

**GLBTQQIAA (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Transsexual, Queer, Questioning, Intersex, Intergender, Asexual, Ally)
Study Group Report
Submitted by Tina Jacobowitz**

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Our group used the four dimensions of the Agenda for Education in a Democracy as a framework for our suggestions of important topics and issues to be included in a teacher education program (See Appendix A). Several themes emerged as we went through the process of brainstorming within the different categories. These themes are safety, language, identity, history, educating parents and the community and policy. We recognize that it is unlikely that an entire course would be devoted to preparing future teachers to work successfully with GLBT students so we have put together a list of suggestions and resources that can be infused into existing courses. The most likely course that would include these topics is one on diversity, but we believe that our suggestions can be incorporated into a variety of courses in the teacher education program to include courses on literacy, curriculum development and methods.

I. What Are the Major Ideas and Concepts that Future Teachers Need to Know?

A. Safety

1. Future teachers must be made aware of the statistics that show that GLBT students are not safe in schools. They are subjected to harassment and bullying by other students as well as teachers. A good resource for this is the GLSEN Executive Report at:

[http://www.glsen.org/cgi-bin/iowa/all/library/record/2340.html ? state=research&type=research](http://www.glsen.org/cgi-bin/iowa/all/library/record/2340.html?state=research&type=research)

2. Teach students how to be stewards in terms of creating safe places in their schools.

B. Language

Teachers have reported in GLSEN surveys and other research that they are reluctant to bring up sexuality and gender expression, or even to address student comments and questions, because they feel unprepared and ignorant on the topics. Some of this discomfort probably stems from a general unease about talking about sex and the ways that sexuality and gender expression are linked with sex. We can help prospective teachers by giving them educational materials about terminology, identities, social and political issues, and by allowing them a space in which to share their worries with one another in a safe environment. We could also provide them with support within their schools to educate their colleagues and to build support for an inclusive curriculum.

1. Become familiar with the vocabulary and language of GLBT culture, e.g. queer, affectional orientation, gender fluidity, homodiscrimination, intrasex)
2. Become intolerant of anti-GLBT language such as “That’s so gay.”

C. Identity (Special thanks to Darla Linville for writing this section for our report.)

1. Teacher educators, teachers and college faculty should know that children and adolescents make choices about, have desires for, and think about their identities, including their gender expression and sexuality. They have agency within the material limitations presented by their situation. In educational settings we (teachers, caregivers, etc) often imagine children and even adolescents as innocent of sexuality and unaware of the dynamics of gender differences, and assume that if we haven't explicitly told them about gayness, gender expression or sexual feelings that they will not experience or understand them. However children often express sexual ideas and understand limitations of gender, even in very young grades. Teachers resist understanding children's questions and often reinforce gender roles and heteronormative (heterosexual) assumptions in their curriculum and casual interactions. As in other matters, educators should trust that young people have experiences and knowledge about themselves in terms of sexuality and gender expression - and we can learn from them.
2. Preservice teachers need to understand that sexuality (or sexual orientation) and genders are socially constructed categories. In other cultures and in other times peoples have understood genders and sexualities differently and structured sexual and gender

categories in different ways. We in this era and in the Western European tradition (and elsewhere through colonization) understand gender to be binary (masculine and feminine) and to link to specific, mutually exclusive anatomy. In cases where anatomy is not definitive, children have until very recently (1980s?) been assigned a gender through genital surgery. In this country we also understand, and teach children, that heterosexuality is the normal and non-heterosexuality is a deviance that must be tolerated. This categorization of sexuality and gender is fairly recent and there have existed in all eras and cultures people who did not fit within it. If we can teach educators that these categories exist in our society and time, but not in all societies in all times, we can begin to question why they exist and understand how to rethink the values accorded to the categories.

D. History

1. Because current textbooks in history and social studies are unlikely to highlight GLBT history both in terms of its heroes and oppression, it is important that preservice teachers learn this history and ways of incorporating it into their curriculums. There are ample resources on the web that preservice teachers can mine to learn the history. A good place to start is at the GLSEN website:

<http://www.glsen.org/cgi-bin/iowa/all/library/record/1718.html?state=tools&type=educator>

E. Educating Parents and the Community

1. Preservice teachers need to understand that LGBTQ(TQIIAA) students and students with non-traditional families are within our community and, even if we think they are only a small fraction of our communities and schools, they are not expendable. We must teach them. It is a matter of social justice.

F. Policy

1. Future teachers should be aware of existing Safe Schools policies at the local, state and federal levels. (See <http://www.glsen.org/cgi-bin/iowa/all/involved/policy/index.html> for examples of such policies.)
2. Future teachers should be encouraged to contact their elected officials and other policy makers to encourage them to support policies that ensure safe schools for all students.

II. What Pedagogies and Resources Can Teacher Educators Use to Teach these Ideas and Concepts? (See our list of resources in Appendix B for some of the suggestions below.)

- A. View films (Groundspark is a good resource here, e.g. the film Straightlaced)
- B. Read and discuss academic books and journal articles (Some suggestions in resources)
- C. Read children's and adolescent literature to include novels, poetry and biographies (Some suggestions in resources)
- D. Bring in GLBT students to tell their stories
- E. Bring in GLBT members of the community to share their stories
- F. Use the arts (role-playing, music, fine arts)
- G. Have cross-cultural dialogues
- H. Model appropriate practices of respect and civil discussions
- I. GLBT educators should share their personal stories with their students. It is not uncommon for straight teachers to say things like "My wife..." or "My kids..." and GLBT teachers should feel just as comfortable saying "My partner..." or "My kids..."

III. What Can NNER Do to Continue and Move this Work Forward?

- A. Reestablish the Equity Task Force as a permanent committee of the NNER and make the GLBTQQIIAA expert panel and the special education expert panel subcommittees of the Equity Committee. The annual equity reports could then be reviewed by the Equity Committee and these two subgroups would look at those aspects of the reports that apply to them. Co-chairs of the subgroup will be elected by the group.
- B. Continue to have sessions on GLBTQQIIAA concerns
- C. Educate our members so that they can educate their preservice students. We can't assume that teacher educators have the skills, knowledge and dispositions required to accomplish the goals we have set forth above for teacher education programs.
- D. Have speakers, movies, dialogue, panels
- E. Collect work on the policy level that is done to create safe spaces
- F. Make connections with organizations that are already doing this work
- G. Bring and support experts on LGBTQQIIAA to come to NNER.
- H. Make connections between equity committee and other NNER groups as well as the NNER leadership.
- I. Serve as a clearinghouse for resources
- J. Offer sessions and presessions for training
- K. Have bigger/open sessions for dialogue on the program
- L. Have a fair/poster session on LGBTQQIIAA
- M. Walk the walk: NNER leadership is aware of, concerned about, has a commitment to and is an advocate of, LGBTQQIIAA concerns
- N. Provide social spaces for LGBTQQIIAA special interest and caucus groups

Appendix A. Group's Brainstorming Using the Four Moral Dimensions of the Agenda for Education in a Democracy

I. Access to Knowledge

- A. Access to history of LGBTTQQIIAA (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Transsexual, Queer, Questioning, Intersex, Intergender, Asexual, Ally). Our group needs to decide what we want to be called. As of Saturday, we included all of the above, but I can't recall what the second "I" is.
- B. Access to health information for students, teachers, administrators, school personnel in general - so that teachers feel confident talking with students about sexuality and gender identity
- C. Access to gender dialogue
- D. Knowledge of GSA
- E. Resources for educators

II. Nurturing Pedagogy

- A. Language/Learning the language and dialogue with students
- B. Dialogue with students about language and vocabulary (e.g. affectional orientation, gender fluidity, homodiscrimination, intra-sex)
- C. Encouraging educators to model and have good practices of respect for all
- D. Using resources (movies, books, websites, etc.)
- E. Using the arts, e.g. theater, plays, role-playing
- F. Having cross-cultural dialogues
- G. Reaching across disciplines/departments, making connections/Dimensions (I'm not sure what this means)
- H. Advocate for Safe Spaces
- I. Be a visible ally
- J. Educators should share personal stories with students

III. Stewardship

- A. Learning to take low/high risk
- B. Visibility of GSA
- C. Advocate for safe space for all
- D. Do not tolerate bullying and inappropriate language (e.g. That's so gay)
- E. Do not tolerate teachers harassment of students
- F. Take a stand
- G. Social justice and equity (talk the talk, walk the walk)
- H. Educate parents and community members

IV. Democratic Practice

- A. Visibility of language, community and history
- B. Learning the vocabulary
- C. Policy
- D. Access to and dialogue with policy makers to address the concerns of LGBTTTQQIIAA
- E. Educators should share their personal stories
- F. Ensuring a safe space for everyone including students and educators
- G. Teach and promote civil discourse
- H. Teacher ed programs should prepare educators to have the dialogue with others

Appendix B. Suggested Resources

Journal Articles

- A. Blackburn, M. V. (2002). Disrupting the (hetero)normative: Exploring literacy performances and identity work with queer youth. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*, 46(4), 312-324.
- B. Blount, J. M. (2000). Spinsters, bachelors, and other gender transgressors in school employment, 1850-1990. *Review of Educational Research*, 70(1), 83-101.
- C. Diamond, L. M. (2003). New paradigms for research on heterosexual and sexual-minority development. *Journal of Clinical Child and Adolescent Psychology*, 32(4), 490-498.
- D. Fields, J., & Tolman, D. L. (2006). Risky business: Sexuality education and research in U.S. schools. *Sexuality Research and Social Policy*, 3(4), 63-76.
- E. Fine, M., & McClelland, S. I. (2006). Sexuality education and desire: Still missing after all these years. *Harvard Educational Review*, 76(3), 297-338.
- F. Herek, G. M. (2004). Beyond "homophobia": Thinking about sexual prejudice and stigma in the twenty-first century. *Sexuality Research and Social Policy*, 1(2), 6-24.
- H. Kumashiro, K. (2000). Theory of anti-oppressive education. *Review of Educational Research*, 70(1), 25-53.
- I. Loutzenheiser, L. W., & MacIntosh, L. B. (2004). Citizenships, sexualities, and education. *Theory Into Practice*, 43(2), 151-158.
- J. Lugg, C. A. (2006). Thinking about sodomy: Public schools, legal panopticons, and queers. *Educational Policy*, 20(1), 35-58.
- K. Lugg, C. A. (2003). Sissies, Faggots, Lezzies, and Dykes: Gender, Sexual Orientation, and a New Politics of Education? *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 39(1), 95-134.
- L. Lugg, C. A. (2006). Our straight-laced administrators: The law, LGBT administrators, and the assimilationist imperative. *Journal of School Leadership*.
- M. McCready, L. T. (2004). Some challenges facing queer youth programs in urban high schools: Racial segregation and de-normalizing whiteness. *Journal of Gay & Lesbian Issues in Education*, 1(3), 37-51.
- N. Moje, E. B., & MuQaribu, M. (2003). Literacy and sexual identity. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*, 47(3), 204-208.

- O. Opotow, S. (1990). Moral exclusion and injustice: An introduction. *Journal of Social Issues*, 46(1), 1-20.
- P. Rofes, E. (2000). Bound and gagged: Sexual silences, gender conformity and the gay male teacher. *Sexualities*, 3(4), 439-462.
- Q. Szalacha, L. A. (2004). Educating teachers on LGBTQ issues: A review of research and program evaluations. *Journal of Gay & Lesbian Issues in Education*, 1(4), 67-79.
- S. Tolman, D. L., Striepe, M. I., & Harmon, T. (2003). Gender matters: Constructing a model of adolescent sexual health. *The Journal of Sex Research*, 40(1), 4-12.

Books

- A. Blount, J. M. (2005). *Fit to Teach: Same-sex desire, gender and school work in the twentieth century*. Albany: State University of New York Press.
- B. Chasnoff, Debra and Helen S. Cohen. (2008). *A Message From the Producers. It's Elementary, Talking About Gay Issues in School: A Guide to Community Organizing, Professional Development and K-8 Curriculum*.
- C. Diaz, E. M., & Kosciw, J. G. (2009). *Shared Differences: The experiences of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender students of color in our nation's schools*. New York: GLSEN.
- D. Driver, S. (2007). *Queer girls and popular culture: Reading, resisting and creating media*. New York: Peter Lang.
- E. Education, Masters Paper, NY: CUNY Graduate Center
- F. Epstein, D., & Johnson, R. (1998). *Schooling Sexualities*. Buckingham: Open University Press.
- G. Fausto-Sterling, A. (2000). *Sexing the body : gender politics and the construction of sexuality* (1st ed.). New York, NY: Basic Books.
- H. Fields, J. (2008). *Risky lessons : sex education and social inequality*. New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press.
- A. Gibson, P. (1989). Gay male and lesbian youth suicide. In Report of the Secretary's Task Force on Youth Suicide (Ed.) (Vol. 3): U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.
- B. Irvine, J. M. (2002). *Talk about sex: the battles over sex education in the United States*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- C. Letts, W. J., & Sears, J. T. (1999). *Queering elementary education : advancing the dialogue about sexualities and schooling*. Lanham, Md.: Rowman & Littlefield.
- D. Linville, D., Walsh, C., & Carlson, D. L. (2009). Queered standards: Living and working for peace and justice. In J. Andrzejewski (Ed.), *Social Justice, Peace, and Environmental Education: Transformative Standards*. New York: Routledge.
- E. Lipkin, Arthur. (2002). The Challenges of Gay Topics in Teacher Education: Politics, Content, and Pedagogy. *Getting Ready for Benjamin: Preparing Teachers for Sexual Diversity in the Classroom* (Rita Kissen, Ed.). New York: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.
- F. Miceli, M. (2005). *Standing out, standing together: The social and political impact of gay-straight alliances*. New York: Routledge.

- G. Pascoe, C. J. (2007). *Dude, you're a fag: Masculinity and sexuality in high school*. Berkeley: University of California.
- H. Russo, Kristin (2009). *Seeing the Invisible: Uprooting Heterosexism in Teacher*
- I. Savin-Williams, R. C. (2005). *The new gay teenager*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- J. Villegas, Ana Maria, and Tamara Lucas. (2002). *Educating Culturally Responsive Teachers*. New York: State University of New York Press.

Organizations

- A. Groundspark - movies and resource guides
- B. Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network (GLSEN)
- C. Gay Straight Alliance Network

Books for students

- A. And Tango Makes Three
- B. Asha's Two Mommies
- C. Getting Ready for Ben
- D. Luna

Books for Educators

- A. Gay Parents, Straight Schools
- B. Portraits of families

Websites

- A. <http://www.sexetc.org/>
- B. <http://www.lambdalegal.org/take-action/toolkits/gettingdown-to-basics/lgbtq-youth-resources.html>
- C. http://www.safeschoolscoalition.org/RGgibt_youth_of_color.html
- D. <http://www.plannedparenthood.org/resources/implementing-sex-education-23516.htm>
- E. http://www.safeschoolscoalition.org/RG-teachers_elementary.html
- F. <http://ric.libguides.com/content.php?pid=60800&sid=447393>
- G. http://www.ltscotland.org.uk/resources/d/genericresource_tcm4512285.asp
- H. <http://www.sexedlibrary.com/>
- I. <http://www.communityactionkit.org/>

Legislation

- A. Equality California. (2006). Equality California-Sponsored Legislation: SB 1437: Bias-Free Curriculum Act. Retrieved August 28, 2007, from <http://www.eqca.org/site/apps/nl/content2.asp?c=9oINKWMCF&b=1352277&ct=2120323>