

Are Tomorrow's Teachers Ready To Deal with Diverse Students? Teacher Candidates' Attitudes toward Gay Men and Lesbians

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Introduction

The purpose of pre-service teacher education programs is to provide future teachers with the necessary skills and tools to be effective educators. In addition to providing students with pedagogical methodologies, these programs should prepare students to work with various and diverse populations and give them the ability to acknowledge and address issues of social and educational inequities within their schools and classrooms (Clark & Digby, 1999). Many pre-service teacher preparation programs address some of these concerns, such as racial and ethnic issues (Wardle, 2000), linguistic diversity and economic status (Commins & Miramontes, 2006), but few have confronted issues dealing with sexual minorities (Mathison, 1998). The purpose of this study was to conduct an exploratory assessment of pre-service educators' attitudes toward gay men and lesbians. As there are no

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studies examining teacher candidates' attitudes towards gay men and lesbians, this project fills a gap in the literature. By examining the attitudes of teacher candidates on sexuality issues, teacher preparation programs can better address such issues and thus positively influence future teacher-student interactions.

Studies have shown that lesbian, gay, and bisexual (LGB) youth are more susceptible to certain health risks, such as victimization (Bontempo & D'Augelli, 2002; DuRant, Krowchuk, & Senal, 1998) and mental health problems (Hershberger & D'Augelli, 1995), and more likely to engage in health risk behaviors, such as substance abuse and sexual risk-taking (Bontempo & D'Augelli, 2002; DuRant, et al., 1998; Garofalo, Wolf, Kessel, Palfrey, & DuRant, 1998; Hershberger & D'Augelli, 1995; Rosario, Hunter, & Gwadz, 1997; Rotherum-Borus, Rosario, Van Rossem, Reid, & Gillis, 1995). Regarding LGB youth, one of the most severe health concerns is the possibility of suicide attempts and suicide completions. Some studies and reviews of previous research have concluded that this population is at greater risk for suicide than their heterosexual peers (Halpert, 2002; Kulkin, Chauvin, & Perle, 2000; McDaniel, Purcell, & D'Augelli, 2001); however, the degree to which LGB youth are at risk or whether they are at a greater risk compared to others is currently being debated as other studies suggest that only a minority of LGB youth are at-risk for suicide (Savin-Williams & Ream, 2003).

Whether LGB youth are at greater risk for suicide or not, understanding and decreasing health risks of youth is critical. For LGB youth, their sexual orientation itself does not put them at greater risk for these health-related concerns, but the environmental responses to their sexual orientation at home, at school, and in their neighborhoods are the factors that actually increase their risk (Bontempo, & D'Augelli, 2002; Garofalo, et al., 1998; Remafedi, French, Story, Resnick, & Blum, 1998; Savin-Williams & Ream, 2003). For example, LGB youth may experience discrimination and possibly violence from teachers, peers, and others in their communities based on perceptions of their sexual orientation or if they were to reveal their sexual orientation to others; less directly, they may hear disparaging and negative comments made about LGB individuals that could result in depression and negative risk-taking behaviors.

While all environments have an impact, understanding the school environment where students spend eight or more hours a day and interact most frequently with their peers is critical. In their recent publication on school climate, the Gay, Lesbian, Straight, Education Network (GLSEN) (Kosciw & Diaz, 2006) noted that 64% of sexual minority youth report feeling unsafe at their school. Likewise, sexual minority students were five times more likely to skip school in the last month because of safety concerns than the general student population. This lack of safety is related to direct experiences. Because of their sexual orientation, 64% of surveyed youth reported being verbally harassed (name-calling, threats) at school, and again because of their sexual orientation, over one-third of these students experienced physical harassment at school and 17.6% had been physically assaulted.

In addition to direct experiences, the overall climate is negative; 75.4% of students heard derogatory remarks such as “faggot” or “dyke” frequently or often at school, and 89.2% reported hearing “that’s so gay” or “you’re so gay” frequently or often (Kosciw & Diaz, 2006).

While peer interactions are obvious influences in the school experience of LGB youth, the impact of teachers is also critical. Of youth who had heard homophobic remarks in school, 83% of students reported that faculty or staff never intervened or only intervened some of the time in these situations (Kosciw, 2004). Likewise only 43.8% of students who reported incidents of victimization to school staff said that the steps taken by school authorities to address the situation were effective (Kosciw & Diaz, 2006). Similarly, for bisexual youth, their feelings about their teachers—getting along with teachers, believing that the teachers cared about the student and that the teachers treated students fairly—was the strongest predictor for not experiencing trouble in school (paying attention, completing homework and getting along with other students) (Russell, Seif, & Truong, 2001). As positive feelings toward teachers can affect the high school experience, it can also affect future plans; the identification of supportive teachers by LGB youth increases the youth’s intent to attend college (Kosciw, 2004). While a specific prevalence rate of gay, lesbian and bisexual youth is difficult to determine, national research shows that approximately 4.1% of individuals identify as LGB and an additional 3.8% of individuals identify as “something else” [not heterosexual, lesbian, gay, or bisexual (Mosher, Chandra, & Jones, 2005)]. Given these rates, the typical 25 student class would have approximately 1 student who identifies as lesbian, gay or bisexual, and one student who identifies as “something else.” In addition, some individuals may not self-identify as lesbian, gay or bisexual, but engage in same sex behaviors. For adults, about 6% of males have had same-sex sexual experiences and 11.2% of women have had same-sex sexual experiences regardless of their self-identified orientation (Mosher, Chandra, & Jones, 2005); national rates of those youth who may engage in same-sex behaviors but do not identify is not known.

In addition to considering the overall school environment, specific examination of educators’ attitudes and behaviors toward gay men and lesbians is important. Other characteristics of the educators may be affecting these attitudes and beliefs. Gregory Herek, who created the attitudes scale used in this study, has found that people’s attitudes are more negative towards gay men than towards lesbians and that heterosexual men tend to exhibit greater homophobic attitudes and behaviors than do heterosexual women (Herek, 1994; Herek, 2002). Similar research indicates that heterosexual men frequently use “fag” and “queer” as put downs for one another and that anti-homosexual prejudice was predictive of anti-gay behaviors (Burn, 2000).

In a study on the importance of ethnicity and religion in predicting attitudes towards lesbians and gay men, Schulte and Battle (2004) found that there was a difference between ethnicities but that difference disappeared when religion was removed. Their conclusion that homophobic attitudes were not necessarily a function of ethnicity so

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much as a function of religiosity is also supported by Negy & Eisenman's (2005) findings. Irregardless of ethnic identification, religious affiliation, and other characteristics, the main issue is whether or not individuals who are more homophobic bring anti-homosexual attitudes and behaviors into the school setting.

From the GLSEN reports (Kosciw, 2004; Kosciw & Diaz, 2006), one may presume individuals do bring such attitudes into the classroom; however the GLSEN studies do not examine teachers but the perceived school environment by LGB youth. This study seeks to provide a different perspective of school climate by examining the attitude of teacher candidates' towards gay men and lesbians. Evidence suggests teacher candidates are not being trained to meet the needs of LGB youth (Mathison, 1998). For those that have received training, some have found the topic irrelevant, with many respondents assuming a "compulsory heterosexuality" in the schools, and pathologizing lesbian and gay identities (Robinson & Ferfolja, 2001). However, other studies demonstrate that if such training were included in preparation programs, it may, in fact, improve teachers' knowledge and awareness about the concerns of LGB individuals. For example, teacher candidates who demonstrated a lack of knowledge about LGB youth and were provided instruction about these issues felt a strong appreciation for the new knowledge (Athanases & Larabee, 2003). Additionally, while some teacher candidates voiced concerns about the topic due to religious beliefs and others expressed concerns about classroom applicability, the majority felt that they had a greater appreciation for the challenges facing LGB youth and reported plans to advocate for those students in their schools (Athanases & Larabee, 2003). Likewise, teachers who participated in an HIV/AIDS training program were more likely to teach about homosexuality and refer LGB youth to community services (Remafedi, 1993). These results indicate that a better understanding of teacher candidates' attitudes toward gay men and lesbians can help inform and structure programs that will be most effective.

In a similar vein, DeJean (2004) describes the experiences of sexual minority teachers whom have come out in their classrooms. Within this study sexual minority teachers that have decided to no longer keep their sexual orientation a secret cite several reasons: the need to stop hiding; the attempt to end homophobia that is often embedded in schools; and most commonly, the desire to support LGB youth by serving as a positive role model. Moreover, teachers whom have experienced sexual orientation discrimination report an understanding of the need to include intrapersonal and interpersonal skill development within the classroom setting (DeJean, 2004).

Research Questions

To better understand the school climate, teacher candidates were asked about their attitudes towards gay men and lesbians. This study is a unique contribution to the literature as it does not replicate previous research and provides valuable

information about pre-service educators during their training. This study specifically examines five research questions:

- (1) What are the attitudes of teacher candidates towards gay men and lesbians?
- (2) Does gender affect attitudes towards gay men and lesbians of teacher candidates?
- (3) Does ethnicity affect attitudes towards gay men and lesbians of teacher candidates?
- (4) Does the sexuality education philosophy of a teacher candidate affect his/her attitudes towards gay men and lesbians?
- (5) Does the perceived sexuality education level of a teacher candidate affect his/her attitudes towards gay men and lesbians?

Methods

Participants

Students from two Central/South Texas universities enrolled in a child and adolescent development course required for teacher candidates completed a 147-item survey about their training, education and attitudes related to sexuality issues. From this larger study of 485 participants, 334 identified themselves as teacher candidates and also completed a 10-item questionnaire related to attitudes about gay and lesbian individuals. Most participants were female (83.5%; n=278) with 16.5% (n=55) being male; one participant did not identify a gender. The majority were White, non-Hispanic (56.6%, n=189); however, over one-fourth were Hispanic/Latino/a (25.1%; n=84). Seven and a half percent identified as Asian/Pacific Islander (n=5); 4.2% (n=14) identified as African American and 6.6% (n=22) identified as "Other" or did not list an ethnicity.

Regarding classification, 51.5% (n=172) identified themselves as juniors and 28.7% (n=96) as seniors. First- and second-year teacher candidates made up less than 20% of the participant group with 7.2% (n=24) freshmen and 11.7% (n=39) sophomores. Three individuals (0.9%) indicated that they were graduate students.

Procedure

Prior to data collection, Human Subjects Institutional Review Board approval was obtained. At the beginning of a child and adolescent development course, participants were solicited to complete the 147-item questionnaire examining teacher candidates' knowledge, attitudes, and beliefs regarding general sexuality education concepts (i.e. HIV transmission knowledge, effectiveness of abstinence-only and comprehensive sexuality education programs, etc.); the age-appropriateness of various sexuality

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education topics (i.e., anatomy, peer pressure, condoms, masturbation, homosexuality, abstinence, communication skills, etc); and the level of confidence in addressing the various sexuality education topics as listed above. Participants signed consent forms and were informed that they could discontinue participation at any time and/or omit any item on the questionnaire without penalty. This process began during the spring semester of 2004 and was repeated during the summer 2004, fall 2004, and spring 2005 semesters. A coded questionnaire was developed and the data from each questionnaire were coded accordingly and entered by hand using the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS). The data were analyzed to include the alpha coefficient (internal reliability estimate), descriptive statistics, and analysis of variance.

Instrumentation

The comprehensive survey included 147 items. The short version of the Attitudes Toward Lesbian and Gay Men (ATLG-S) Scale (Herek, 1984) in combination with five self-reported demographic questions were used to examine these teacher candidates' attitudes towards lesbians and gay men. The other items were not relevant for this study.

The ATLG-S Scale is a brief 10-item scale that measures one's attitudes toward lesbians and gay men. Individuals respond to items on 5-point Likert scale from strongly agree to strongly disagree with "strongly agree" coded as 1 and "strongly disagree" as 5. Six items needed to be reverse coded before computing scores for each scale. Adding the scores for each of the items determines the individual's score on the total scale, so individuals with lower scores reported more positive attitudes towards gays and lesbians. The survey has two subscales of 5 items each; one assessing attitudes toward gay males (ATG-S5) and one assessing attitudes toward lesbians (ATL-S5). The original scale has demonstrated high test-retest reliability after a three-week period (Herek, 1988, 1994) and this shorter scale and its subscales are highly correlated with its longer original counterpart [$r=.97$ for ATLG-S with ATLG, $r=.96$ for ATG-S5 with ATG, and $r=.95$ for ATL-S5 with ATL (Herek, 1988)]. For this administration, the alpha coefficient for the entire scale was .91. For the ATG-S5, the alpha coefficient was .87 and for the ATL-S5, the alpha coefficient was .77. Three demographic questions included year in school, gender, and ethnicity. Two additional demographic items were included. One item addressed sexuality education philosophy (Item read: "Regarding the topic of sexuality education, do you regard yourself as liberal, moderate or conservative?"), and another item asked about perceived level of knowledge (Item read: "In the area of sexuality education, would you describe yourself as well informed and educated, moderately informed and educated, or poorly informed and educated?").

Results

Overall, the participants indicated an uncertain attitude toward gay and lesbian

individuals. The mean score for the ATLG-S was 24.56 (SD=9.39) and the median was 24.0 with a possible range from 10 to 50. For the subscales, similar mid-range results were found, though the attitude toward gay males was slightly more negative. For the subscales, the possible score ranged from 5 to 25. For the ATL-S5, the mean was 11.90 (SD=4.45) and the median was 11.0. For the ATG-S5, the mean was 12.67 (SD=5.35) with a median of 12.0. Descriptive statistics for each of the ten items were examined; frequencies and means are reported in Table I.

Overall, the group considered themselves as moderates about the issue of sexuality education (46.7%, n=156). Almost one-third (29.0%, n=97) considered themselves liberal on the issue and about a quarter (23.4%, n=78) considered themselves conservative. Three participants did not respond to this question. Similarly, most of the group considered themselves moderately informed and educated about sexuality issues (69.2%, n=231) with 12.8% (n=42) reporting that they are well

Table I. Responses to the items on the ATLG-S Scale.**

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Uncertain	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Mean
1. Lesbians just can't fit into our society.*	2.4% (8)	4.8% (16)	10.8% (36)	41.6% (139)	40.4% (135)	4.13
2. State laws against private sexual behavior between consenting adult women should be abolished.	24.6% (82)	17.4% (58)	29.9% (100)	15.3% (51)	12.9% (43)	2.75
3. Female homosexuality is a sin.*	16.5% (55)	18.3% (61)	15.9% (53)	22.8% (76)	26.6% (89)	3.25
4. Female homosexuality in itself is no problem unless society makes it a problem.	23.4% (78)	29.0% (97)	18.6% (62)	19.2% (64)	9.9% (33)	2.63
5. Lesbians are sick.*	3.6% (12)	5.7% (19)	11.4% (38)	35.3% (118)	44.0% (147)	4.10
6. I think male homosexuals are disgusting.*	6.6% (22)	9.6% (32)	12.0% (40)	30.8% (103)	41.0% (137)	3.90
7. Male homosexuality is a perversion.*	8.4% (28)	12.9% (43)	21.3% (71)	24.0% (80)	33.5% (112)	3.61
8. Male homosexuality is a natural expression of sexuality in men.	15.6% (52)	21.0% (70)	30.8% (103)	17.7% (59)	15.0% (50)	2.96
9. Sex between men is just plain wrong.*	16.2% (54)	16.5% (55)	16.8% (56)	22.5% (75)	28.1% (94)	3.30
10. Male homosexuality is merely a different kind of lifestyle that should not be condemned.	29.0% (97)	26.0% (87)	19.8% (66)	13.5% (45)	11.7% (39)	2.53

* These items were reverse coded for the scale.

** Items 1-5 represent the ATL-S5 subscale. Items 6-10 represent the ATG-S5 subscale.

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informed and educated and 16.2% (n=54) reporting that they are poorly informed and educated. Seven individuals did not respond to this question.

In order to answer the research questions, analysis of variance (ANOVA) procedures were conducted to determine differences in the subscales and total scale related to gender, ethnicity, sexuality education philosophy and perceived level of knowledge. Multivariate normality was assumed for each of the variables. In addition, for all independent variables, the Levene's tests of homogeneity of variance were not significant; therefore, the null hypothesis that the groups have equal variances was accepted. Some of the response categories for independent variables were collapsed in order to create more equal sample sizes. However, because gender could not be collapsed and had unequal sample sizes, the Brown & Forsythe's F test of equality of means test was performed instead of a t-test or univariate ANOVA. This test is appropriate for samples that do not have equal sizes (Garson, 2005).

Using the Brown & Forsythe's F test of equality of means there were no significant differences between genders for the total ATLG-S and the ATL-S5. There was a significant difference regarding gender for the ATG-S5 scale with males having a more negative attitude toward gay males ($F=5.22$, $df=1$, $p<.05$).

To achieve more equal group sizes when examining ethnicity, participants were collapsed into three groups: White, Hispanic and Other (which included Asian and African American). There were no significant differences between the three ethnicities on the ATLG-S or the two subscales, ATL-S5 and ATG-S5.

Regarding self-reported sexuality education philosophy, ANOVA revealed significant differences on all three scales (ATL-S5, ATG-S5 and ATLG-S). For the attitudes toward lesbian scale, individuals who identified themselves as liberal had a lower mean ($M=9.08$, $SD=3.48$), compared to those who were moderate ($M=12.12$, $SD=3.89$) and conservative ($M=15.64$, $SD=4.13$). Similar differences existed when comparing the ATG-S5 with liberals again having a lower mean ($M=9.14$, $SD=4.22$) then moderates ($M=13.02$, $SD=4.77$) and conservatives ($M=17.18$, $SD=4.50$). For the total scale, ATLG-S, liberals also had a significantly lower mean with 18.22 ($SD=7.16$) versus those identifying as moderate ($M=25.13$, $SD=8.18$) and conservative ($M=32.82$, $SD=8.24$). Post-hoc analyses using Tukey's HSD were conducted and showed significant differences between all three groups (liberal, moderate and conservative) for all three scales; these results are presented in Tables II and III.

Individuals who responded differently regarding perceived level of education did not differ significantly on the ATLG-S and the ATG-S5 scales. However, there was a significant difference on the ATL-S5. Post-hoc analysis (Tukey's HSD) revealed that those who identified themselves as "well informed and educated" on sexuality issues had significantly more positive attitudes toward lesbians (mean difference=-2.23, 95% Confidence Interval=-4.36 and -.09, $p<.05$) than those who indicated that they were "poorly informed and educated" on sexuality issues.

Table II.
ANOVA for Differences between Political Sexuality Education Philosophy.

		df	Mean Square	F
ATL-S5	Between Groups	2	1395.41	123.45*
	Within Groups	328	11.30	
ATG-S5	Between Groups	2	2051.49	128.28*
	Within Groups	328	15.99	
ATLG-S	Between Groups	2	6830.43	147.40*
	Within Groups	328	46.34	

* p < .001

Table III.
Tukey HSD Post-Hoc Analyses for Sexuality Education Philosophy.

			Mean Difference	Standard Error	95% Confidence Interval	
ATL – S5	liberal	moderate	-3.36*	.43	-4.39	-2.34
		conservative	-8.03*	.51	-9.23	-6.83
	moderate	liberal	3.36*	.43	2.34	4.39
		conservative	-4.67*	.47	-5.75	-3.57
ATG- S5	liberal	moderate	4.18*	.52	-5.40	-2.96
		conservative	-9.74*	.61	-11.17	-8.31
	moderate	liberal	4.18*	.52	2.96	5.40
		conservative	-5.56*	.55	-6.86	-4.25
ATLG – S	liberal	moderate	-7.54*	.88	-9.62	-5.47
		conservative	-17.77*	1.04	-20.21	-15.33
	moderate	liberal	7.54*	.89	5.47	9.61
		conservative	-10.22*	.94	-12.45	-8.00

* p < .001

Discussion

The overall moderate attitudes toward gay males and lesbians are indicative of the need for more training in this area in order to create a more positive and safe environment for LGB students. Some may argue that moderate attitudes are a step forward from previous eras with a strong negative attitude toward homosexuality. While the researchers are encouraged by the moderate attitudes expressed by teacher candidates in this study, the data also indicate that much work remains to ensure that teacher candidates understand the issues of LGB youth (Mathison, 1998). The role of the teacher is pivotal to enhancing successful school experiences among sexual minority students (Kosciw, 2004; Kosciw & Diaz, 2006; Russell, Seif, & Truong, 2001). Likewise, with lesbian, gay, and bisexual youth being more susceptible to

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various health risks, it is essential that school personnel address environmental responses and internal biases that are targeted to sexual minority students. Bullying and harassment of gay, lesbian, and bisexual students are serious problems in the public school setting. Approximately one-third of Texas youth report that students are bullied, harassed, and called derogatory names because they are perceived to be gay (Harris Interactive & GLSEN, 2005).

This study's findings that individuals had a more negative attitude toward gay males than lesbians is consistent with Herek's (1994; 2002) previous research. Likewise, as Herek's (1994; 2002) research suggests that heterosexual females exhibit fewer homophobic attitudes than heterosexual males; the overall mid-range results for the ATLG-S scale and ATG-S5 and ATL-S5 subscales should not be surprising with 83.5% of the sample being female. This finding suggests that values clarification and additional information and education about the issues of gay males are warranted.

Moreover, this study found no significant differences in attitude toward LGB between the various ethnic groups, which is consistent with previous work (Negy & Eisenman, 2005; Schulte & Battle, 2004) though these studies found that ethnic differences in predicting attitudes toward gay and lesbian individuals were a function of religion rather than ethnicity itself. Since ethnicity was never identified as a difference in this study, other factors, such as the need to collapse some ethnic groups due to small sample sizes, may have affected these results.

Significant differences between individuals characterizing themselves as conservative, moderate, or liberal with regard to sexuality education was an interesting finding. While not a surprising result, follow-up studies that may include quantitative as well as qualitative methods could examine differences in how these future educators will create a positive, supportive, and safe environment for all students.

Individuals who responded that their perceived level of sexuality knowledge was high have more positive attitudes toward lesbians. However, this positive attitude did not extend to gay males. While education is not a "cure-all" for issues related to negative attitudes towards gay men and lesbians, increased awareness and exposure may improve this attitude and the interaction with youth as previous research suggests (Athanases & Larabee, 2003; Remafedi, 1993).

There were several limitations of this study. The scale and subscales are originally designed to assess the attitudes of heterosexuals toward gay men and lesbians; however, this study did not assess the sexual orientation of the participants. The experiences of sexual minority teachers greatly influence his/her attitudes and supportive interactions with LGB students (DeJean, 2004). Some of the participants most likely identify as a sexual minority, and their attitudes are probably positive toward gay men and lesbians which may have skewed the overall results.

Another limitation is that this study did not assess what, if any, religious affiliation and/or beliefs of the participants. While a separate construct, this variable most likely influenced the participants' response about sexuality education philosophy.

Likewise, this scale does not address attitudes towards bisexual or transgender individuals. Research suggests that bisexual individuals are discriminated from both the heterosexual and homosexual communities (Ochs, 1996) and transgender students have specific suggestions for improvement in schools that differ from other sexual minorities (Sausa, 2005). Future research needs to include pre-service educators' attitudes towards both of these sexual minorities.

While the participants were allowed to omit any item on the instrument and/or not complete the survey without penalty, participants may have responded to the items in a socially desirable manner, which may have biased the results. Additional follow-up studies after these participants had entered the classroom setting would also provide insight into how the teaching experience and interacting with LGB youth may affect their attitudes.

Implications

The results of this study indicate that teacher preparation is needed on all sexuality issues, particularly issues specific to homosexuality and sexual minority students to better ensure a greater appreciation for the challenges that lesbian, gay, and bisexual youth face. Therefore, it is suggested that teacher candidates be encouraged to take a sexuality education course to increase one's knowledge of the various sexual health issues facing today's youth. While some of the issues facing LGB youth may be included in a multicultural or diversity course, sexual orientation and related issues are often included at the discretion of the course instructor. Therefore the completeness of the information will vary greatly.

Moreover, interpersonal and intrapersonal violence prevention programs, such as bullying prevention programs and suicide prevention programs, and substance abuse prevention programs should include a focus on issues concerning LGB youth. These prevention programs should include sensitivity training for faculty, staff, and students to increase tolerance of diversity as well as provide opportunities for individuals to engage in pro-social behavior and constructive risk-taking.

Future and current educators must be aware of any prejudices and biases that may exist concerning homosexuality as well as how those biases may emerge in the classroom and school setting (Smith & Drake, 2001). The findings from this research support extending this idea; values clarification strategies should be incorporated into teacher preparation programs to increase future educators' awareness of their potential biases. Awareness of attitudes can help a teacher overcome unconscious or subtle ways they create an unsupportive environment for LGB youth.

For professionals interested in learning more about the issues of sexual minority youth, there are a number of online resources available designed specifically for educators in Table IV. These organizations are committed to increasing awareness about the issues LGB youth face on campus as well as working to ensure that schools are safe for all students. Their websites contain publications, lesson plans,

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Table IV. Educator Resources.

Gay, Lesbian, Straight Education Network www.glsen.org

GLSEN is the leading national organization focused on ensuring safe schools for ALL students. Their website includes resources for educators at www.glsen.org/cgi-bin/iowa/educator/educator/index.html. Included are the following:

Information about GLSEN-sponsored No Name Calling Week www.glsen.org/cgi-bin/iowa/educator/library/record/1921.html

Also at www.nonamecalling.org

The GLSEN Training of Trainer Program for Educators and Community-based Organizations www.glsen.org/cgi-bin/iowa/educator/library/record/1817.html

Educator Library

www.glsen.org/cgi-bin/iowa/educator/library/index.html

Sexuality Information and Education Council of the United States www.siecus.org

SIECUS is a non-profit organization that strives to ensure that all people have access to accurate information, comprehensive education about sexuality and sexual health services. They work to create a world that ensures social justice and sexual rights. They serve as the National School Health Education Clearinghouse Online, part of the SIECUS School Health Project www.siecus.org/school/index.html Included are the following:

Guidelines for Comprehensive Sexuality Education
www.siecus.org/school/sex_ed/guidelines/guide0000.html

Self-Guided Training Modules
www.siecus.org/school/trainingModules/index.html

National Education Association www.nea.org

The NEA is the nation's largest employee organization and is committed to advancing the cause of public education. Their website contains the following resources:

The School Employees Guide to LGBT Issues
www.nea.org/takenote/glbguide06.html

Safe Schools for Everyone
www.nea.org/schoolsafety/glb.html

Parents, Families, & Friends of Lesbians & Gays www.pflag.org

PFLAG provides support for families and friends of GLBT people as well as advocating for equal rights and promoting education efforts. They have a section dedicated to education on their website at www.pflag.org/Programs.programs.0.html This section includes the following:

From Our House to the Schoolhouse
www.pflag.org/From_Our_House_to_the_Schoolhouse.schools.0.html

Straight for Equality
www.pflag.org/Straight_for_Equality.s4e.0.html

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Advocates for Youth www.advocatesforyouth.org

Advocates for Youth list various resources for professionals, including educators, who work with GLBTQ youth at www.advocatesforyouth.org/glbqt.htm.

The Facts: GLBTQ Youth
www.advocatesforyouth.org/publications/factsheet/fsglbt.htm

Tips and Strategies for addressing Harrassment
www.advocatesforyouth.org/publications/frtp/harassment.htm

Tips and Strategies for Creating Inclusive Programs
www.advocatesforyouth.org/publications/frtp/inclusiveprograms.htm

Creating Safe Space for GLBTQ Youth: A Toolkit (includes lesson plans for classroom use)
www.advocatesforyouth.org/publications/safespace/index.htm

The Human Rights Campaign www.hrc.org

The HRC is an advocacy organization that works to promote equal rights for gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender people in family rights, and education, employment. Their website includes a section on schools at www.hrc.org/Template.cfm?Section=Youth_Schools&Template=/TaggedPage/TaggedPageDisplay.cfm&TPLID=26&ContentID=10314 that includes the following:

School Safety
www.hrc.org/Template.cfm?Section=Youth_Schools&CONTENTID=18608&TEMPLATE=/ContentManagement/ContentDisplay.cfm

Books and Videos on School Issues
www.hrc.org/Template.cfm?Section=Youth_Schools&CONTENTID=22346&TEMPLATE=/TaggedPage/TaggedPageDisplay.cfm&TPLID=68

training modules, and community/school action kits that are made available for use in school and community settings.

Future research in this area should examine in greater depth the attitudes and environmental responses of educators and their influence on classroom and school experiences of sexual minority students. Use of qualitative methods could add richness to data that may be collected quantitatively, so mixed methods studies may be especially valuable. Additionally, future studies should examine the attitudes and environmental responses of other school personnel such as counselors, administrators, and support staff with regard to the challenges that LGB youth face and their influence in the school setting. In addition to a more comprehensive understanding of the school environment, further examination of teacher preparation programs is warranted. These projects could determine the extent of how, if at all, teacher preparation programs address the challenges and concerns facing sexual minority students and include an intervention study on pre-post attitudes of pre-service teachers regarding LBG youth to demonstrate the impact of an inclusive pre-service program.

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