



## Balik Paaralan: The DECS Home-Study Program\*

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\*based on an interview with Mr. Jose D. Gonzales Jr., Principal, RESPSCI

### The Birth of RESPSCI

The Balik-Paaralan Program (BPP) or the Back-to-School Home Study Program of the Department of Education, Culture and Sports (DECS) is one of the programs offered by the Rizal Experimental Station and Pilot School of Cottage Industries (RESPSCI) which was officially created with the approval of Republic Act No. 4571 on June 19, 1965. The Act provided for "the establishment, operation, and maintenance of an experimental station and pilot school of cottage industries in the Municipality of Pasig, Province of Rizal." However, it was only on November 18, 1974 when the school started its formal operation after negotiations with the Pasig Municipal Council. It temporarily stayed at the Pasig Central Elementary School until it transferred to the Mutya ng Pasig Complex at the start of the school year 1975-1976. In March, 1979, the RESPSCI moved to its present site in Maybunga, Pasig City.

Owing to its unique programs and services, the RESPSCI, unlike the regular public secondary school, is under a principal directly supervised by the Office of the Regional Director of the DECS-NCR.

### Its Objectives

Envisioned to serve purposes beyond those of the ordinary public high school, the RESPSCI aims to accomplish the following objectives:

1. To achieve the objectives of the secondary education program in accordance with the Revised Secondary Education Program (RSEP1973) and the New Secondary Education Curriculum (NSEC)
2. To make the school program relevant to the national development goals by

- a. preparing secondary school students for vocational proficiency in order to become productive citizens after they leave school
  - b. training the nation's manpower in the middle-level skills required for national development
  - c. training out-of-school youths and employable adults for vocational proficiency to enable them to engage in small scale home industries
  - d. **giving opportunities for school leavers to enter the mainstream of formal education through the "Balik-Paaralan Program"**
3. To prepare individuals for employment in industry as craftsmen and eventually become managers or entrepreneurs

### Its Program Offerings

During its initial years of existence, the RESPSCI offered five courses addressing the needs of a wide variety of clientele who wish to undergo formal school training and prepare themselves either for further education or possible employment after graduation. Such programs are as follows:

1. Revised Secondary Education Program
2. New Secondary Education Curriculum
3. Technical-Vocational Education Program
  - a. Apparel and allied products
  - b. Food and beverages preparation
  - c. Metal craft
  - d. Technical drafting
  - e. Short-term computer course
4. Technical-Vocational Training for the Handicapped
5. **Balik-Paaralan Project**

The number of RESPSCI programs, however, was reduced when the DECS instituted the Secondary Education Development Program (SEDP) in 1989 replacing the RSEP and the NSEC. A further reduction took place when the two technical-vocational programs were fused

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as one. These changes yielded these offerings:

1. Secondary Education Development Program
2. Technical-Vocational Education Program
3. Balik-Paaralan Program

### THE BALIK-PAARALAN PROGRAM

#### Target Clienteles

The BPP was conceptualized primarily to meet the needs of a particular group of students - those who cannot, for one reason or another, regularly go to school to receive instruction via the residential mode. Specifically, these are 1) students who are above the normal school age but are willing or wishing to continue their secondary education; 2) students who cannot attend regular classes in school due to employment, early marriage/pregnancy, chronic illness (e.g. asthma, epilepsy), rigid training (e.g. athletes), threat to life (e.g. kidnap targets, state witnesses).

#### Admission Requirements

The BPP requires the following: 1) Report Card (Form 138/Transcript of Record (Form 137); 2) Philippine Evaluation and Placement Test (PEPT) Result; 3) Certificate of good moral character; 4) Letter of application from the student's parents/guardian addressed to the principal stating the reason/s why they want to avail of the BPP; 5) Submission of the pertinent document/s as the case may so require - certificate of employment from employer/letter certifying employment if self-employed, marriage certificate/birth certificate of child (for young mothers), medical certificate (for chronically-ill students), certificate of training (for athletes), police/barangay report/blotter, birth certificate of student applicant, and other reference documents the school may

require.

#### The Curriculum

In consonance with its main goal of achieving the objectives of the secondary education program offered by the regular secondary schools, the BPP adopts the program prescribed by the DECS. The curriculum prescribed at present is the Secondary Education Development Program (SEDP) which requires the students to satisfy and complete requirements in eight subjects namely CA English, CA Filipino, Mathematics, Science and Technology, Social Studies, Values Education, PE, Health and Music (PEHM) and Technology and Home Economics (THE). Science and Technology and THE carry two units each and are taught for 80 minutes per day. Each of the other subjects is equivalent to one unit and is taught for 40 minutes per day.



On the other hand, the program is made relevant to national goals and used as a means to prepare students for employment and become productive citizens after graduation through the offering of the following elective courses required of third and fourth year high school students - Foods, Dressmaking, Cosmetology, Handicraft, Electronics, Drafting, Electricity, and Welding and Fabrication.

#### Mechanics of the Program

1. Students are required to go to school once a week, or as the need arises
  - a) to receive instructions from their teachers regarding their weeklong assignments, lessons, activities;
  - b) to submit homeworks/ other accomplished requirements;
  - c) to confer/consult with teachers regarding any other matter pertinent to their studies and the requirements of the eight required subjects and electives.
2. Students are given modules to work on

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and asked to do research work, themes, experiments, projects, etc. for submission after a certain period of time. In the Science and Technology and the THE classes, experiments are performed and projects are done in school either individually or in groups.

3. Students are given a quiz/long test only after the completion of a certain portion of the course requirements.
4. Students can take the periodic examination only after full compliance with the quarterly requirements.
5. Senior students are required to attend the Citizen's Army Training (CAT) every last Friday of the month.

### Instructional Materials

Other than the absence of classroom interaction and the utilization of the self-study approach, the other factor that differentiates the BPP from the regular school program is the materials used by the students. While students in the regular school use books, students enrolled in the BPP use modules. The DECS-produced modules are written by a group of curriculum writers composed of supervisors, principals, and RESPSCI teachers. Beginning with mimeographed materials when it started its operations, the BPP now boasts of computerized hardbound modules.

The yearlong lessons are generally divided into four (4) modules corresponding to the four quarters of the school year. Each module is made up of about twelve (12) lessons to be taken up within a quarter's time. The basic components of a module are Objectives and Procedure. Under Procedure are Introduction, Activity/ies, Analysis, Synthesis, Generalization, and Evaluation. In addition, the first module includes a preview, a pre-test, and a set of reminders as to how the students should use the module.

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and observations are major components of the learning/teaching process, plans are underway to produce videotaped materials that will supplement the existing modules.

### Evaluation of Student Performance

The BPP makes use of the grading system in the regular high school program wherein 100% is the highest grade and 75% the passing grade. The following basic course requirements are used as the criteria for evaluation of student performance: periodic examination, quizzes, projects, assignments, notebooks. Depending on the nature of the subject area, the weight given to each basis varies. For example, while THE gives more weight to projects, Social Studies gives more weight to periodic test.

Faced with problems concerning students whose academic performance is below par, the BPP has adopted the practice of retaining a student in a particular year level and making him/her repeat all the subjects in that particular year level if s/he fails two or three subjects equivalent to a three-unit credit.

### EVALUATION OF THE BPP

In its two decades of existence, the BPP has undergone both major and minor changes in its curriculum, procedures (which come necessarily with changes in the administration), composition and background of its clientele, and physical plant. Nevertheless, neither the program nor any of its components or aspects has ever been evaluated. Operating within a very tight budget appropriated by the government, the school, much as it wants to, cannot afford to employ additional manpower nor rechannel resources for purposes of conducting an evaluation to find out how useful and effective its programs are and what its students have become after graduation. Without such study, the school and the general public can only make speculations as to how well it has accomplished its objectives throughout its 23 years of existence.

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