

TEACHERS: BALANCED BEINGS

by:

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Teaching is considered to be one of the noblest professions here present. Teaching is seen to be the mother of all other professions, may it be commerce, technology, medicine, education per se, agrarian, law, and so on. Teaching is seen to be the root of further knowledge.

With the whirlwind of time, Philippines has endured many challenges concerning teaching. From the native Filipinos' informal way of having their children educated; (1) where young men are taught to be courageous, battle-ready, and resourceful in terms of the living of the tribe, and (2) where young maidens are taught to be gentle, reserved, and mother-like for the perpetuation of the tribe, which was later influenced by the religious teaching of the Spanish Friars of the life and death of Jesus Christ, alongside the sacrifices of the Saints, to the more envisioned educational system brought about by the Americans. Historically taken, Philippines has been renowned for many exemplary talents and intelligence many of our kababayan have.

Today, the Department of Education (DepEd), the government body which directly manages, supervises, and controls the educational system in the country, wishes to uphold the utmost pride in living up to the expectations that it has been given. One of the many issues concerning DepEd today is known as the Child Protection Policy, a regulation that restricts teachers or school personnel to, in any form, abuse the child. This covers, mental, emotional, social and physical harassment that may incur before, during, and after the official class hours. Under the Executive Order No. 53 of the Department of Justice (DOJ) which aims to strengthen the Committee for the Special Protection of

Children, Amending for this Purpose Executive Order No. 275 that all children in the Philippines and Filipino children elsewhere are protected from all forms of violence, abuse, exploitation and discrimination.

Also, DepEd statistically proven to be the largest branch of the government having hired 75,242 teachers in kindergarten, elementary, junior, and senior high school adding to the 880,000 teachers already in the system.

With millions of students inside the schools, teachers are expected to do more than a handful of activities and paperwork each day, not to mention the guidance and counselling of every child in the class and refraining from violating any regulations. Completion of forms and accomplishment reports from different agencies of the government and for the varied school activities.

There has been a recent concern about a newly-hired teacher in Region 8 who has taken her own life allegedly because of too much paperwork. This has raised hundreds, if not, thousands of rants in the social media. One teacher courageously said, "We are not only teachers, we are part of different departments of the government, like DSWD, DOH, DOJ, etc... and even local units, like the Barangays." All the claims which are true. On that note, teachers who have sympathized with the family created the Facebook Page Justice for Teacher Emylou which yields thousands of comments. It has earned varied comments from teachers, and even those who are not in the teaching field, friends, husbands, sons, and daughters, and even students. Nevertheless, this incident has struck the heart of the department.

According to Edgar Tenasas, the DepEd-Leyte assistant division superintendent, this suicide incident is wake-up call for many educators in the public service to learn how to manage the work pressures and other task-related loads".

Management. Pressure.

Many of our teachers are called and said to be patient. That before someone becomes a teacher, he must be very patient. However, today, teachers are encouraged to be more relaxed in terms of the paperwork by doing it promptly, with the use of technological aids.

Preparing lessons and reports is part of the daily routines and tasks of a teacher. It is inevitable. However, from Tenasas' words, lesson preparation is now more convenient with the access and availability of technology, through the use of these gadgets and computer sets and units, teachers may lessen the time spent on such endeavors. "We are luckier now," he says.

In the end, it all falls down to this, teachers must be (1) intellectually capacitated, knowing, understanding and transferring correct and practical knowledge, (2) emotionally stable, to handle different nerve-wracking situations in school and in their personal lives, (3) mentally healthy, to manage stressful timelines and due dates, and lastly (4) socially active, to have time, still, with family and friends, colleagues and other organizations in the community.

Balance is the key.

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