

# NORMALIZING QUEERNESS THROUGH INCLUSIVE PEDAGOGY IN SELECTED UNIVERSITY IN MANILA: TEACHERS CHALLENGES

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## Abstract

This study examined inclusive pedagogical practices and challenges in teaching queer students at a selected university in Manila. Using a convergent mixed-methods design, it combined survey data with interview narratives from 15 faculty members. Participants were selected through total enumeration for the survey and purposive-convenience sampling for the interviews. Results showed moderate to high implementation of inclusive practices in learning environment, curriculum and instruction, and professional development. Key challenges included addressing gender identity, personal and cultural adjustment, managing classroom reactions, navigating dress codes, handling communication differences, and ensuring fairness. Despite limited institutional support, faculty employed reflective, adaptive strategies. Grounded in Critical Pedagogy and Queer Theory, the study recommends targeted professional development and a Microcredential Seminar Program. Findings urge collective efforts to advance LGBTQIA++ inclusion in education.

**Keywords:** Inclusive Pedagogy, Queer Students, Critical Pedagogy, LGBTQIA++ Education, Teacher Challenges

## INTRODUCTION

Queer pedagogy is an inclusive approach that promotes safety, understanding, and affirmation of LGBTQIA++ identities in education (Thomas-Reid, 2018). It challenges heteronormative curriculum and teaching by embracing diverse expressions of gender and sexuality (Cheves, 2023). While some still struggle with the term “queer,” many educators and students accept it as a vital framework for inclusion. Inclusive education in the Philippines emphasizes participation, recognition, and supportive environments (Raguindin et al., 2021; Moriña, 2019). However, teachers face varying challenges influenced by demographics, beliefs, and resources, which affect their comfort and implementation of inclusive practices (Page, 2017).

Despite these barriers, consistent inclusive teaching remains crucial. This study examines faculty inclusive pedagogical practices and challenges in a Manila university, aiming to develop a microcredential seminar program to build faculty competencies and foster lasting institutional change. Promoting inclusion is vital as queer students often face higher rates of bullying, discrimination, and mental health issues than their heterosexual peers (Kosciw, Clark, & Zongrone, 2020; Salerno, Williams, & Gattamorta, 2021). Thus, addressing these challenges through targeted support and inclusive pedagogy can improve their educational experiences and well-being. This study aimed to determine the inclusive pedagogical practices of the faculty members in selected university in Manila and determine the challenges they face when teaching in classrooms that include queer students. Specifically, this study sought to answer the following questions:

1. What is the profile of the respondents in terms of:
  - 1.1 age
  - 1.2 sex & gender
  - 1.3 course taught
  - 1.4 years of teaching at selected university in Manila
  - 1.5 years of teaching outside the selected university in Manila
2. What current inclusive pedagogical practices do teachers implement for queer students in terms of:
  - 2.1 Learning Environment
  - 2.2 Curriculum and Instruction
  - 2.3 Teacher Professional Development
3. How does the implementation of the inclusive pedagogy be compared when the respondents are grouped according to their demographic profile?
4. What are the challenges encountered by teachers when teaching in classrooms that include queer students?
5. What is the relationship between the inclusive pedagogical practices in terms of learning environment, curriculum and instruction, and teacher professional development and the teachers' challenges when teaching in the classroom that includes queer students?
6. Based on the findings, what Queer Inclusive Pedagogy Microcredential Seminar Program may be proposed?

## Hypothesis of the Study

Ho: There is no significant difference in the implementation of inclusive pedagogy when respondents are grouped according to their demographic profile.

## Review of Related Literature and Studies

### Queerness and Queer Theory

Queerness broadly refers to non-normative expressions of gender, sexuality, and culture. Emerging in the 1990s, queer theory critically examines fixed ideas about identity and challenges heteronormativity in social and educational contexts (StudySmarter, n.d.; Thomas-Reid, 2018). Originally a stigmatizing term, “queer” has been reclaimed as a symbol of empowerment and inclusivity (Cheves, 2023). Queer theory advocates for recognizing fluid identities and disrupting binaries, which is essential for creating affirming educational spaces.

### Filipino Sociocultural Context

In the Philippines, identities such as "bakla" carry specific cultural meanings often tied to gender expression rather than sexuality alone (Presto, 2020). Acceptance of queer individuals tends to be conditional, influenced by factors like financial support, family approval, and social conformity. Discrimination and stigma remain widespread, particularly in schools and workplaces, leading to significant mental health risks among LGBTQ students, including depression and anxiety (Tang & Poudel, n.d.; Mutya et al., 2021). Social institutions frequently restrict queer expression, and queer students often face bullying and exclusion, underscoring the need for inclusive policies and supportive environments (Ulla, 2022; Hongboontri, n.d.; Hanson et al., 2019).

### Inclusive Pedagogy and Learning Environments

Inclusive education aims to reduce discrimination and promote participation, recognition, and support for all students, including LGBTQIA++ learners (Ioannidi & Malafantis, 2022; Moriña, 2019; Raguindin et al., 2021). Queer pedagogy integrates queer perspectives into curricula, challenges heteronormativity, and fosters safe, affirming classroom climates (Prescott, 2019; Florian & Black-Hawkins, 2011). Teachers can make meaningful changes by employing gender-sensitive language and inclusive materials that reflect LGBTQ+ identities (Queer Pedagogy in the Classroom, n.d.). Programs such as High School FLASH have demonstrated the positive impact of inclusive sexual health education on reducing homophobia and promoting respectful peer interactions (Kesler et al., 2023).

### Curriculum and Instructional Practices

Effective inclusive education incorporates diverse learning styles, varied content, and equitable assessment practices to ensure all students engage meaningfully (Ioannidi & Malafantis, 2022; Evangelou, 2023). Curriculum design should embed LGBTQ+ narratives naturally to avoid tokenism and “othering” (Page, 2017). Queer pedagogy encourages educators to use “queer” positively to dismantle stigma and to support marginalized groups, including BIPOC and students with disabilities (Thomas-Reid, 2018; LibGuides, n.d.). Collaborative learning, peer teaching, and teacher beliefs play crucial roles in successful inclusion (Florian & Black-Hawkins, 2011; Moriña, 2021). Schools must adopt policies and practices that promote diversity and equip teachers with necessary resources (Raguindin et al., 2021).

### Teacher Professional Development

Teachers' preparedness and ongoing professional development are critical for effective inclusive education (Mabasa-Manganyi, n.d.; Leling, n.d.). Collaborative working environments, shared decision-making, and research participation empower teachers and improve inclusive practices. However, many educators lack adequate training and support, leading to challenges in addressing diverse student needs (Nuñez & Rosales, 2021; Misquitta & Joshi, 2022). Professional development programs, including workshops and mentoring, can enhance teachers' knowledge, skills, and confidence to foster inclusive classrooms (Prescott, 2019). Furthermore, queer teachers often serve as leaders in creating welcoming school climates, but they may face resistance requiring policy support (Clark n.d.).

### Challenges in Inclusive Pedagogy

Despite recognizing the importance of queer-inclusive education, teachers face significant barriers such as limited institutional support, lack of knowledge, and societal resistance (Tarrayo & Salonga, 2022; Huertas-Abril & Palacios-Hidalgo, 2023). Emotional intelligence has a greater influence on inclusive teaching than expertise alone, highlighting the need for confidence-building (Nwosu et al., 2022). Structural issues include inadequate training, resource constraints, large class sizes, and conflicting community attitudes (Bayram & Öztürk, 2020; Alcosero et al., 2023). Additionally, age and cultural factors affect teachers' attitudes and readiness to implement inclusive practices (Clark, n.d.; Lewis, n.d.).

### Teachers' Perceptions and Attitudes Toward Queer Identities

Teachers' beliefs and biases significantly influence their approach to queer-inclusive education. Reflective practice helps educators recognize and challenge their assumptions, fostering more inclusive classrooms (Phipps, n.d.; Somma, n.d.). Negative attitudes often correlate with religious, regional, and political affiliations, but familiarity and knowledge about queer issues increase acceptance (Perez-Jorge, n.d.; Lewis, n.d.). Gender is increasingly understood as fluid and socially constructed, with educators encouraged to adapt teaching to respect diversity and dismantle stereotypes (Lewis, n.d.).

## Theoretical Framework

The study draws on critical pedagogy (Freire, 1996) and queer theory (Thomas-Reid, 2018; Walters, 2011). Critical pedagogy challenges traditional classroom power structures, urging educators to create participatory, justice-oriented learning environments. Queer theory critiques fixed gender and sexuality norms, advocating for identity fluidity and affirming practices. These frameworks support a shift from rigid, authority-driven instruction to flexible, student-centered inclusion.

## Conceptual Framework

**Figure 1** Conceptual Framework Integrating Critical Pedagogy and Queer Theory for Inclusive Education

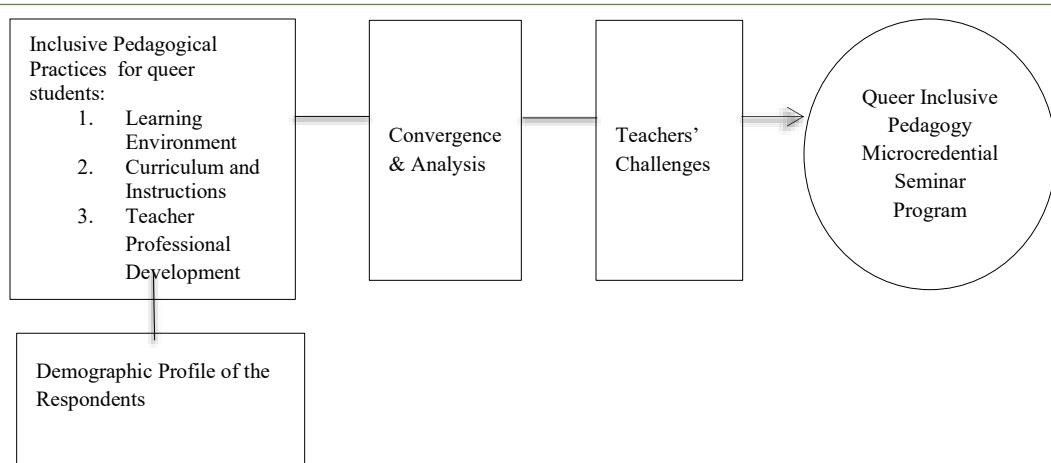


Figure 1 presents a conceptual framework based on critical pedagogy and queer theory. Critical pedagogy addresses intersectionality, student identities, and transforming inequitable systems through inclusive practices in learning, curriculum, and teacher development (Watts, 2017). Queer theory challenges heteronormativity and shows how teacher demographics shape inclusive pedagogy. This study used critical pedagogy to examine inclusive practices and queer theory to identify heteronormative barriers. Inclusive pedagogy supports queer students but poses challenges for educators. Findings informed the design of a targeted, theory-informed microcredential seminar to strengthen queer-inclusive teaching.

## METHODOLOGY

This study used a convergent mixed-methods design, integrating quantitative surveys and qualitative interviews to explore inclusive pedagogical practices and challenges in teaching in a classroom that includes queer students. Data were collected from undergraduate faculty members at selected university in Manila during AY 2024–2025. Eligibility required at least one year of teaching experience. Total enumeration was used for the survey, while 15 participants were purposively selected for interviews.

The quantitative tool was adapted from the CDC's LGBTQ Inclusivity Assessment, using a 4-point Likert scale with expert validation and pilot testing ( $n = 17$ ). In table 1, the cronbach's alpha confirmed high internal consistency (.835–.946). The tool measured beliefs, practices, and inclusivity-related behaviors. Semi-structured interviews focused on challenges in implementing queer-inclusive pedagogy, with pilot testing to ensure clarity. Both instruments were administered in English. The pilot testing yielded the following results:

**Table 1** Cronbach's alpha Result

Items	Cronbach's alpha	Descriptors
1-14	.946	Excellent
15-21	.835	Good
22, 27-36	.936	Excellent
23-26	.888	Good

The interpretations and descriptive meaning were labelled as:

Mean	Verbal Interpretation	Descriptive Meaning
4.01-5.00	Strongly agree	Very High Implementation
3.01-4.00	Agree	High Implementation
2.01-3.00	Disagree	Low Implementation
1.00-2.00	Strongly disagree	Very Low Implementation

Ethical clearance was secured from the Institutional Ethics Review Board. Following approval, permission was sought from the Vice President for Research to conduct the survey at the selected university in Manila. Informed consent was obtained digitally, with participants free to withdraw anytime. Interviews (20–30 minutes) were conducted face-to-face, recorded with consent, and scheduled for convenience. All data were securely stored on a password-protected device, following the Privacy Act 2012 and NEGHHR 2022.

Quantitative data were analyzed using SPSS: frequency, weighted mean, t-tests, and ANOVA. Qualitative data underwent narrative thematic analysis and axial coding. Two researchers cross-checked results, and participants verified the final report for accuracy. As appreciation, participants received certificates and vouchers (Php 200–300). The study posed minimal risk, with confidentiality assured. Teachers' reflections informed the creation of a queer-inclusive micro-credential seminar.

The researchers declare no conflicts of interest. All research procedures were conducted objectively and ethically, with no personal, financial, or professional influences.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. What is the profile of the respondents in terms of:

**Table 2** Age

Age	Frequency	Percentage
20–29	12	11.7
30–39	27	26.2
40–49	20	19.4
50–59	41	39.8
60 and above	3	2.9
<b>Total</b>	<b>103</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 2 shows the age distribution of respondents, revealing a workforce mainly composed of mid- to late-career educators. Nearly 40% are aged 50–59. Those aged 30–39 make up 26.2%, and 19.4% are between 40–49. Younger faculty (20–29) represent 11.7%, while only 2.9% are 60 or older.

Table 3 summarizes sex and gender data, showing a predominantly female teaching population (66.02%). Males comprise about one-third (31.07%), while gay (1.94%) and queer (0.97%) respondents reflect limited gender and sexual diversity within the community.

**Table 3** Sex & Gender

Sex and Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Female	68	66.02
Male	32	31.07
Gay	2	1.94
Queer	1	0.97
<b>Total</b>	<b>103</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 3 shows the courses taught, highlighting a diverse teaching profile. Health and Allied Sciences make up over one-third of faculty, while Professional and General Education also hold significant portions. Social Sciences, Humanities, and Other disciplines are equally represented, with Science and Technology and Business & Management less represented.

**Table 4** Course(s) Taught

Course(s) Taught	Frequency	Percentage
Health and Allied Sciences	36	35.0
Professional and General Education	22	21.0
Social Sciences and Humanities	16	15.5
Science and Technology	8	7.8
Business & Management	5	4.9
Other disciplines	16	15.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>103</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 4 shows the respondents' teaching experience at the university, ranging from new to veteran faculty. About 40.8% have 1 to 5 years of experience, while nearly a quarter have 26 or more years. Smaller but steady groups fall within mid-range experience levels.

**Table 5** Years of Teaching Experience in selected university in Manila

Years of Teaching	Frequency	Percentage
1-5	42	40.8
6-10	7	6.8
11-15	16	15.5
16-20	7	6.8
21-25	2	1.9
26-30	14	13.6
31-35	11	10.7
36-40	4	3.9
<b>Total</b>	<b>103</b>	<b>100</b>

**Table 6** Years of teaching experience outside selected university in Manila

Years of Teaching	Frequency	Percentage
0	39	37.9
1-5	28	27.2
6-10	22	21.4
11-15	6	5.8
16-20	4	3.9
21-25	2	1.9

26-30	2	1.9
<b>Total</b>	<b>103</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 5 and 6 show respondents' teaching experience outside the university. Over one-third (37.9%) began their careers at the university. More than 48% have 1 to 10 years of experience elsewhere, while about 13% have over 10 years of teaching outside the university

2. What current inclusive pedagogical practices do teachers implement for queer students?

**Table 7** Learning Environment

Learning Environment	Mean	Interpretation/Descriptive
Inclusive behavior management plan	3.5	High Implementation
Safe classroom—no bullying/harassment	3.8	High Implementation
Inclusive visual symbols (e.g., flags, signs)	2.6	Low Implementation
Respectful group norms	3.6	High Implementation
Safe and inclusive space for all	3.9	High Implementation
Clear behavioral expectations	3.7	High Implementation
Promotes inclusive collaboration	3.7	High Implementation
Overall Mean	3.6	High Implementation

"Table entries are reduced descriptors of the original survey items."

Table 7 shows teachers' inclusive practices for LGBTQIA++ students, with a high mean of 3.6. They excel in ensuring safety (3.9) and prohibiting bullying (3.8), but visual markers scored low (2.6), showing a gap between behavioral inclusion and symbolic affirmation. Teachers recognize gender identity (3.68), sexual orientation diversity (3.56), avoid gender assumptions (3.42), and use inclusive language (~3.5). Low visual inclusivity and moderate belief in gender fluidity (3.20) suggest awareness but tentative symbolic advocacy.

**Table 8** Curriculum and Instruction

Curriculum and Instruction	Mean	Descriptive Meaning
Inclusive LGBTQIA++ content/materials	3.5	High Implementation
Teach gender identities	3.4	High Implementation
Include sexual orientations	3.3	High Implementation
Explain diverse relationships	3.5	High Implementation
Present gender/sexual diversity	3.3	High Implementation
Provide varied Q&A options	3.4	High Implementation
Cover all types of sex	3.4	High Implementation
HIV/STI info inclusive of LGBTQ	3.5	High Implementation
Pregnancy prevention relevant to LGBTQ	3.5	High Implementation
HIV/STI strategies for diverse identities	3.6	High Implementation
Anatomy/physiology taught separate from gender	3.3	High Implementation
Overall Mean	3.4	High Implementation

"Table entries are reduced descriptors of the original survey items."

Table 8 shows a high mean of 3.4 for Curriculum and Instruction, indicating strong teacher commitment to LGBTQIA++-inclusive practices, especially in sexual health education. The highest score (3.6) was for presenting HIV/STI prevention strategies reflecting diverse orientations and identities, with related items (3.5) ensuring representation of LGBTQIA++ identities and accessible pregnancy prevention information. Teachers' beliefs that gender identity is unique (3.68) and sexual orientation diverse (3.56) likely inform inclusive design. Moderate scores (3.3) in teaching diverse orientations and decoupling anatomy from gender suggest content gaps.

**Table 9** Teacher Professional Development

Teacher Professional Development	Mean	Descriptive Meaning

Attend inclusive training	3.2	High Implementation
Limited training attendance	3.0	Low Implementation
Correct harmful language	3.4	High Implementation
Advocate inclusive materials	3.5	High Implementation
Overall Mean	3.3	High Implementation

“Table entries are reduced descriptors of the original survey items.”

Table 9 shows teachers strongly support inclusive materials ( $M = 3.5$ ) and correct harmful language ( $M = 3.4$ ), creating safe, respectful classrooms. Formal training scored lower ( $M = 3.0$ ), indicating a gap between advocacy and action. Teachers value inclusion but may lack content knowledge or institutional support for complex queer issues.

3. How does the implementation of the inclusive pedagogy be compared when the respondents are grouped according to their demographic profile?

**Table 10** Comparison of Inclusive Pedagogy Implementation Across Respondents’ Demographic Profiles

Demographic Variable	Mean	SD	F-Value/ Value	t- Value	Sig. (p- value)	Interpretation.
Age	3.05	1.19	$F = 1.016$	0.466		Not significant
Sex	1.34	0.48	$t = 2.611$	0.010		Significant difference
Gender	1.83	1.40	$F = 0.531$	0.919		Not significant
Years of Teaching in Selected University (Manila)	1.98	1.12	$F = 1.371$	0.134		Not significant
Years of Teaching Outside the Selected University	1.17	0.47	$F = 0.579$	0.959		Not significant

Table 10 shows only sex significantly affected inclusive pedagogy, suggesting male and female faculty differ due to gendered experiences. No significant differences emerged for age, gender identity, or teaching experience.

4. What are the challenges encountered by teachers when teaching in classrooms that include queer students?

#### Theme 1: Sensitivity in Addressing Gender Identity

Participants emphasized using students’ preferred pronouns and inclusive forms of address, though confidence varied. Participant 1 stated, “I always ask, ‘How do you want me to address you?’” showing active affirmation, while others like Participant 4 acknowledged the ongoing effort to “remind myself to use the proper pronouns.” Participant 6 noted difficulty choosing between “kuya” or “ate,” illustrating the emotional labor of adapting ingrained linguistic habits. This theme reveals a gap between inclusive intent and cultural norms embedded in language. Participant 3 reflected, “I used to inform students I will call you Mr. and Ms. regardless of identity,” highlighting different readiness levels for gender-diverse classrooms. Language emerged as both inclusion tool and barrier, requiring reflection to avoid exclusion (Prescott, 2019; Queer Pedagogy in the Classroom, n.d.). Freire’s (1996) conscientização, Monchinski’s (n.d.) critique of titles, and Walters’ (2011) queer theory highlight language’s role in challenging fixed categories.

#### Theme 2: Personal and Cultural Adjustment of Teachers

Theme 2 highlights how teachers experience personal and emotional tension when traditional religious or cultural beliefs conflict with inclusive teaching. This is especially significant in the Philippine context, where conservative values remain strong. Participant 9 shared, “Personally, as a Christian, I was taught through the Bible that there are only two sexes... but I respect them, and I don’t impose my beliefs on them,” reflecting the strain between faith and professional respect. Participant 13 added, “Hindi po ako sanay sa ganong masyadong knowledge or interactions... need ko po maging sensitive kasi ayoko maka-offend,” showing discomfort and the need for sensitivity. This reflects emotional labor and uncertainty, often without training. Critical Pedagogy sees such discomfort as political space for growth, with Freire (1996) and Monchinski (n.d.) framing bias reflection as resistance to dominant norms. Queer Theory views it as an opportunity to break binaries and embrace fluid identities (Walters, 2011), with teachers shifting from tolerance to active inclusion.

#### Theme 3: Classroom Reactions and Managing Inclusivity

Theme 3 examines managing student reactions to LGBTQ+ topics. Participant 10 noted terms like “lubrication” and queer student language can provoke discomfort or laughter, highlighting the need for inclusive, non-shaming classroom management. Participant 14 emphasized fostering respectful peer dynamics, stating, “Binibigyan ko sila ng clues... ayoko na mag-instill na meron silang superiority complex.” Such practices reflect queer pedagogy’s call to challenge binaries (Prescott, 2019; Thomas-Reid, 2018) and the emotional labor of maintaining safe, non-shaming spaces (Chen, n.d.; Nwosu et al., 2022). Aligned with Raguindin et al. (2021), Galgo (2023), and Kesler et al. (2023), these micro-practices disrupt or reinforce heteronormativity, affirm fluid identities (Walters, 2011), and support critical pedagogy’s goal of confronting power structures (Freire, 1996; Monchinski, n.d.).

#### Theme 4: Navigating Dress Code and Expression Policies

Participants revealed the balance between institutional rules, like dress codes, and students’ rights to gender expression. Participant 1 noted acceptance: “You can see how they dress up, how they fix their face... and that’s OK,” showing that small acts foster acceptance. Inclusive spaces must affirm gender diversity and challenge heteronormativity (Neto, 2018), reflecting queerness with love, critique, and hope (Linville, n.d.). Yet, not all

educators feel empowered. Participant 9 shared, “One LGBTQ+ student... requested permission to wear female clothes and grow their hair... I referred the matter to the SAO as I wasn’t sure how to handle it on my own.” Many teachers lack training and institutional support to handle gender-sensitive issues, often deferring to authorities due to rigid policies (Tarrayo & Salonga, 2022; Misquitta & Joshi, 2022; Dorji, n.d.).

Some adapt classroom rules, especially in PE, to accommodate gender expression. Participant 5 explained, “May mga klase kami na dapat may proper uniform, pero minsan may sumasabay sa PE uniform kahit hindi naman PE... pero pinapakiusapan na lang namin, lalo na kung related sa gender expression.” This reflects adaptive teaching that respects identity and supports Raguindin et al.’s (2021) view that inclusive environments embrace diversity and communication. also involves daily practices that ensure emotional safety (Chen, n.d.; Anderson & McCormack, 2020]. Participant 15 shared an example tied to body image and inclusion, “Dati yung swimming, dapat talaga naka-bathing suit, pero since yung mga plus size nahihiya, ginawa na namin na sila magdadala ng kanilang swimming attire... iconsider yun.” This highlights intersectionality in student experiences, as queer pedagogy urges attention to identity, size, gender, and self-expression (Anderson & McCormack, 2020; Thomas-Reid, 2018; Queer Pedagogy in the Classroom, n.d.).

#### Theme 5: Behavior Management and Communication Style Differences

Participants adapted discipline for sensitive LGBTQ+ students through kindness and private talks. Participant 6 noted, “Kapag pinagsabihan... umiiyak agad... kailangan hinay-hinay,” while Participant 7 stressed private conversations. These show a shift to flexible, student-centered approaches. Inclusive and queer pedagogy stress affirming environments (Neto, 2018; Raguindin et al., 2021). Rigid discipline alienates queer students (Mutya et al., 2021; Hanson et al., 2019), while emotional intelligence fosters trust (Nwosu et al., 2022). Critical pedagogy (Freire, 1996) challenges power, and queer theory promotes flexible, validating spaces. These findings stress empathetic, adaptable behavior management.

#### Theme 6: Promoting Fairness Without Overemphasis on Identity

A key challenge in LGBTQ+ pedagogy is fostering fairness without overemphasizing identity. Teachers stressed equal treatment. Participant 14 shared, “Binibigyan ko sila ng attention, pantay lang, fair... Ayoko na mag-instill na meron silang superiority complex... Dapat maging fair din sila sa classmates nila.” This reflects affirming identity without favoritism or tokenism.

Literature supports this view. Inclusive pedagogy is a shared responsibility that avoids labels (Florian & Black-Hawkins, 2011). Queer theory likewise resists fixed identities, urging natural integration of queer narratives (Walters, 2011; Prescott, 2019; Page, 2017; Clark, n.d.). Teachers’ balancing act reflects equity as equal opportunity (Chen, n.d.) and queer pedagogy’s aim to normalize, not exceptionalize (Thomas-Reid, 2018).

In the Filipino context, where queer acceptance is conditional (Presto, 2020), teachers practice cautious fairness as culturally responsive inclusion. Guided by Freire’s (1996) principle of resisting symbolic oppression, they disrupt exclusion while affirming dignity without over-recognition.

5. What is the relationship between the inclusive pedagogical practices in terms of learning environment, curriculum and instruction, and teacher professional development and the teachers’ challenges when teaching in the classroom that includes queer students?

#### Learning Environment

**Table 11** Learning Environment

Quantitative (Learning Environment)	Item Mean	Verbal Interpretation / Descriptive Meaning	Qualitative Theme & Sample Statements	Meta-Inference / Convergent Insight
Use inclusive behavior management plan	3.5	Agree / High Implementation	<b>Theme 5: Behavior Management &amp; Communication Style Differences</b> “Kapag pinagsabihan mo sila, umiiyak agad... kailangan hinay-hinay.” (Participant 6) “May times na nag-aaway sila... kailangan kausapin sila nang paisa-isa.” (Participant 7)	Teachers actively use inclusive management; qualitative data shows emotional and communication adjustments for LGBTQIA++ students.
Prevent bullying/harassment; foster safety	3.8	Agree / High Implementation		High scores align with proactive interventions that reduce stigma and foster safety.
Use visual symbols (flags, signs) for inclusion	2.6	Disagree / Low Implementation	<b>Theme 4: Navigating Dress Code &amp; Expression Policies</b> “I referred the matter to the SAO as I wasn’t sure how to handle it.” (Participant 9) “There are those not saying [their identity], but you can see how they dress up.” (Participant 1)	Teachers set norms respecting identities, reinforcing respectful culture.

Set group norms encouraging respect	3.6	Agree / High Implementation	<b>Theme 1: Sensitivity in Addressing Gender Identity</b> "I always ask how do you want me to address you?" (Participant 1) "The challenge is always to remind myself to use the proper pronouns." (Participant 4)	Teachers set norms respecting identities, reinforcing respectful culture.
Ensure safety & inclusion for all students	3.9	Agree / High Implementation	<b>Theme 3: Classroom Reactions &amp; Managing Inclusivity and Theme 6: Promoting Fairness Without Overemphasis on Identity</b> "Pantay lang, fair... Ayoko na mag-instill na meron silang superiority complex." (Participant 14) "Dapat pantay-pantay, hindi kailangan i-emphasize." (Participant 15)	Highest score shows teachers promote fairness and inclusion without overemphasis.
Ban stigmatizing remarks; enforce respect	3.7	Agree / High Implementation	<b>Theme 3: Classroom Reactions &amp; Managing Inclusivity &amp; Theme 1: Sensitivity in Addressing Gender Identity</b> "I have strategies... alternative options so they can comfortably share." (Participant 4) "I treat them equally... I am not condemning or judging." (Participant 6)	Teachers enforce norms against stigma while allowing dialogue.
Promote inclusive collaboration	3.7	Agree / High Implementation	<b>Theme 3: Classroom Reactions &amp; Managing Inclusivity &amp; Theme 1: Sensitivity in Addressing Gender Identity</b> "I have strategies... alternative options so they can comfortably share." (Participant 4) "I treat them equally... I am not condemning or judging." (Participant 6)	Teachers nurture respectful collaboration and reduce fear of discrimination.
Overall Mean	3.6	Agree / High Implementation	Integration of all the above themes.	High score confirms efforts in communication, management, and adaptation, though visible symbols remain limited.

In table 11, survey showed high implementation ( $M = 3.6$ ), especially in behavior management, safety, and collaboration. Inclusive discipline ( $M = 3.5$ ) stressed gentleness (Theme 5). Safe classrooms ( $M = 3.8$ ) were modeled by Participant 10 through professionalism and humor. Respecting names/pronouns ( $M = 3.6$ ) aligned with Theme 1; Participant 1 asked, "How do you want me to address you?" Emotional safety scored highest ( $M = 3.9$ ), with Participant 14 ensuring fairness without favoritism. Peer collaboration and clear expectations ( $M = 3.7$ ) fostered openness. Participants 2 and 4 emphasized boundaries and flexibility. Symbolic gestures lagged ( $M = 2.6$ ); Theme 4 showed hesitation, as Participant 9 deferred to administration.

#### Meta-Inference

Inclusive pedagogy is a negotiated, emotionally engaged process, not static techniques. Teachers' inclusive practices involve emotional labor, communication adjustments, and relational work. Yet strong commitment does not always show in symbolic support, with low scores for physical markers reflecting institutional and cultural limits. Inclusion creates dilemmas: affirming identity without marginalization or overemphasis. This balance requires negotiation, reflection, and discretion. Lacking institutional guidance, teachers rely on self-driven efforts. This convergence reflects critical pedagogy and queer theory, both challenging power and norms. Critical pedagogy (Freire, 1996; Monchinski, n.d.) emphasizes equity, seen in teachers' adjustments to stigma and vulnerability, as Participant 6 noted, "Kapag pinagsabihan mo sila, umiiyak agad... kailangan hinay-hinay." Queer theory disrupts binaries through practices like neutral terms, affirming pronouns, and respecting preferred address (Participant 1), resisting essentialist categories (Walters, 2011; LibGuides, n.d.).

These frameworks show inclusive pedagogy as reflective, relational work that disrupts power and affirms diversity. It requires reflexivity, support, and structural change. Findings call for training that integrates critical pedagogy and queer theory, emphasizing intersectionality and inclusive communication. Institutions should provide visible markers, embed queer content in curricula, and align policies with both cultural contexts and inclusive values.

Curriculum and Instruction

**Table 12** Curriculum and Instruction

Quantitative (Curriculum Instruction)	Item and Mean	Verbal Interpretation / Descriptive Meaning	Qualitative Theme & Sample Statements	Meta-Inference / Convergent Insight
I ensure content and materials are inclusive of LGBTQIA++ history, events, and resources.	3.5	Agree / High Implementation	<b>Theme 1: Sensitivity in Addressing Gender Identity</b> Participant 4: "The challenge is always to remind myself to use the proper pronouns..." Participant 1: "I always ask how do you want me to address you? ... I'd rather use 'they' or whatever you want."	Inclusive content fosters awareness.
I teach different gender identities in sexual health lessons.	3.4	Agree / High Implementation	<b>Theme 2: Personal and Cultural Adjustment of Teachers</b> Participant 9: "As a Christian... I respect them, and I don't impose my beliefs on them." Participant 13: "Need ko po maging sensitive kasi ayoko makaf offend."	Teachers adjust beliefs while respecting identities.
I include sexual orientation diversity in health lessons.	3.3	Agree / High Implementation	<b>Theme 3: Classroom Reactions and Managing Inclusivity</b> Participant 10: "Terms like 'lubrication' can make some students react... I just try to address it professionally." Participant 14: "I encourage students to be fair and remove superiority complex."	Inclusivity needs managing reactions.
I explain diverse friendships and romantic relationships.	3.5	Agree / High Implementation	<b>Theme 4: Navigating Dress Code and Expression Policies</b> Participant 1: "You can see how they dress up, how they fix their face... and that's OK." Participant 9: "Referred a student's request for clothing to SAO."	Diversity links with policies.

I present diverse gender identities and orientations to explain relationship diversity.	3.3	Agree / High Implementation	<b>Theme 5: Behavior Management and Communication Style Differences</b> Participant 6: "Kapag pinagsabihan sila, umiiyak agad... sensitive sila minsan." Participant 7: "Kailangan kausapin sila nang paisa-isa."	Multiple channels foster safety.
I allow varied ways (e.g., anonymous box, online forums) for student questions.	3.4	Agree / High Implementation	<b>Theme 3: Classroom Reactions and Managing Inclusivity (continued)</b> Participant 2: "Open dialogue allows students to vent and teachers to intervene."	Broad content aligns with real diversity.
I include all types of sex, not centering only on penetrative sex.	3.4	Agree / High Implementation	<b>Theme 4: Navigating Dress Code and Expression Policies (adaptation)</b> Participant 15: "Adapted swimming attire policies to accommodate plus-size students."	Broad content aligns with diversity & reform.
I provide HIV/STI prevention content inclusive of LGBTQ experiences.	3.5	Agree / High Implementation	<b>Theme 6: Promoting Fairness Without Overemphasis on Identity</b> Participant 14: "I treat them fairly, avoiding superiority complex." Participant 15: "Balance is important."	Inclusive yet balanced avoids tokenism.
I ensure pregnancy prevention info is relevant for LGBTQ students.	3.5	Agree / High Implementation	<b>Theme 6: Promoting Fairness Without Overemphasis on Identity</b> Participant 15: "Dapat pantay-pantay ang treatment sa lahat ng estudyante, hindi kailangan i-emphasize na iba sila, para hindi magkaroon ng superiority complex o special treatment. Pero syempre, dapat inclusive pa rin ang information na ibinibigay, na relevant sa kanila." –	Relevance confirmed; avoid favoritism.
I include HIV/STI prevention strategies for diverse orientations and identities.	3.6	Agree / High Implementation	<b>Themes 1, 2 &amp; 5 (Synthesis)</b> Teachers personalize strategies while navigating their adjustments and adapting communication styles to diverse students.	Highest mean: strong focus on inclusive prevention.

I describe anatomy and physiology apart from gender (e.g., "body with a penis"). 3.3 Agree / High Implementation

**Theme 1: Sensitivity in Addressing Gender Identity**

Participant 3: "I inform students about terms, use 'Mr./Ms.' but flexible."

Participant 4: "Use preferred pronouns."

Separating anatomy affirms identity.

In table 12, data show high inclusive practice ( $M = 3.3-3.6$ ), especially in teaching LGBTQIA++ perspectives. Implementation required reflection, cultural sensitivity, and balancing beliefs with duties ( $M = 3.5$ ). Teachers adapted language and methods, easing discomfort ( $M = 3.4$ ) through anonymous platforms, though efforts relied on personal labor without institutional support.

#### Meta-Inference

Data convergence shows inclusive curriculum as dynamic and context-sensitive, requiring negotiation, cultural awareness, and adaptable communication. Quantitative results confirm high practice, while qualitative data highlight teachers' behind-the-scenes effort. Challenges arise from balancing inclusion with student reactions, policies, and beliefs, yet these foster nuanced, empathetic strategies. The findings align with Critical Pedagogy (Freire, 1996; Monchinski, n.d.) and Queer Theory, both advocating transformative, inclusive education.

Teachers in this study navigate institutional limits and cultural sensitivities while fostering inclusive discussions on gender and sexuality. Using correct pronouns, flexible dialogue, and safe spaces reflects Freirean dialogic learning, while avoiding gendered language and representing diverse relationships align with Queer Theory's disruption of binaries. Adaptations to norms, like dress codes, show efforts to dismantle rigid structures and validate plurality. These frameworks reveal inclusion as critical practice requiring reflection, adaptability, and cultural awareness. Training and policy must go beyond surface inclusion to empower teachers as transformative, empathetic agents.

#### Teacher Professional Development

**Table 13** Teacher Professional Development

Quantitative (Curriculum and Instruction)	Item Mean	Verbal Interpretation / Descriptive Meaning	Qualitative Sample Statements	Theme & Meta-Inference / Convergent Insight
I enhance my knowledge and skills by attending training and professional development focused on creating inclusive environments where all students, including LGBTQIA++ members, can work and learn together	3.2	Agree / High Implementation	<b>Theme 2: Personal and Cultural Adjustment of Teachers</b> Participants describe their ongoing learning and self-education efforts despite cultural/religious challenges. "Personally, as a Christian, I was taught there are only two sexes, but I respect them and don't impose my beliefs." (Participant 9)	Teachers are actively engaging in professional development, reflecting a willingness to improve inclusivity knowledge and skills despite personal challenges. This aligns with the moderate-high quantitative mean, signaling commitment to learning inclusive pedagogy.
I attend training and professional development focused on creating inclusive environments where all students, including LGBTQIA++ members, can work and learn together	3.0	Disagree / Low Implementation	<b>Theme 1: Sensitivity in Addressing Gender Identity</b> Some teachers find aspects of inclusive language challenging, indicating gaps in training application. "The challenge is always to remind myself to use the proper pronouns..." (Participant 4)	Despite attending some training, the application of skills like using proper pronouns remains inconsistent. This suggests a need to enhance training effectiveness and support ongoing practice to raise implementation levels.

I correct those around me if I hear them using incorrect, outdated, derogatory, or harmful language or terminology	3.4	Agree / High Implementation	<b>Theme 3: Classroom Reactions and Managing Inclusivity</b> Teachers actively manage classroom dynamics to address harmful language and reactions. "I try to address it professionally while keeping the atmosphere light." (Participant 10)	Teachers feel confident and empowered to intervene against harmful language, reflecting the quantitative trend toward high implementation of corrective behavior. This indicates a proactive culture in promoting respectful dialogue.
I advocate for inclusive and affirming materials in all school and classroom environments to support all students, including LGBTQIA++ members	3.5	Agree / High Implementation	<b>Theme 4: Navigating Dress Code and Expression Policies</b> Participants advocate and adapt materials and policies to affirm diverse identities. "Dati swimming, dapat naka-bathing suit, pero since plus size nahihiya, ginawa na namin na sila magdadala ng swimming attire." (Participant 15)	Teachers' advocacy is reflected in efforts to adapt school policies and instructional materials, showing alignment between self-reported high implementation and qualitative evidence of practical accommodation strategies.
<b>Overall Mean</b>	<b>3.3</b>	<b>Agree / High Implementation</b>	Integrated themes: sensitivity to gender identity, personal adjustments, classroom management, dress code navigation, communication style adaptation, fairness balance	Overall, quantitative data indicates a generally positive implementation of professional development related to LGBTQIA+ inclusivity, while qualitative data contextualizes this with nuances: personal struggles, ongoing learning, and practical strategies teachers employ. Together, they illustrate a developing but committed inclusive learning environment.

In table 13, data show strong LGBTQIA++ professional development ( $M = 3.2$ ), though cultural tensions persist. Lower training scores ( $M = 3.0$ ) reveal attendance alone is insufficient, requiring practice-based support. Growing confidence in addressing language ( $M = 3.4$ ) and advocating materials ( $M = 3.5$ ) reflects teacher agency and empathy. Meta-Inference

Findings show inclusive pedagogy is ongoing, contextual labor, not a static skill. Quantitative data confirm moderate-high practice, while qualitative insights reveal continuous emotional and ethical work. Teachers negotiate beliefs, policies, norms, and student needs, with challenges driving reflection, strategy, advocacy, and sustained learning. Becoming an inclusive educator is iterative and reflective, requiring context-based development. Data show growth amid cultural tensions: training attendance ( $M = 3.2$ ) supports adjustment, though practice gaps remain ( $M = 3.0$ ). Teachers negotiate beliefs while upholding equity, as seen in struggles with pronouns and ethical reflection. This reflects Freire's conscientização and the call to move beyond theory toward enacted change.

Queer theory complements critical pedagogy by challenging gender and sexuality norms, urging teachers to unlearn binaries (Walters, 2011). Highest scores came from advocating inclusive materials ( $M = 3.5$ , Theme 4) and correcting harmful language ( $M = 3.4$ , Theme 3), exemplified by Participants 15 and 10. Inclusive pedagogy is ongoing, situated, and value-laden, with teachers as critical agents of transformation. Policy and training should move beyond awareness toward skills-based, reflective, and context-responsive practice, aligning with critical pedagogy's resistance to domination and queer theory's challenge to normative constraints.

6. Based on the findings, what Queer Inclusive Pedagogy Microcredential Seminar Program may be proposed?

#### **Proposed Microcredential Seminar Program**

Title: Queer-Inclusive Teaching in Diverse Classrooms: Strengthening Pedagogy through Quantitative Insights and Lived Realities

Program Description:

A microcredential program that empowers educators to create inclusive environments for queer students through research-based strategies, critical reflection, and practical application. It supports equity-focused teaching, encourages advocacy, and fosters institutional change.

Objective:

By the end of the seminar, participants will:

1. Show awareness and sensitivity to queer identities.
2. Design inclusive, diverse learning environments.
3. Develop inclusive curriculum and teaching strategies.
4. Apply respectful communication and classroom management.
5. Create context-based inclusive action plans.
6. Reflect on teaching practices and promoting equity.

Description of Credentialing:

Participants completing all sessions and submitting an Inclusive Teaching Portfolio will earn a Microcredential in Queer-Inclusive Pedagogy, certifying competence in SOGIESC-aligned inclusive practices.

Delivery Mode: Face-to-face seminar or workshop

Target Participants: Basic and Higher Education Faculty Members

**Table 14** Program Flow

Content Focus	Quantitative Variable	Qualitative Theme(s)	Activity/Output
<b>Introduction to Inclusive Pedagogy</b>	(general orientation)	<b>Theme 1:</b> Sensitivity in Addressing Gender Identity	Reflect on bias, inventory teaching practices, group discussion
<b>Learning Environment and Cultural Dynamics</b>	Learning Environment	<b>Theme 2:</b> Personal and Cultural Adjustment of Teachers	Case study, design classroom norms, share experiences
<b>Curriculum and Inclusive Instructional Design</b>	Curriculum and Instruction	<b>Theme 3:</b> Classroom Reactions and Managing Inclusivity <b>Theme 4:</b> Navigating Dress Code and Expression Policies	Workshop: Redesign syllabus, revise policies, peer critique
<b>Communication, Discipline, and Gender Dynamics</b>	Teacher Professional Development	<b>Theme 5:</b> Behavior Management and Communication Differences	Role-play, feedback, inclusive scripts
<b>From Equity to Empowerment: Integration and Application</b>	All variables (integration)	<b>Theme 6:</b> Promoting Fairness Without Overemphasis on Identity	Develop action plan, portfolio, commitment statement

Duration: 8 hours

## CONCLUSION

The study examines a mostly female, mid- to late-career teaching community, diverse in discipline and largely new, with few queer faculty, showing gradual diversity shifts. Guided by critical pedagogy and queer theory, findings reveal entrenched norms limiting inclusivity. Veteran educators may lead change, yet queer faculty remain marginalized. Teachers commit to safe classrooms, inclusive language, and queer content, but visual affirmations and deeper queer pedagogy are limited by lack of institutional support. Female teachers engage more, highlighting reflective practice. Challenges include gender sensitivity, cultural adaptation, student reactions, dress codes, and equitable management. Effective queer-inclusive education needs coordinated efforts, professional development, and institutional reforms to normalize queerness and support equity.

## RECOMMENDATION

Queer-inclusive education needs coordinated stakeholder action. Teachers require ongoing, context-sensitive professional development addressing competence, confidence, and emotional-cultural demands. Administrators should enforce affirming policies, inclusive signage, and gender-neutral facilities. Partnerships with parents reduce resistance, while policymakers ensure inclusive, classroom-grounded policies with teachers as change agents. Legal advocates and LGBTQ+ organizations safeguard student rights. Teacher training must offer reflective, theory-informed curricula for ethical, emotional, and cultural challenges. Further research should explore intersectional approaches and policy impact.

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