

WHAT IS GENDER-RESPONSIVE EDUCATION AND WHY IT MATTERS?

by:

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Today's generation has become more liberal and open when it comes to gender and sexuality. The Filipino youth today has been exposed to various expressions of sexuality and gender. The Department of Education expressed its support for gender responsiveness when it released the DO 32, s. 2017, also known as the Gender-Responsive Basic Education Policy in line with its Gender and Development (GAD). This is in consonance with the mandates of the 1987 Philippine Constitution, Republic Act (RA) No. 9710 or the Magna Carta of Women (MCW), RA 10533 or the Enhanced Basic Education Act of 2013, and the Philippines' International Human Rights Commitments to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), and the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) among others (DepEd, 2022).

But what exactly are gender and gender-responsive education? According to Edu links (2022), gender refers to the roles and relationships, personality characteristics, attitudes, actions, values, and relative power and influence that society ascribes to the sexes. These roles and connections are socially created. The term "gender" does not just refer to women or men, but rather to the connection (or relationships) that exist between them. The term "gender-responsive refers to a realization of the different needs of girls and boys, as well as the different requirements of men and women, followed by activities that meet these different needs and that avoid gender prejudice or discrimination connected to gender. In addition, when gender prejudice and inequality are challenged, gender responsiveness has been shown to be effective in advancing gender equality.

Gender-responsive teaching is equally important as our advocacies for gender equality. However, we have to admit that gender equality is still a taboo topic for many Filipinos. Nevertheless, we teachers have the power to shift the paradigm into gender-responsive pedagogy. Teaching that is gender-responsive take into account teaching methods and learning materials that address the specific needs of female and male pupils. Gender-responsive teaching should be concerned with “what is taught, how teaching takes place, and how what is taught is learned, in the context of female and male students.”

It matters that classrooms should not only focus on academic performance but performances that are addressing the needs of various genders. It matters because genders are tied up to the identity of individuals. If we make our pupils feel safe on these sensitive topics, we provide them with an environment conducive to better learning where they feel accepted and seen.

References:

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