conflicts of interest usually arise because the citizens are given certain rights that they can actuate and execute. But if such rights are put into action, together with autonomy being an aim of education, then conflicts would surely arise. This is why she mentions: “To discourage such occasions, rules which function as regulatory principles binding on all, are generated. Restrictions are intended to encourage a sense of shared living within a group and to increase areas of freedom judged meaningful and desirable in individual pursuit of intended ends” (Miranda, 1990, p. 114).

Thus, autonomy now becomes *moral autonomy*, with the initial characterization that regulated autonomy must be confined within a consideration of the *interest of others* (and this is how Miranda views *morality*). Thus, she maintains that “the interest of education in autonomy is *not merely* to enable individuals to behave as they see fit but in acting to take account of matters of fact, logic and *interests of others*” (Miranda, 1990, p. 117). Philosopher of education R.F. Dearden has a similar take on autonomy being regulated by morality: “Without morality, the more autonomous an agent is the worse he is likely to be. Great criminals are markedly autonomous men” (Dearden, 1972, p. 461).

It is clear from the foregoing exposition that the concept of *moral autonomy* being argued for by Miranda as a viable aim of education, in the parlance of the proposed criteria of the FAE, displays *an overlap between two criteria*, namely, (2) and (5),

“enabling the individual to exercise genuine autonomy” and “furnishing the individual for a life in a democratic society, and toward becoming a good citizen” respectively. Conversely, it can be argued, using the proposed criteria here, that *moral autonomy*, thus far, has adequately satisfied two criteria, thereby giving it the status of a prospective fundamental aim of education. If it can be argued that *moral autonomy* can satisfy all the ten (10) criteria, then it befits the label fundamental aim of education. But if it cannot jointly satisfy the ten criteria, then it is not a suitable fundamental aim of education. *It can be an aim of education, but not the fundamental aim of education.* Furthermore, to go back to the primary issue of a *supplementary justification* for the tenability of the ten criteria, the existence of *moral autonomy*, which is an overlap of two criteria, is evidence that the specified ten criteria *do not contravene one another*, or that they overlap one another. This satisfies the *viability meta-criterion*.

Lastly, with regard to the third overlapped criterion and some implications to GMRC and Values Education, the Philippine government has recently modified the existing curriculum of basic education. Upon the implementation of the K-12 program, the subject *Edukasyon sa Pagpapakatao* (EsP) was introduced, which would be taken up by students from Grades 1 to 10. However, upon the ratification of the *GMRC and Values Education Act* last July 22, 2019, EsP has been replaced by the two aforesaid subjects. Per the legal document, “Good Manners and Right Conduct (GMRC) and Values Education *shall replace* the existing *Edukasyon sa Pagpapakatao* curriculum” (Republic Act No. 11476: GMRC and Values Education Act, 2019, p. 3), and that “GMRC shall be taught from Grades 1 to 6 as a separate subject,” and “Values Education shall be taught from Grades 7 to 10 as a separate subject,” and that both would have “the same time allotment as the other core subjects” (2019, p. 3).

Furthermore, “values education shall be integrated in the teaching of the subjects in Grades 11 and 12” (p. 3) in the senior high school level. The document defines *values education* as “the process that provides young people internalization of values which aims at student’s grasp of underlying principles, together with the

ability to act on those principles, and the settled disposition to do so” (p. 2). There is much to unearth from the aforesaid characterization, but attention is to be given, for the purposes of this discussion, on the phrase “settled disposition to do so.” To be educated in values education means that the learner not only grasps the underlying principles of valuation, not only possessing the ability to act on those principles, but having the *disposition* to do so. Whatever the contents of these valuations, underlying principles, the ability to act on these principles are, there is the inclusion of disposition. *In other words, the Philippine-based Values Education educates the learner’s disposition (whatever it is).*

Now consider Evelina Miranda’s suggestion for her conception of *moral autonomy*, that this is comprised of what she calls self-mastery. Here is how she characterizes it.

[The concept] of self-mastery... may be considered as a means for teaching moral autonomy... To be mastered by, say, moral rules, is to suggest that when one is confronted with a moral problem one employs them without fail. One’s self has been mastered by these rules. But this does not mean that self has been passive but that one’s self is involved in mastering its own tendencies and dispositions to resist acceptance of and submission to these rules. In other words, one tries to master these rules. And trying is not a passive act. To try to master something is to do something specific and repeatedly, for example, mastering typing skills, producing a foreign language sound, etc. It is close to being trained to do something. When one’s attempts at mastering something is successful what one does could appear to be done out of habit, without reflection. *It becomes a disposition* (Miranda, 1999, p. 341).

This research will not explore these areas further, but it is clear that the idea of *self-mastery* is very much connected to *disposition* because it is so. There are two things that are relevant here. First is that in the much-awaited *Implementing Rules and Regulations* (IRR) of RA 11476, which includes the *curriculum guide*, Miranda’s idea of *self-mastery* can be included because this touches upon the dispositional component of the learner’s values education. Do take note that values education is characterized in

the legal document as having “the settled disposition to do so.” If curriculum experts are looking for a way of unpacking and expanding this proposed values education, then might as well borrow the work of Evelina Miranda, who is a Filipino philosopher of education.

In addition, once the IRR and the curriculum guide have been released, authors and publishing houses will have to produce textbooks for GMRC and Values Education. Again, Miranda’s conception of moral autonomy will be very much pertinent because in these two scrutinized works of her, she proposes three ways on *how to teach for moral autonomy*: self-mastery (dispositional component), independence of moral judgment, and moral determination (Miranda, 1990, pp. 121-124; Miranda, 1999, pp. 341-344). In other words, Filipino educationalists need not borrow from the ideas of non-Filipino philosophers of education in providing details to the entire GMRC and Values Education subjects. Miranda’s ideas can be utilized instead. Secondly, is it also clear that the concept of *moral autonomy*, which is argued to be accepted and relevant in education, is not only an overlap of two criteria (*viz.*, *disposition* and *being a good citizen*). It is actually an overlap of three criteria, which includes “(6) touches on the formation of certain dispositions.” Thus far, *moral autonomy* is able to satisfy three criteria of the ten, and if it is able to satisfy all, then it befits the label *fundamental aim of education*. Arguing for it (or against it) would be a topic for another study.

Thus far, this section has attempted to provide supplementary justifications for the proposed ten (10) criteria of a tenable FAE. It does so first through the concept of *fundamental needs* borrowed from Garret Thomson, that is, any educative enterprise or endeavor that does not include some of the argued criteria is not fit to be considered educational. It is because the absence of some of these criteria would be detrimental to the overall quality of the student's life, and it is the overall quality that is being considered in determining whether something is genuinely educational. It has been argued here that some of the proposed criteria do satisfy Thomson's *fundamental needs*,

thereby giving support to the tenability of these ten criteria. The second way of providing supplementary justification is through an exploration of the concept of *moral autonomy* borrowed from Evelina Orteza y Miranda, a Filipino philosopher of education.

It is argued that the proposed ten criteria complement one another and/or do not contravene one another, viz., *they overlap with one another*. Just like the cabinet members of a newly-elected president, it would be better that all individuals (or criteria) would complement one another for the sake of the country's betterment. This is referred to as the *viability meta-criterion*. It is argued here that *moral autonomy*, which is widely accepted in education today, displays an overlap of three criteria, viz., *autonomy*, *being a good citizen*, and *disposition*. The fact that moral autonomy is widely accepted in education today, and the fact that it is an overlap of three criteria, is ample *background evidence* that these ten criteria do not contravene one another, or that they complement one another (through *overlaps*). Some implications for GMRC and Values Education are also indicated in the foregoing analyses and explorations.

Conclusion

This research is an answer to a meta-question that is rarely inquired about in the area of education: *what set of criteria must be used to determine whether something is a tenable fundamental aim of education?* It is answered through a *philosophical reconstruction* of the works of some philosophers on the aims of education, and ten (1) criteria are proposed from a generalization of their ideas. To answer a possible rejoinder from an astute reader, two *supplementary justifications* are provided that support the tenability of the specified criteria. First, it is argued that the criteria (or some of them) have adequately addressed the issue that any educational enterprise must be able to respond to the *fundamental needs* of the student, thereby supporting the criteria's claim for tenability. Second, it is argued that these criteria *overlap with one another* (or that they do not contravene one another) by naming at least one widely accepted concept in education today (viz., *moral autonomy*) that exudes the presence of three overlapping criteria (viz., *autonomy*, *being a good citizen*, and *disposition*). This serves as *background evidence* for

the tenability of the proposed ten criteria because they are actually present in some generally purported aims of education.

The contribution of this study in the area of philosophy of education is clearly seen in its attempt to answer a *meta-question* that is virtually non-existent in the field. The ramification of this study is displayed in areas where it is being decided which putative FAE is genuinely a FAE. It is not only that there exists several aims of education, but also a plethora of putative FAEs. Another benefit of this study is that when another researcher embarks on an evaluation of these putative aims and FAEs, she would be greatly equipped by this study, and there is definitely a need to do such research because diversity, though an acceptable educative value, is in need of further evaluative tools.

In the context of the Philippine educational system, per RA 10533, which is the legal basis of the K-12 program, it is explicitly mentioned that the aim of the state-based basic education is to produce “an empowered individual who has learned... the foundations for learning throughout life, the competence to engage in work and be productive, the ability to coexist in fruitful harmony with local and global communities, the capability to engage in autonomous, creative, and critical thinking, and the capacity and willingness to transform others and one's self” (2012, p.2). All these can be said to be the FAEs of the Philippine basic education system. *It is one thing to declare them as is, and another to declare them with the provision of robust justifications.* The latter is possible if the educationalist or the Filipino philosopher of education has on her hands the answer/s to the abovementioned meta-question. In other words, there is now a way to evaluate philosophically and critically the legal basis of the entire K-12 program of the Philippines, and robust evaluation is a necessary component toward bettering the *status quo*.

Lastly, teachers on the ground will be greatly helped by this study because they now possess a set of criteria that they can use in assessing what their school administrators, local experts, or certain politicians are claiming to be the *fundamental aims of education*. In the absence of a critical norm for the teachers to be

able to assess what they receive externally, they will easily be swayed by this paternalistic approach to education. If the teachers, however, are cognizant of a set of criteria in assessing whether a putative FAE is genuine or a façade, then they will be able to critically discriminate the two. In this way, teachers are empowered because when they decide for themselves, they are able to put forward reasons in their preferences, and these reasons are in the form of the set of criteria proposed here.

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