

TEACHERS OF COLOR

by:

Bryan Jake Mangune

Mariveles National High School - Poblacion

The Civil Society Network for Education Reforms, or E-Net Philippines stated, that educational institutions should be a secure environment and the first location that promotes equality. The group continued that it should be a location where young Filipinos discover how colorful the world is and how they may prosper in a variety of ways.

Being an LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender) teacher has posed certain difficulties. I believe that safety is a crucial link between LGBT identity and happiness. On a psychological level, safety is essential to our well-being and ability to operate as humans. Feeling unsafe indicates that we are constantly experiencing sensations of uncertainty, worry, and terror. Our welfare will suffer if we do not feel comfortable in our surroundings. We can work productively and creatively, have a sense of purpose and achievement, create solid connections with friends and colleagues, and thrive personally and professionally when we have good mental health and well-being. I am not in the majority as a gay man. I am an outcast. The workplace is overwhelmingly heteronormative, with 'straight' being the preferred and encouraged sexuality.

It should be noted that equity is desirable in all aspects of our democracy. Unfortunately, lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) educators have often not experienced equity in some schools. LGBTQ teachers are an example of those who are attempting to contribute to society despite the stigmas they face. Despite the growing acceptance of the LGBTQ population, there are still barriers to their coming out, particularly in the workplace.

In reality, navigating the heteronormative and cis-normative staffroom and classroom requires tremendous attention and alertness for LGBT teachers. There is evidence that LGBT teachers aim to blend into their surroundings as much as possible in order to avoid drawing attention to themselves (Lee, 2019). Some people resist being promoted to school leadership positions because they are afraid that their personal lives would be scrutinized more by school stakeholders. The fear of having to 'come out' to new individuals or having the school community become more interested in your personal life as a result of promotion may be a risk that LGBT teachers are unwilling to take. Heterosexual people do not have to worry about being accepted because of their sexual orientation.

Many lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBTQ) people in the Philippines are struggling to find safe spaces, particularly in schools, given the present divisive and demanding climate. LGBTQ educators, both historically and currently, have had difficulty being their true selves.

Slowly, the Department of Education begins to fully open its doors and abide by the idea of inclusion, regardless of societal issues like sexual orientation or gender identity and expression. As a minority group, the LGBT community applauds this achievement in the Philippine school system. Looking ahead, and hoping that gender-based bullying, discrimination, abuse, and exploitation will become obsolete. This only goes to show that with the right knowledge and understanding, any battle can be won, and the true spirit of love triumphs.

References:

American Psychological Association (2022) Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender.

Retrieved from <https://www.apa.org/topics/lgbtq>

Lee, C. (2019). Fifteen years on: the legacy of section 28 for LGBT+ teachers in english schools. *Sex Educ.* 8, 1-16. doi: 10.1080/14681811.2019.1585800