BREAKING STEREOTYPES IN TEACHING HOME ECONOMICS AND PROMOTING GENDER EQUALITY AMONG HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

by:
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According to Amato (2014), even though gendered home economic classes are long gone, Traister (2014) writes that “gendered teaching styles and attitudes toward women in positions of power haven’t evolved”. The traditional roles of women are still being propagated today: after work, women should do household chores, take care of the children, and other traditional roles “expected” of women. Traister concedes that women’s graduation rates have surpassed that of men’s, yet she is quick to cite the imbalance in household chores as the source of women’s absence from upper-level positions. Despite a 20 percent jump in stay-at-home fathers in recent years, entrenched prejudices are slow to change; society still views a father packing school lunches for his children as emasculating.

The solution? “We need to rewire those attitudes wholesale and early,” advises Traister, “to teach boys from the time they are small that their obligations are to diapering as well as to moneymaking.”

In the Philippines, we can say that we still tend to stereotypes between the work and roles of men and women. For example, it is expected that men should work while women should stay at home and take care of the domestic work. Although this kind of thinking is slowly being eradicated in the country, there are still the same line of thinking that is being propagated. As teachers of Technology and Livelihood Education, it is our role to promote gender equality in the household work and we can begin by teaching our
students at the secondary level that housework is both the responsibilities of men and women, and that women can also go to work and pursue her own interests and passions.

Because of our relentless campaign for Gender and Development in the Philippines, Hapal (2018) reported that the Philippines is the region's best performer on indicators of gender equality in work, that more women have participated in professional and technical jobs and leadership positions, and is 'near best' on perceived wage gap for similar work. The Philippines is at par with the ASEAN countries on gender equality especially on the availment of women on essential services, economic opportunity, and physical security and autonomy, and 'above average' on protection of laws and political participation.

We can start promoting more of this equality even in our TLE classes, and home economics is one of the ways we can educate our students regarding stereotypes between boys and girls and what kind of work they should do. Stereotyping limits people to become the best they can be. Negative stereotypes can have harmful consequences for the quality of life of students and can also result in a major loss to society. In one way or another, we can help breaking stereotypes by properly educating our students to understand that gender is not an automatic description of the things they can do as a person. Our high school students are the next generation of this country so let us instruct a generation of gender-bias free individuals.
References:

