Exploring Educational Equity for GLBT Students and Teachers

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Purpose
This article addresses GLBT (gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender) issues relevant for Grades K-12 as well as teacher education programs. Highlighted are issues and concerns that GLBT students and teachers face in school and society.

The Article
Many facts about GLBT students point to the fact that the educational community must attend to GLBT issues. A recent study revealed that almost one half of GLBT secondary students from the study reported to have been bullied and over one third had been sexually harassed. Educational practitioners have the ability to improve conditions for all students with a thorough examination of belief systems. Self-discovery allows space for teachers and students alike to move forward in an honest and compassionate manner. Second, educators should advocate for working gently with people by unobtrusively positioning them to rethink their beliefs and perspectives. Third, lighthearted humor allows for optimistic observation of belief systems and allows for dialogue. Finally, all parties should be encouraged to use a gentle approach with ourselves. As we strive to move toward enacting an antibias, antidiscrimination curriculum in our classrooms, we will undoubtedly have successes and shortcomings.

What this Means for the Field
Although U.S. educators have made important strides pertaining to issues of racial, cultural, and linguistic diversity over the past few decades, GLBT issues continue to be largely overlooked and underaddressed in K-12 school settings. GLBT issues also receive little attention in preservice and in-service teacher education programs. The subject understudy believes that a vital goal for all educators should be to embrace a more just, caring educational and societal experience for everyone, regardless of sexual preference.

Citation

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