



Paula C. Rodríguez Rust, PhD / Sociologist, Diversity Educator

e-mail: [Spectrumdiversity@comcast.net](mailto:Spectrumdiversity@comcast.net) / web site: [www.spectrumdiversity.org](http://www.spectrumdiversity.org) / cell (732) 735-7209  
NJ DOE Professional Development Provider #6555

**Professional Development Workshop  
SEXUAL ORIENTATION AND GENDER DIVERSITY**

- I. Introductory Exercise
- II. Basic Concepts and Background Points
  - a. Terminology: Sex, Gender, Gender Expression, Sexual Orientation; Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual; Transgender, Transsexual, Intersexuality; Homophobia, Heterosexism
  - b. The Heterosexual assumption; what is it, how it manifests, effects on LGBTI.
- III. The Invisibility of Sexual Orientation. Comparison to race. Discussion about the Closet and the stress & distraction from school work that this causes for GLBTI.
- IV. Nature of Stereotypes, Prejudice, and Discrimination
  - a. Cultural categories and the Diversity of Humanity. Comparison to the rainbow, which is a continuum in nature, but divided into color categories by culture.
    - i. Kinsey scale, Klein grid, Bem Sex Role Inventory (BSRI)
  - b. Us vs. Them Thinking
    - i. "We" are individuals; "They" are group
    - ii. Categorical thinking, lack of information, and lack of contact across group boundaries, are the roots of stereotypes.
    - iii. Stereotypes self-perpetuate. Research experiment: Subjects watching video of crime often remember gun in black man's hand, even if it was in white man's hand.
    - iv. What are the stereotypes of lesbians, gay men, and bisexuals?
    - v. Forms of discrimination: intentional, unintended, interpersonal, structural, and socially patterned discrimination. Research experiment: Stranded motorist
- V. Formal Respect vs. Cultural Understanding.
  - a. Civil Respect means common courtesy. Minimal requirement in a civil society. Classroom "Speech rules" promote Civil Respect. Good starting point, but can also stifle necessary discussion if not used carefully.
  - b. True Respect involves understanding others across differences; integration rather than segregation; breaking down us/them thinking; actively working against prejudice and discrimination.
- VI. Statistics about LGBTI Youth in Schools from sources including GLSEN 2005, Seattle Teen Health Survey 1999, Massachusetts Youth Risk Behavior Survey, 1998 & 2001.
  - a. Prevalence of harassment & bullying related to sexual orientation
  - b. Suicidality among LGBTI students
  - c. (Un)willingness of adults to intervene in GLBTI harassment.

(continued on reverse, or page 2)

- VII. Relevant Laws, Policies, and Court Cases
  - a. Criminal Law: Bias Intimidation Act (“hate crimes law,” 2C:16-1)
  - b. Education Law: Anti-bullying Law (18A:37-13 *et seq.*)
  - c. Civil Law: Law Against Discrimination, L.A.D. (10:5-14)
  - d. NJ Memorandum of Agreement between Education and Law Enforcement Officials, Addendum 2: Responding to Hate Crime and Bias-Related Acts.
  - e. *L.W. v. Toms River Regional*
- VIII. The Power of Words: Toward a Deeper Understanding of Respect
  - a. Certain words are clearly offensive. Or are they? Is “queer” offensive? Among LGBTI, it is often a positive word. Should it be prohibited by school speech rules?
  - b. “That’s so Gay” A common phrase. Is it offensive? Why? What to say when students say, “I didn’t mean gay or lesbian people when I said it.”
- IX. Curricular Inclusion.
  - a. How to teach about sexual orientation diversity without teaching about sex.
  - b. Teaching across the curriculum. LGBTI people have a history, a culture, families. What lessons can be taught in Social Studies? In science and math? Alan Turing, Harvey Milk, the Stonewall Rebellion.
- X. Issues of Concern to GLBTI in School and Society.
  - a. Coming out, being out, withstanding prejudice and discrimination
  - b. Finding other LGBTI, and finding supportive heterosexuals
  - c. Bisexuality. Especially important when dealing with youth. Stereotypes include “There is no such thing as bisexuality” (there is); “Bisexuals are attracted to everyone, and are promiscuous.” (Monogamy & celibacy are consistent with bisexuality); “Bisexuality is a transitional identity.” Bisexuality can be an honest, lifelong identity. Lack of recognition for bisexual identity might encourage young people to “prove” their sexuality, thus leading to unhealthy sexual activity.
  - d. Freedom of speech vs. freedom from a hostile environment. ACLU statement.
  - e. Sexual pressure. Sexual activity as a hazing ritual, or as proof of loyalty within friendships. Pressure to engage in heterosexual activity is a longstanding issue in schools; pressure to engage in same-sex activity is a more recently recognized issue.
  - f. Parental and community concerns about sexual orientation diversity education in schools. Addressing concerns, minimizing public relations problems.
  - g. Students with LGBTI parents.
- XI. What Faculty Can Do
  - a. Visible support, e.g., “Safe space” window stickers
  - b. Behavior speaks more loudly than words. LGBTI students constantly assess who is a safe person and who is not. Do you intervene when you hear offensive comments? Do you avoid the heterosexual assumption in your teaching? Is your curriculum LGBTI-inclusive whenever possible?
  - c. Hot spots. What are the “hot spots” in your school for bullying? What are the “hot spots” for LGBTI students? Find out, and improve supervision in these areas.
  - d. Role play interventions
  - e. Resources
    - i. Where to find further information.
    - ii. Where to find curricular materials. GLSEN, COLAGE, Safe Schools Coalition, Lambda Legal.
    - iii. Resources for students; web sites and organizations that provide support to students; keep the list in your desk for the day you have an opportunity to share it with someone who needs it.