

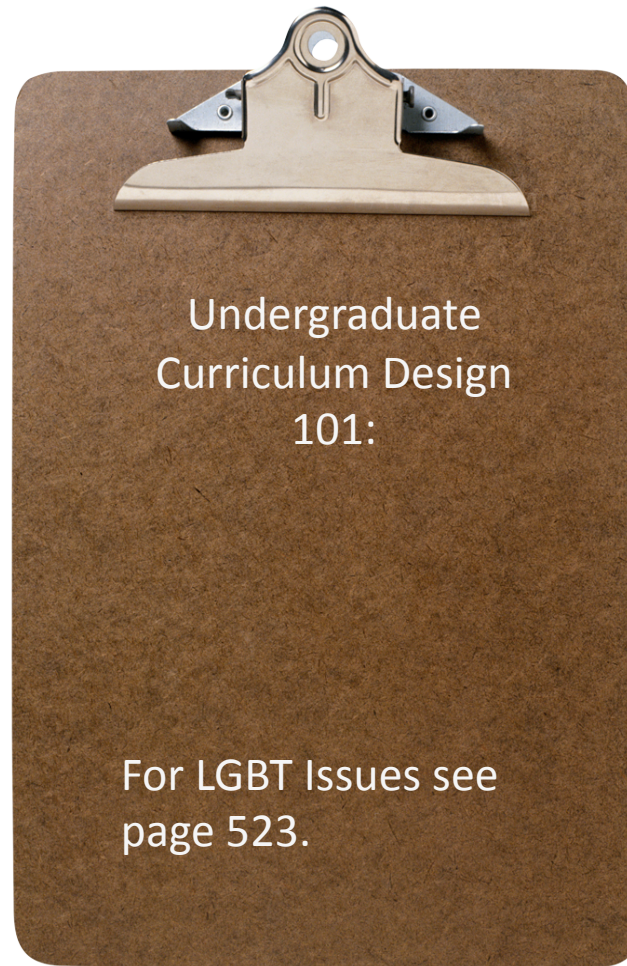
# LGBT Student Learning Experiences and Inclusive Curriculum Design

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[http://farm2.static.flickr.com/1060/1212780554\\_6fdb64c50d\\_b.jpg](http://farm2.static.flickr.com/1060/1212780554_6fdb64c50d_b.jpg)

# Why bother?



Undergraduate  
Curriculum Design  
101:

For LGBT Issues see  
page 523.

# Bother because:

- In Higher Education what we include in our teaching and how we teach are, in many cases, intrinsically linked.
- Together these, along with the personalities in a department, make up the dominant culture.
- If the dominant culture norms LGBT experience as not relevant or wrong – this might impact on student learning outcomes.

# Campus Climate

- Experiences and perceptions of a particular single minority
- Intersecting equality groups' experiences and perceptions



[http://newsimg.bbc.co.uk/media/images/41438000/jpg/\\_41438565\\_racism6.jpg](http://newsimg.bbc.co.uk/media/images/41438000/jpg/_41438565_racism6.jpg)



Gene Robinson's Visit: Protesters, St Mary's Cathedral, Glasgow, August 08

[http://farm4.static.flickr.com/3164/2729170304\\_c250d5de82.jpg?v=0](http://farm4.static.flickr.com/3164/2729170304_c250d5de82.jpg?v=0)

Hurtado, S., Carter, D.F. & Kardia, D. (1998) The Climate for Diversity: Key Issues for Institutional Self-Study, *New Directions for Institutional Research*, 98, pp. 53-63.

- Fears for their physical safety;
- Frequent occurrences of disparaging remarks or jokes regarding sexual orientation;
- Anti-gay graffiti;
- A high degree of inaccurate information and stereotypes reflected in student attitudes;
- Lack of visibility of gay role models or access to supportive services;
- Conflicts in classes regarding the topic of sexual orientation;
- Students' feeling as if they need to censor themselves in classroom environments or academic activities for fear of negative repercussions;
- Lack of integration of sexual orientation into the curriculum.

Where do university curriculum designs fit into this?



- Conflicts in classes regarding the topic of sexual orientation;
- Students' feeling as if they need to censor themselves in classroom environments or academic activities for fear of negative repercussions;
- Lack of integration of sexual orientation into the curriculum.

# Practicalities of H.E. curriculum design

- Individual academic's approaches
- Discipline approaches
- Campus climate and social norms

# Individual Academic's Approaches

## What if?

Deliberate omission of material:

- relating to LGBT perspectives on a subject.
- that portrays LGBT people in a positive light.

Deliberate inclusion of material where LGBT persons are portrayed in a negative light.

# More likely?

- deliberately ignoring matters of sexual orientation when they arise in the classroom;
- not reacting to derogatory remarks made towards staff, students and folk outwith the classrooms;
- behaving differently to those we suspect of being LGBT in orientation.

# Discipline Approaches:

## Possible Hypothesis:

Curricular activities come from dominant norms within wider society that implicitly (and sometimes explicitly) exclude others.

If our curricular activities are representative of the dominant norm, they can leave minority groups invisible and their experience undervalued.

# Hypothesizing LGBT Learning Experience 1

- LGBT identity development is formed through an identifiable sequence. At some stages, particularly the early ones, a sense of shame is heightened, self worth and confidence are lower. Lower self-worth is associated with less resilience and 'sticking the course'.

# Hypothesizing LGBT Learning Experience 2

- For some LGBT students, the challenges of identity development lead them to be more mature in a range of areas of their lives. This leads them to be more tenacious and, for some, to become academic high achievers.

# Hypothesizing LGBT Learning Experience 3

- Both 1 & 2 co-exist. They are not contradictions, but aspects of the non-homogeneity of student experience.





# Something to remember:

- adolescent transitions - especially difficult for male gay youth,
- but once an adult identity is established with adult resources and coping strategies then experience of transitions becomes similar to those observed in the heterosexual community.

**Elizur, Y. & Ziv, M. (2001) Family support and acceptance, gay male identity formation, and psychological adjustment: A path model. *Family Process*, 40: 125-144.**

**Restated uncritically in:**

**Fish, L..S. & Harvey, R.G. (2005) *Nurturing Queer Youth: Family Therapy Transformed*. Norton Press, p. 61.**

## Sounds good, but:

- Is not about lesbian, bi, trans experience;
- Adult resources - not equally distributed - intersect with race, gender, disability, class, religious environment, academic ability and opportunity, & culture;

**= Any interventions to improve learning outcomes of LGBT students' learning will need to be multi-factorial.**

# Where next (in an ideal world)?

- Raising awareness
- Engaging with learners
- Developing queer pedagogies
- Identifying institutional and discipline champions
- Getting discipline-specific professional bodies on-side
- Embedding within programme approval systems