

Steps Toward a Smooth Inclusion of LGBT Curriculum in the Elementary Classroom

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LOS ANGELES UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT
Deputy Superintendent, Instruction and Curriculum

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SUBJECT: MEMORANDUM NO. DP-14
GAY AND LESBIAN AWARENESS MONTH

ROUTING
Administrators
Staff

DATE: May 14, 1999

OFFICE: Intergroup Relations

APPROVED: *ELS*
Evangelina R. Stockwell, Assistant Superintendent

For further information, please call Evangelina Stockwell, Assistant Superintendent, Office of Intergroup Relations, at (213) 625-6597; Kathy Gill, Teacher Adviser, Educational Equity Compliance Office, at (213) 229-5900; or Edward Negrete, Director, Human Relations Education Commission, at (213) 625-6066.

I. BACKGROUND

On May 18, 1992, the Board of Education passed the first resolution designating June of each year as a time to recognize the gay and lesbian community. The resolution was passed in support of "Educating for Diversity," the District's multicultural and human relations education policy which affirms that: "Each student has equal access to a quality education and an opportunity to participate fully in the academic and social activities of the school." It further notes that: "School policies and practices act to foster a climate that reduces fears related to differences and deters name-calling and acts of violence or threats motivated by hate and bigotry."

II. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

The Nondiscrimination Statement Poster of the District cited in *Required Nondiscrimination Notices*, Memorandum L-5, Educational Equity Compliance Office/Office of the General Counsel, dated June 19, 1998, states: "The Los Angeles Unified School District does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, gender (including sexual harassment), physical or mental disability, or age in any of its policies, procedures, or practices in compliance with federal civil rights laws..." The Nondiscrimination Statement also notes that State laws and District policies further provide that the District does not discriminate on the basis of religion, ancestry, marital status, sexual orientation, medical condition, political belief, affiliation, nor does it condone retaliation. Schools are expected to act proactively to prevent harassment or acts of violence or to remediate promptly when such acts occur.

Promoting Cultural Diversity and Cultural Competency

Self-Assessment Checklist

This checklist is intended to heighten the awareness and sensitivity to the importance of cultural diversity and cultural competence in schools. It provides concrete examples of the kinds of values and practices that foster such an environment.

Directions: Select A, B, or C for each numbered item listed.

- A = Things I do frequently
- B = Things I do occasionally
- C = Things I do rarely or never

Physical Environment, Materials, and Resources

- ____ 1. I display pictures, posters and other materials that reflect the cultures and ethnic backgrounds of children and families in my classroom.
- ____ 2. I insure that magazines, brochures, and other printed materials in reception
- ____ 3. When using food during an assessment, I insure that meals provided include foods that are unique to the cultural and ethnic backgrounds of children and families served by my program or agency.
- ____ 4. I insure reading teaching aids and reading material which are used during lessons and assessment, are representative of the various cultural and ethnic groups within the local community and the society in general.

Communication Styles

- ____ 5. For children who speak languages or dialects other than English, I attempt to learn and use key words in their language so that I am better able to communicate with them during class time.
- ____ 6. I attempt to determine any familial colloquialisms used by children and families that may impact student progress.
- ____ 7. I use visual aids, gestures, and physical prompts in my interactions with children who have limited English proficiency.
- ____ 8. I use bilingual staff or trained/certified interpreters for communication with parents and care givers of children who have limited English Proficiency.

9. When interacting with parents who have limited English proficiency I always keep in mind that:

- ____ limitations in English proficiency are in no way a reflection of level of intellectual functioning.
- ____ limited ability to speak the language of the dominant culture has no bearing on ability to communicate effectively in their language of origin.
- ____ a person may or may not be literate in their language of origin or English.
- ____ 10. When possible, I insure that all notices and communiques to parents are written in their language of origin.
- ____ 11. I understand that it may be necessary to use alternatives to written communications for some families, as word of mouth may be a preferred method of receiving information.

Values and Attitudes

- ____ 12. I avoid imposing values that may conflict or be inconsistent with those of cultures or ethnic groups other than my own.

- _____ 13. In class I discourage children from using racial and ethnic slurs by helping them understand that certain words can hurt others.
- _____ 14. I screen books, movies, and other media resources for negative cultural, ethnic, or racial stereotypes before sharing them with students and their parents in my class.
- _____ 15. I intervene in an appropriate manner when I observe other staff or parents within my learning environment in behaviors that show cultural insensitivity, bias or prejudice.
- _____ 16. I understand and accept that family is defined differently by different cultures (e.g. extended family members, fictive kin, godparents).
- _____ 17. I recognize and accept that individuals from culturally diverse backgrounds may desire varying degrees of acculturation into the dominant culture.
- _____ 18. I accept and respect that male-female roles in families may vary significantly among different cultures (e.g. who makes major decisions for the family, play and social interactions expected of male and female children).
- _____ 19. I understand that age and life cycle factors must be considered in interactions with individuals and families (e.g. high value placed on the decisions of elders or the role of the eldest male in families).
- _____ 20. Even though my professional or moral viewpoints may differ, I accept the family/parents as the ultimate decision makers for services and supports for their children.
- _____ 21. I recognize that the meaning or value of medical treatment and health education may vary greatly among cultures.
- _____ 22. I recognize and understand that beliefs and concepts of emotional well-being vary significantly from culture to culture.
- _____ 23. I understand that beliefs about mental illness and emotional disability are culturally-based. I accept that responses to these conditions and related treatment/interventions are heavily influenced by culture.
- _____ 24. I accept that religion and other beliefs may influence how families respond to illnesses, disease, disability and death.
- _____ 25. I recognize and accept that folk and religious beliefs may influence a family's reaction and approach to a child born with a disability or later diagnosed with a physical/emotional disability or special health care needs.
- _____ 26. I understand that traditional approaches to disciplining children are influenced by culture.
- _____ 27. I accept and respect that customs and beliefs about food, its value, preparation, and use are different from culture to culture.
- _____ 28. I advocate for the review of my program's or agency's mission statement, goals, policies, and procedures to insure that they incorporate principles and practices that promote cultural diversity and cultural competence.

There is no answer key with correct responses. However, if you frequently responded "C", you may not necessarily demonstrate values and engage in practices that promote a culturally diverse and culturally supportive environment for children and their families.

Tawara D. Goode, - Georgetown University Center for Child and Human Development-University Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities Education, Research & Service

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Recommendations

Training:

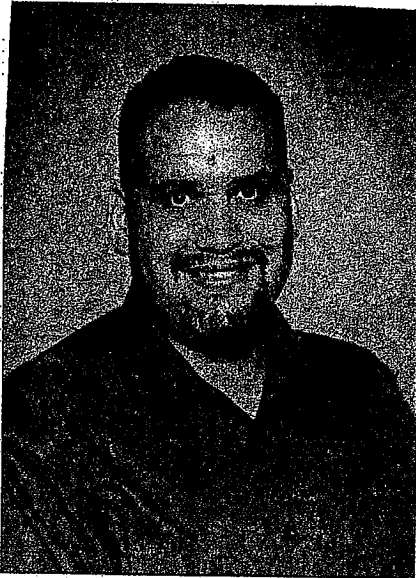
- Critical pedagogy theory
- Contact theory hypothesis/Gay cultural proficiency
- Multicultural Education's goals
- Purpose for gay-themed children's literature
- About working with parents and student questions-inform policy and purpose
- Pedagogical retraining: sexual orientation and sexual diversity.
- Gay youth as at-risk, suicides, hate crimes, academic failure
- Delineate district policies; create if none exist.
- An inclusive university education: Multicultural Education and Gay-Themes



Gay-Themed Children's Literature in the Elementary Classroom: An Impossibility?

by *Gabriel Flores, Ed.D.* on January 23, 2012

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One day, my student's mother came to me in mid June. School was almost out and she asked if she could speak with me. When I saw the mother coming toward me, I knew what she wanted to talk about...gay-themed children's literature. I was ready though. She came close to my face and smiled and simply said, "Thank you." I looked at her surprised and wondered what for. She murmured that her brother was gay with HIV and had no idea how to talk to her daughter about the topics. She thanked me again and said that I had made it so much easier for her. I had opened the doors of communication and she was eternally grateful. I smiled and told her she was welcome and that I was simply doing my job as an educator.

Seven years ago in 2003, I was contemplating whether or not I should implement new lessons. The month was June and Los Angeles Unified School District celebrates this month as "Gay and Lesbian Awareness Month." During June, teachers are encouraged by the Los Angeles District to teach tolerance and diversity in education through children's literature and lessons. The District encourages that those lessons too have gay themes within their content. Therefore, I decided to take on that role and be a social change agent.

But before I begin to tell you my story, let me detail some background about implementing gay themes in the classroom. During the 1980s and 1990s, multicultural education focused on inclusion of Asian, African-American, and/or Latino culture themes in the classroom. In 1992, gay culture was included as part of the multicultural education agenda for classrooms of the National Association of Multicultural Education (NAME, 2005). Today, teachers are encouraged by multicultural education scholars to implement a more diverse curriculum that incorporates gay-themed children's literature (i.e. two-daddy or two-mommy families) in the elementary classroom. Unfortunately, many teachers are dissuaded to implement gay themes, usually by fears of retaliation or their own negative attitudes.

So, I began as a social change agent by implementing gay-themed children's literature in June of 2002 to my third grade students. I was nervous, yet not by student questions, but more by having parents at the principal's office the next morning. Consider the fact that my school was 95% of a minority population; surely, I believed parents would be upset and angry at my door, I presumptuously assumed. Nonetheless, I knew I could take on any student questions and I knew that I had the District's and my school administration's support.

The lessons I presented were simple. I used common gay-themed children's literature. Many books are available at local libraries and on book-buying websites such as Amazon. However, the books are controversial to many and offensive to some. The books I read to my students were, but not limited to, *And Tango Makes Three* (Richardson & Parnell, 2005) and *Asha's Mums* (Elwin & Pause, 1990). The two books directly address non-nuclear families. In these books, the two-mommy or two-daddy families (or two-daddy analogy in *Tango* book) show that families can look differently, yet still have a deep sense of love and caring as is the "norm" among families.

The lessons began by reading the children's books, usually on a rug, just as I would any other book. Children asked questions; usually comprehension questions about content. At first though, students' questions had giggles and smirks, but eventually the giggles disappeared and meaningful discussions emerged. I found myself answering the best way I knew how... honestly and openly, as I had learned myself. Some people mistakenly believe gay-themed children's literature deals with discussions about gay sex but the topic is never appropriate and never emerged during lessons. Nevertheless, I found that student questions were age-appropriate, so I answered age-appropriately too. One question, for example, was, "How can a boy or girl have two mommies?" And my answer was simple, "Sometimes there are two women who love each other and want to have children." It was as easy and honest as that.

Once the books were read and the content discussed, the children went to their desks, wrote a summary, and drew a picture. By the end of June, the children had about ten different books within their Tolerance Bibliography that dealt with subjects from gay themes to disabilities. I told my students to keep their folders as a resource because they might want to go to their local library to checkout the books, buy them at a bookstore, or at our own school library. Unfortunately, many libraries lack these books and teachers are not willing or able to spend extra money on buying new, let alone, controversial materials.

One might wonder the purpose for implementing gay themes in the classroom. These were my reasons. First, I kept on hearing children using the word 'gay' in a derogatory manner. Anything and everything children did not like was called 'gay.' Second, I wanted children's negative attitudes toward gay and lesbian people to change. Research suggests that implementing gay themes in the classroom may help change the negative attitudes that one possesses (Bowen & Bourgeois, 2001). In addition, research suggests that gay and lesbian people commit 33% of all suicides (Satterly & Dyson, 2005). Moreover, about 17% of all US hate crimes are committed toward gays and lesbians (Ventura, Lambert, Bryant, & Pasupuleti, 2004). These astonishing aforementioned numbers made me realize I had to push for positive social change through implementing gay themes in the classroom.

During my years of implementing gay themes, I can say it was an amazing and rewarding experience. I never had any big problems. Perhaps one or two parents went to the administration, usually because they erroneously believed the topic was age-inappropriate. Nevertheless, I always had the support of my school administration and the District. Research suggests that because of a child's psychosocial and cognitive developmental characteristics, early childhood and adolescence are appropriate times to introduce diverse multicultural education topics (Manning, 2000).

An ex-student of mine made me realize how important it was what I was doing for my students. One June day, this student, from before the days of implementing gay themes, came to visit. He looked around my room and saw that I had a rainbow pride/diversity flag displayed. He asked what the flag was for. I said that it was a diversity flag, which represents love for all people and cultures, and more specifically gay and lesbian pride. He looked at me, and simply asked why I had not taught 'his' class this. I had no answer for him. He said he wished I had taught gay themes to our class and admitted he had been harboring animosity towards a gay classmate. He said that if I had implemented gay themes then perhaps his attitudes would be different today. I was speechless.

As an educator, I finally have realized what a crucial service I am providing to my students and school culture, especially after dealing with my own issues of stigma. I now carry a message of tolerance and acceptance wherever I go. Gay themes in the classroom are very controversial, I know, but it is completely possible for them to be implemented successfully. To some it is scary and to others it is wrong. However, the reason for gay themes to be implemented is to stop the hatred and death, which is prevalent. For those who are apathetic about implementing gay themes in the classroom, think about the following thought: The implication is that a teacher negotiate his or her personal and religious beliefs with his or her professional role if he or she is to implement gay themes in the classroom (Goldstein, Collins, & Halder, 2007).

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2 Steps Toward Implementing Gay Themes: Personal Reflection and Recommendations

for Action

Gabriel Flores

In the United States in 2000, 16% of all hate crimes were

directed toward gay and lesbian people (Ventura, Lambert, Bryant, & Pasupuleti, 2004). Types of hate crimes included murder, manslaughter, rape, aggravated assault, simple assault, intimidation, arson, and damage or vandalism of property (Wills, 2004). In addition, gay or lesbian individuals committed nearly one third of all suicides in the United States (Allan, 1999; Daniel, 2007; Satterly & Dyson, 2005; Van Wormer & McKinney, 2003). A multicultural curriculum teaching tolerance and diversity towards homosexuals may reduce hate crimes, suicides, and fear, and in turn, create meaningful change within society (Hansman, 1998; Milton, 2003).

Teaching tolerance and acceptance about sexual orientation can never start too early (Lai, 2006; Roffman, 2001; Solomon, 2004;

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Woody, 2002); however, huge misconceptions exist. One misconception is that gay themes and gay-themed children's literature is age-inappropriate in the elementary classroom and that discussions involve sexual behavior. The aforementioned point demonstrates a need for schools, districts, and educational leaders to provide appropriate training to teachers who express the misconception. The goal of teaching gay issues is not to convert or influence students, but to educate and create tolerance and environments free of harassment, homophobia, and discrimination (Wolfe, 2006). Implementing gay themes in the classroom through professional development and pedagogical training may bring about a safer learning environment for all children, including gay youth, by reducing intolerance and bullying and increasing acceptance and student achievement. Unfortunately, public schools have been slow to implement gay themes as a part of a balanced multicultural education curriculum (Giugni & Semann, 2004; Moita-Lopes, 2006; Swartz, 2003).

In the following paragraphs, some steps and ideas for educators and school leaders are provided that may serve to help with the implementation process. I will also reflect on my

experiences as an educator who has implemented gay themes in the elementary classroom since 2002. Before describing the steps, however, some historical background is essential.

During the 1980s and 1990s, multicultural education focused on inclusion of Asian, African-American, and/or Latino cultural themes in the multicultural classroom. In 1992, gay culture was included as part of the multicultural education agenda for classrooms by the National Association of Multicultural Education (NAMEE). During the new millennium, teachers were encouraged by multicultural education scholars to implement a more diverse multicultural education curriculum that incorporates gay-themed children's literature (i.e. two-daddy or two-mommy families, transgender, and gender nonconformance characters) in the elementary classroom (NAMEE, 2005a, 2005b). Unfortunately, many teachers are dissuaded from implementing gay themes, usually by fears of retaliation, by parents and administrators, or the teachers' negative attitudes.

Research has suggested, however, that attending in-service and professional development training has helped improve negative attitudes and dispel misconceptions about the lesbian, gay,

bisexual, and transexual community (Bowen & Bourgeois, 2001;

Maher, 2007). It is important teachers be made aware the right-

wing movement, religious organizations, and some politicians may

object to gay theme implementation, but micro-revolutionary

changes can occur by teachers and administrators attending training

sessions, having discussions, and accepting and advocating gays

and lesbians' civil rights (Barber & Krane, 2007; Birden, 2002; Lucas,

2004). Incorporating sexual orientation and gay culture into

diversity workshops may help sensitize and educate staff, faculty

members, students, and administrators (Barber & Krane, 2007;

Cosier & Sanders, 2007; Moita-Lopes, 2006; Swartz, 2003).

Providing such support may create a more successful program for

implementing gay-themed literature in the classroom.

Research has found schools, districts, and pre-service

university teacher programs are not including gay themes and

issues into diversity education courses. In my own research (Flores,

2009), more than 80% of the teacher participants in the study

demonstrated a lack of training in gay themes for the multicultural

education classroom. As I previously suggested in that research, an

initial step in implementing gay themes and gay-themed children's

literature may be through professional development, both within

school districts and in preservice teaching programs. It is important

school districts provide training that exposes teachers to critical

pedagogy theory because critical pedagogy is an important step in

guiding teachers when implementing gay themes in the classroom.

Because critical pedagogues question mainstream culture,

counteract mainstream ideas, and help the subjugated within

society (Chen, 2005), introducing the theory may be crucial for

helping implement gay themes in the classroom environment. Once

teachers understand that gays and lesbians comprise an

underrepresented and subjugated minority (Hansman, 1998) who

are at-risk (Skegg, 2005), a smoother transition towards

implementing gay themes and gay-themed children's literature may

be possible.

Within my elementary school setting, I conducted critical

pedagogy professional development training in June 2007. The

training, entitled "Critical Pedagogy Theory and Tolerance,"

involved teachers reading Chen (2005) and summarizing the

elements about critical pedagogy theory. I believe that in order to

have schools implement gay themes within a multicultural

education program, teachers should learn about critical pedagogy and its relationship to gay themes and gay culture.

My elementary school is one that implements gay themes during June as part of celebrating Gay and Lesbian Awareness Month. My critical pedagogy training may have helped teachers make revolutionary changes within their own classrooms; I am one of 10 other teachers who implements gay themes to various age groups of children. In addition, my school library is one of the most diverse with many gay-themed children's literature included within its bookshelves. Teachers, administrators, and the librarian have ordered and welcomed the literature into the library's collection.

Teachers also require training about the contact theory hypothesis. Basset et al. (2005) found certain factors within the contact theory hypothesis reduced prejudice against gays, such as accepting a biological explanation for homosexuality, taking human sexuality classes, listening to gay guest speakers, exposing teachers to gay peers, and watching films that address prejudice against homosexuals. The basic premise behind the contact theory hypothesis is contact with lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) people lead to more tolerance and acceptance.

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Because some people believe gay lifestyles are unnatural, it is important training focus on teaching tolerance and reducing homophobia. It is essential that school districts put into practice the contact theory hypothesis by implementing proficiency training in gay culture that includes the gay struggle and gay civil rights movement, gay familial awareness (two-mommy, two-daddy families), societal dangers for gays, and issues pertaining to gay youth at school. Training needs to be focused on the real life experiences of gays and lesbians and statistics about hate crimes and suicides among gay youth. In learning about the contact theory hypothesis, teachers may learn the facts about gays and that negative attitudes are based on fear and a lack of knowledge. Through education and training, teachers may slowly become more tolerant and accepting of gay people and implement gay themes and gay-themed children's literature in the classroom.

Crary (1992) suggested two methods to help deal with the differences and ensure children become comfortable with different types of people and cultures: First, introducing differences through children's books and literature and second, offering children experiences with real people. As an educator who has implemented

gay themes in the classroom, I have introduced gay people and friends to my students, thus putting the contact theory hypothesis into practice.

I invited my openly gay friend to help me teach a division lesson. He helped the students with the lesson and was a funny guest: He made the math lesson fun. After he left, I casually mentioned that he was my gay friend Eddie. Children were shocked; I assume the children had a stereotyped image in their heads of a gay man. My friend Eddie is a masculine man with a deep voice and is handsome. A short discussion ensued about how he works, has a family, and loves his family/partner like anyone else. I believe it was a good learning experience for the students and dispelled many misconceptions; it was a chance for them to become more tolerant and accepting individuals. Some students expressed their misconceptions, and they were quite extraordinary.

Some teachers feel discomfort when teaching gay themes and do not teach sexual orientation education and gay themes due to their own intolerance (Athanases, 1996; Birden, 2002; Hermann-Willmarth, 2007; Rienzo, Button, Jurn-Jye, & Ying, 2006; Van Wormer & McKinney, 2003). However, such teachers would have

to learn how to handle and or set aside their own feelings of discomfort and fear. The implication here is a teacher would have to negotiate his or her personal and religious beliefs with his or her professional role if he or she is to implement gay themes in the classroom (Goldstein, Collins, & Halder, 2007). Although some teachers may be hesitant, the more perseverant teachers could make the initial intent and this slowly may lead other teachers to follow suit.

Gay cultural proficiency training may help with the implementation of gay themes in the classroom by increasing awareness and knowledge among parents and teachers. Cultural proficiency is a step toward reaching empathy, understanding, and contact with gays and lesbians, as the contact theory hypothesis suggests (Overby & Barth 2002). Acceptance of others requires tolerance, sensitivity, and cultural awareness training (Goodenow, Szalacha, & Westheimer, 2006; Sogunro, 2001). Cultural proficiency training may also assist teachers with learning the facts about gays and dispel the myths and misconceptions, the reason for some of those feelings of discomfort (Solomon, 2004). Teachers could obtain the knowledge by taking courses at a local Gay and Lesbian Center

or reading biographies about gay people, such as Harvey Milk or Bayard Rustin. Movies and documentaries are a great resource to learn about gay culture; however, teachers would need to take that initiative and be ready to deal with the cognitive dissonance and disequilibrium.

Another step toward having a more inclusive classroom curriculum would be to understand the goals and ideals of multicultural education. In order for multiculturalism to succeed, however, a teacher would need to renounce his or her prejudicial attitudes and negotiate his or her personal and religious beliefs with his or her professional role if he or she is to implement gay themes in the classroom as multicultural education (Goldstein et al., 2007).

Teachers should be aware that gay culture is part of the multicultural education agenda and that preventing homophobia and heterosexism is an essential element of the NAME (Holland, 2005; NAME, 2005a, 2005b). In addition, because some teachers and administrators do not accept gay culture as a culture, they must be instructed that cultural identity is defined as the self-perception of one's social positioning in life, such as race, social class, gender, religion, age, and sexual orientation, as well as physical and mental

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ability (Chen, 2005). During my past trainings with staff and colleagues, some teachers had objected to gay culture being considered a culture. However, after discussing critical pedagogy, contact theory hypothesis, and NAME's goals, teachers became less resistant and began to listen and accept--and some to implement--gay themes in the classroom.

Another important step would be to understand the purpose for implementing gay themes in the classroom. Multicultural education that includes discussions about sexual orientation focuses on discussions about issues associated with being gay and gay communities and cultures, including the themes of love, families, respect and relationships (Swartz, 2003; Wolfe, 2006). The purpose of including gay-themed children's literature is to teach about diversity, tolerance, and acceptance of homosexuals and LGBT people (Athanasios, 1996; Moita-Lopes, 2006; Swartz, 2003). Another reason for including gay themes is to provide a safer learning environment for all students, which this may lead to less bullying and negative playground chatter where one hears the derogatory phrase, "that's so gay."

Implementing gay themes in the elementary classroom as well as conducting professional development and training for teachers, the aforementioned steps were critical for successful implementation. Mentioning NAME's goals, district/school policy (if applicable), and the purpose for implementing gay themes in the classroom avoided disagreement and teachers became more focused on the training at hand. In all the years that I have been implementing gay themes in the elementary classroom, I have had about 2-3 parents complain to the principal and one teacher walk out of professional training. In the end, the training was successful and I realized it is fine for some to disagree.

Another step is for teachers to understand the purpose of gay-themed children's literature; the purpose specifically being to create a more diverse learning environment that welcomes gay families and their cultures. Because the children of gay parents consist of an estimated one million children in the United States (Peterschick-Gilmore & Bell, 2006) and the children of gay parents are often bullied, rejected, or harassed by their peers (Clarke, Kitzinger, & Potter, 2004), gay families and the children of gay families require representation and validation in schools and within

society through children's literature. Such representation may dispel misconceptions and help increase the self-esteem of children from gay families, thus improving the achievement levels of students in general.

Parents may be a possible reason for teachers excluding gay-themed children's literature from the classroom. As I discussed previously (Flores, 2009), some teachers have suggested in a study that parental concerns might be an obstacle to implementing gay-themed children's literature within multicultural education program. Schools and educational leaders must provide adequate support to teachers who implement gay themes in the classroom. Once teachers know that they have the support of their school district and administrators then implementation is more feasible. In addition, if district policy is enacted the case for parental objection becomes irrelevant.

However, in order to handle parental concerns, teachers would have to learn specifically about district policies toward implementing gay-themed children's literature as well as how to deal with parents' concerns and students' questions. Again, teachers need to focus on the inclusion of gay themes is to increase

tolerance and create a safe learning environment for all students. If teachers and parents are informed of the purpose, the implementation of gay themes may be more feasible. In addition, it is important to mention that implementing gay themes or gay-themed children's literature does not involve discussions of sex or homosexual behavior; instead, the focus is on tolerance, familial diversity, love, and acceptance.

As an educator who has implemented gay themes in the elementary classroom, if there were parents who complained, my defense was NAMF's goals and the district's inclusive multicultural education policy. The Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) and Board officials emphasized that support for a teacher was unlimited in relation to the implementation of gay-themed literature in the classroom. The LAUSD and the Board of Education have adopted June as Gay and Lesbian Pride Month. LAUSD policy states the following, enacted in 1992:

The Board of Education of the Los Angeles Unified School District hereby declares June as Gay and Lesbian Pride Month and directs the Superintendent and all District staff to support lessons and activities that engage students in

meaningful learning, research and writing about our lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender students and families.

Teachers need to know that they have the support of their school districts and administrative personnel. Likewise, it is essential that all stakeholders be informed about school district policies that approve diverse multicultural education materials that are inclusive of gay culture, gay themes, and gay-themed children's literature. If teachers are not aware of district policies about gay themes and tolerance education inclusion, district officials need to do more to make the policies visible through memorandums, e-mails, mailings, and newsletters.

However, some schools lack the services to protect and meet the needs of the LGBT students (Gay, Lesbian, and Straight Education Network [GLSEN], 2003). Policy is important for the success of all students. If no clear policy exists, it is critical that policy be created to support teachers, parents, and students, including gay youth (Allan, 1999). Policy should provide support for teachers who intend to implement diverse multicultural themes that include gay themes and create an anti-violence/bully code for sexual minorities (Allan, 1999).

Creating and having policy is important because students who have appropriate representation and support at school tend to thrive within their educational environments (Hansman, 1998; Sogunro, 2001). Teachers and staff need to maintain a harassment-free, safe environment for gay youth because current laws and courts have addressed the issue of harassment of sexual minority students. Schools are liable if inaction and complacency to the needs of sexual minority students exist (National Center for Lesbian Rights, 2004); in that sense, policy may be more important than ever.

In order to implement gay themes and gay-themed children's literature successfully, another step would be teachers receiving pedagogical training. Teachers would require training in the area of sexuality, sexual orientation, and sexual diversity, with self-awareness being a critical element (Rienzo et al, 2006; Van Wormer & McKinney, 2003). In addition, teachers should have access to examples set by past teachers and how they have implemented gay themes in the classroom, for example the documentary *It's Elementary* (Chasnoff & Cohen, 1995).

The lessons I developed for my students were simple enough. I turned to widely read gay-themed children's books such as *And Tango Makes Three* (2005) and *Asha's Mums* (1990). These two books directly address nontraditional family structures and send the message that some families may look different from the nuclear family but still encompass as much love and care, as do the nuclear families. After each book was read and discussed, the children returned to their desks, wrote a summary, and drew an accompanying illustration. By the end of June, the students had about 14 different books within their "Tolerance Bibliography" dealing with subjects such as gay families, homelessness, immigration, and disabilities. The discussions were rich and enlightening. The children's literature helped build positive discussions, and children tend to respond very well to books and literature (Aronson, 2004; Wolfe, 2006). Teaching tolerance and acceptance through children's literature may help reduce intolerance and homophobic attitudes (Moita-Lopez, 2006; Swartz, 2003).

The following are some books I have used myself that are available to teachers: Edmonds' (2000) *Mamma Eat Ant Yuck!*,

Kennedy's (1998) *Lucy Goes to the Country*, Newman's (1989) *Heather has Two Mommys*, Valentine's (2004) *One Dad, Two Dad, Brown Dad, Blue Dads*, Willhoite's (1991) *Daddy's Roommate*, and Richardson and Parnell's (2005) *And Tango Makes Three*.

Books available for older children include Bauer's (1994) *Am*

I Blue? Coming Out of the Silence, Crutcher's (1995, 1991) adventure novels *Ironman* and *Athletic Shorts*, Haskins' (1997) biography of *Bayard Rustin*, Peter's (2004) novel *Linna*, and Kaeser's (1999) *Love Makes a Family* (Swartz, 2003). Visit the Welcoming Schools' web page for a more thorough bibliographical list of gay-themed children's literature:

<http://www.welcomingschools.org/2012/03/bibliographies-books-to-engage-students/>

Visit the GSA Network's web page to see LGBT-inclusive lessons and activities for your classroom: <http://gsanetwork.org/fair>

Nevertheless, one may still ask why teach children, especially young children, about gays and lesbians? Because of a child's psychosocial and cognitive developmental characteristics, early childhood and adolescence are appropriate times to introduce multicultural education topics. Young children and adolescents can

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profit from experiences that advocate positive feelings toward themselves, others, and life within a diverse society (Blackburn, 2005; Manning, 2000). Teaching tolerance and educating children about sexual orientation can never start too early (Lai, 2006; Roffman, 2001; Solomon, 2004; Wolfe, 2006; Woody, 2002) because the creation of a child's prejudicial attitudes usually occurs during a child's early years (Willis, 2004).

During their period of growth, children and adolescents are forming cultural identities, establishing friendships, and developing opinions and a sense of fairness and justice. Young adolescents are cognitively and psychologically capable of grasping and comprehending injustices, unfair treatment, family diversity, and pluralism (Manning, 2000; Schall & Kauffmann, 2003).

Teachers should be made aware that gay youth are considered an at-risk population (Skegg, 2005). The high risks are parental rejection, hate crimes, peer abuse, homelessness, dropping out, poor achievement, drug abuse, suicide, and prostitution among gay youth (Hansman, 1998; Lucas, 2004). Knowing about the aforementioned risks may prompt teachers to accept the implementation of gay themes in the classroom. This may create a

safer learning environment, increase support for gay youth, and improve academic achievement for all youth. This knowledge may change some teachers' attitudes toward implementing gay-themed children's literature and increase validation and acknowledgement of gay culture and the implementation of gay themes in the classroom.

The following strategies may help teachers in creating a more inclusive multicultural education and a more welcoming classroom. Allan (1999) suggested teachers might reduce stereotyping and create an open environment for expression with the following strategies:

- a) Become a faculty sponsor of LGBT/GSA club or support group;
- b) Network and use literature to increase knowledge;
- c) Support an open, trusting, and welcoming classroom;
- d) Choose literature that avoids gay stereotypes;
- e) Join GILSEN (Gay Lesbian Straight Education Network);
- f) Use or display materials by gay authors and historical figures such as Harvey Milk; and

g) Post or create school or district's education code against violence.

Van Wormer and McKinney (2003) offered the following ideas for micro-revolutionary change in classrooms:

- a) Support safe sex-ed and discourage high-risk behavior like self-mutilation and self-abuse;
- b) Organize workshops about sexual orientation for school leaders, staff, and administrators;
- c) Institute programs that prevent bullying;
- d) Provide support for gay and lesbian youth;
- e) Link gays, lesbians, and their families to community resources;
- f) Maintain confidentiality and honesty;
- g) Provide the library with useful information about homosexuality; and
- h) Invite LGBT people to conduct classroom discussions.

Because children begin to construct their gender and racial identities by the age of three, Araujo and Strasser (2003) offered suggestions for dealing with differences and helping young children to become comfortable with diversity and tolerance education:

- a) Clarify misconceptions immediately;
- b) Respond promptly to children's concerns and questions;
- c) Provide simple and honest answers;
- d) Introduce diversity and differences through children's age appropriate books and literature;
- e) Offer children real-life experiences with real people;
- f) Acknowledge children's fears and misconceptions;
- g) Model respectful behavior verbally and non-verbally; and
- h) Be fair, honest, and acknowledge if you do not know an answer.

Not only can teachers make a difference but also school districts and administrators. A correlation between self-esteem and

academic performance is apparent; if students are low in self-esteem and feel underrepresented by the dominant culture, low academic performance may be the consequence (Sogunro, 2001). To provide opportunities for identification, school districts need to provide curricular materials representing the diversity that exists in society by including gay cultures. School districts need to be mindful and ensure curriculum address the diversity of society when adopting new curriculum (Allan, 1999).

People have asked me, an educator who implements gay themes in the elementary classroom, "What is the biggest reward?" The rewards are watching children become more tolerant individuals, hearing the word 'gay' used less in a derogatory manner, less bullying on the school playground, and most rewarding of all, is to watch the children no longer squirm or giggle when I used the word gay in a casual manner.

There also have been parents and students who have thanked me for teaching them about gay themes. A parent once came to me thanking me for opening the doors of communication with her daughter. Another student once thanked me because I had widened his world view about different cultures and peoples, while

another student would go to subsequent teachers asking each one what gay themes he or she was going to implement in the classroom just as I had.

As an educator, I realize the crucial service I am providing to my students and school climate. I carry a message of tolerance and acceptance wherever I go. Gay themes in the classroom are very controversial; to some it is scary, and to others it is wrong.

However, the reason gay themes should be implemented is to stop the prevalent hatred directed toward gays. Although the ideas may seem simplistic to some, we have to begin now and make micro-revolutionary changes to our curriculum and instruction. If no child is to be left behind, schools must provide safe, supportive learning environments for all youth, including gay youth, and start the change process today (Goodenow et al., 2006; Wolfe, 2006).

In conclusion, the aforementioned steps may serve to create a more inclusive multicultural education that includes gay themes. If school leadership, teachers, and parents validate and acknowledge gay cultures, tolerance is possible, and increased knowledge would reduce societal homophobia. Tolerance and decreased homophobia may increase student achievement and

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create a safer learning environment for all youth, including gay youth (Hansman, 1998; Swartz, 2003). Improved curriculum, proper training, and strong leadership skills will help to lessen problems that may surface during the implementation of gay-themed children's literature. With the cooperation of school districts, educational leaders, and all stakeholders, implementing gay-themed children's literature may be possible, and a brighter future for all youth may be on the horizon.

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Toward a More Inclusive Multicultural Education: Methods for Including LGBT Themes in K-12 Classrooms

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Although multicultural education scholars and the National Association for Multicultural Education (NAME) have encouraged the implementation of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender themes in the classroom (NAME, 2005), many classroom educators look the other way because of fear, retaliation, or personal discomfort. The following article will provide some basic background on the topic of sexual orientation in the multicultural education classroom and provide some strategies for implementation.

KEYWORDS *Sexual orientation, multicultural education, gay-themed literature, homosexuality, gay and lesbian, LGBT*

BACKGROUND

Multicultural education for “the past 20 years have shown gains in including African-American, Mexican, Latino, Chicano, Asian-American, and Native-American experiences in curricula, the same is certainly not true for experiences of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transsexual, interested (LGBTI) persons” (Swartz, 2003, p. 1). However, incorporating gay-themed and lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) literature to rid society of heterosexism is one of the goals of the National Association for Multicultural Education (NAME) for schools: “School curriculum must directly address issues of racism, sexism, classism, linguicism, ablism, ageism, *heterosexism*, religious intolerance, and xenophobia” (NAME, 2005, para. 3).

Nevertheless, the inclusion of LGBT themes remains a controversial, absent, and stigmatized issue in American education (Gedro, 2007;

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Goodenow, Szalacha, & Westheimer, 2006; Hansman, 1998; Roffman, 2001; Savage, Prout, & Chard, 2004; Swartz, 2003; Walton, 2005). Besides objections by religious groups, a misunderstanding about gay theme inclusion exists: some parents and teachers claim that LGBT and homosexual issues are not school issues and deserve no mention in school (Hermann-Wilmarth, 2007; Whittingham & Rickman, 2007). DePalma and Atkinson (2006) found in a study of higher education students and faculty that some participants believed that sexual orientation education was not age-appropriate because "sexual innocence must be protected from the dangerous knowledge of homosexuality" (p. 339).

Many people mistakenly believe that education about homosexuality focuses on the sexual behavior of homosexuals (Bhana, 2007; Donelson & Rogers, 2004; Goldstein, Collins, & Halder, 2007; Roffman, 2001; Swartz, 2003; Wolfe, 2006). However, what this education does appropriately focus on is an understanding and appreciation of issues of difference, including difference in sexual orientation, relationship, and family structures, and the concepts of love and respect (Swartz; Wolfe). Without knowledge, children theorize about sexuality, sexual identity, gender roles, and sexual orientation. Those "theories" are largely shaped by family, friends, religion, media, and other social and cultural influences. However, with a more inclusive multicultural education that includes LGBT themes, children may base their knowledge and beliefs on accurate information and, ideally, without fear and bias change negative attitudes (Swartz).

Politically, organizations such as the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) have taken action against certain school districts where LGBT sensitivity lessons are not included as part of the curriculum. The ACLU sued school districts in California and Kentucky. The ACLU's intention was to force school districts "to conduct mandatory LGBT appreciation sessions for students and staff" (Knight, 2005, ¶5). "In south Los Angeles, the ACLU of Southern California, along with the National Center for Lesbian Rights (NCLR), reached a settlement requiring mandatory attitudinal training at Washington Preparatory High School" (Knight, ¶5). The training sessions attempted to create model schools and have other districts follow the example. The sessions involved mandatory faculty training about discrimination, diversity, and harassment primarily related to actual or perceived sexual orientation and gender identity. The ACLU reported that they learned from their discussions with students that some teachers called homosexuals "sinners," "wrong," "unholy," and "faggot" (Knight, ¶5). In Kentucky, the ACLU claimed in court that Boyd County High school has not lived up to a 2004 settlement that forced the school to conduct mandatory "anti-harassment training" that would focus on "sexual orientation and gender identity discrimination" (¶6).

Regardless of advocacy, some people still believe that discussions about LGBT issues in school, especially the primary grades are age-inappropriate (Bhana, 2007; Blackburn, 2005; Hermann-Wilmarth, 2007; Roffman, 2001).

Because of a child's psychosocial and cognitive developmental characteristics, however, early childhood and adolescence are appropriate times to introduce multicultural education topics (Blackburn; Manning, 2000). Young children and adolescents can profit from experiences that advocate positive feelings toward themselves, others, and life within a diverse society (Blackburn; Manning).

During their period of growth, children and adolescents are forming cultural identities, establishing friendships, and developing opinions and a sense of fairness and justice (Manning, 2000). Young adolescents are cognitively and psychologically capable of grasping and comprehending injustices, unfair treatment, family diversity, and pluralism (Manning; Schall & Kauffmann, 2003). Many people fear, however, that if children learn about LGBT people, homosexuality, or receive sex education in the upper grades, their knowledge will lead to the practice of homosexuality (Roffman, 2001). A homophobic society fears that having LGBT-themed discussions, gay or lesbian parents, or gay or lesbian teachers on staff would influence or recruit young students to become gay (King, 2004; Paccione-Dyszlewski, 2008), and ascribes their values and beliefs to the concepts, "family" and "religion" in order to use those values, as well as covert and overt harassment, to ensure the invisibility of teachers and students labeled or self-identified as other than heterosexual (MacDougall, 2004). Providing children with the facts and creating a forum for discussion does not encourage children to become homosexual or practice same-sex sexual behavior. Instead, LGBT discussions ensure that children are less likely to insult someone and less likely to ostracize people for being LGBT (Women's Educational Media, 2006).

However, little if any introduction to the subject of LGBT topics exists in contemporary classrooms, even though LGBT people are prevalent in children's lives. Children see and hear about LGBT people and indulge in playground chatter and peer-group discussions. Homosexuality is a reality in the lives of children through the media, current events, families, friendships, law, politics, religion, and youth culture, suggesting that homosexuality is already in the thoughts and experiences of children (Bhana, 2007; Ferfolja, 2007; Milton, 2003; Roffman, 2001).

For example, television programs intended for classroom use that help build tolerance and acceptance toward LGBT people exist, as with a PBS television show that involved an eight-year-old rabbit jetting around exploring America's diverse cultures, which mixes animation with live action segments. In a particular episode entitled "Postcards from Buster in Vermont" (PBS, 2005, as cited in Vaishali, 2005), the rabbit learned to make maple syrup with the children of two lesbian couples. However, an outcry from conservatives about the episode was evident, to the point where the U.S. Secretary of Education pulled the episode, and some stations resisted the presentation of the series (Rowell, 2007; Vaishali). Television programs, however, like children's literature, can help alleviate homophobia and build

tolerance and acceptance, but as with LGBT-themed children's literature, resistance to gay-themed television and LGBT programs still exists.

LGBT-themed programs and lessons clarify the reality of people's lives; for example, many of the curricular topics that deal with the issue of homosexuality are about LGBT families or families headed by gay or lesbian couples. That is no different from stories that deal with families headed by heterosexual couples (Roffman, 2001; Swartz, 2003). Learning about LGBT people or culture is not learning about the sexual behaviors of same-sex couples (Goldstein et al., 2007). The learning a child acquires goes far beyond the sexual orientation issue; it focuses on discussions about the ethical and kind treatment of all people, regardless of their sexual orientation (Roffman). In school, for example, children learn about mommies, daddies, marriage, and families, and the discussions do not involve explicit or graphic sexual information. In education that is LGBT-inclusive, children can learn about LGBT people and culture, the gay civil rights movement, LGBT familial development, and the contributions to society of LGBT people (Cosier & Sanders, 2007; Women's Educational Media, 2006).

Teaching tolerance and educating children about sexual orientation can never start too early (Lai, 2006; Roffman, 2001; Solomon, 2004; Wolfe, 2006; Woody, 2002) because the creation of a child's prejudicial attitudes usually occurs during a child's early years (Willis, 2004). In addition, social psychological theory maintains that stereotyping promotes prejudice, and in order to reduce prejudice one must work toward reducing and changing stereotypes early in a child's education (Sherman, Stroessner, Conroy, & Azam, 2005). Therefore, discussions about tolerance and LGBT themes help dispel misinformation, prejudice, confusion, and stereotypes; in short, children learn the facts about LGBT people and homosexuality (Milton, 2003; Roffman). The creation and manifestation of homophobic attitudes is because of heteronormative behavior, stereotypes, and individual attitudes learned from a child's families, peers, schools, communities, health care institutions, religious institutions, and the media (Willis).

Because of the stigma and negative attitudes associated with the LGBT population, tolerance education becomes beneficial to all students. The presentation of LGBT-themed literature and lessons may help build tolerance and acceptance among children and in turn help reduce bullying and abuse (Athanases, 1996; Moita-Lopes, 2006; Swartz, 2003). The following section will detail how educators may begin the process of implementing LGBT themes and having a more inclusive multicultural education curriculum.

METHODS FOR INCLUDING LGBT THEMES IN THE MULTICULTURAL EDUCATION K-12 CLASSROOM

Many teachers and administrators do not teach tolerance, acceptance, and sexual orientation education due to fear of retaliation, their own intolerance

and discomfort, their lack of knowledge, or their belief that sexual identity is an age-inappropriate topic (Athanases, 1996; Bhana, 2007; Birden, 2002; DePalma & Atkinson, 2006; Hermann-Wilmarth, 2007; Rienzo, Button, Jiunn-ye, & Ying, 2006; Rowell, 2007; Strange, Forrest, Oakley, & Stephenson, 2006; Van Wormer & McKinney, 2003). However, some teachers wish to teach tolerance and to be inclusive of sexual orientation but feel unable to do so because of fear of local political ramifications or parents' disapproval. Nevertheless, these teachers can contribute to the change process by beginning to make changes in their curricular program (Barber & Krane, 2007; Birden; Lucas, 2004). Inevitably, incorporating such change involves negotiating and dialogue with all staff and stakeholders (Warwick, Chase, Aggleton, & Sanders, 2004).

Educators can appropriately teach all youth LGBT themes or LGBT culture in the multicultural education program by considering some of the following ideas. Allan (1999) suggested teachers might reduce stereotyping and create an open environment for self-exploration and expression with the following middle and senior high school strategies:

- Increase knowledge and understanding of LGBT issues and history through literature and networking, for which local gay community centers are good sources of information. Link LGBT students and their families to community resources as well. To find information on current LGBT news events, resources, and issues visit www.LAGayCenter.org and www.eqca.org for more information.
- Join the Gay, Lesbian, Straight Education Network (GLSEN), the GSA Network, or Welcoming Schools to work with other professionals in helping end homophobia in K-12 schools. Visit GSANetwork.org, GLSEN.org, and WelcomingSchools.org for more information.
- Post a school's or district's education code or policy against violence that includes sexual minorities. If no clear policy exists, then policy development should be created to support teachers, parents, and students, including gay youth (Allan, 1999) by writing to the superintendent, school board members, or state and federal representatives.
- Become a faculty sponsor for a Gay Straight Alliance (GSA) club or support group. The following websites may help teachers with the creation of a GSA: <http://www.glsen.org/cgi-bin/iowa/all/library/record/2342.html?state=what> and <http://gsanetwork.org/resources/building-your-gsa>
- Display posters and other class materials that include gay authors and historical figures and dates (e.g., Emma Goldman, Oscar Wilde, Harvey Milk, Matthew Shepard, Bayard Rustin, Jenny Bailey, and the Stonewall Riots). Visit the following web pages for a more thorough list of prominent LGBT people and events: <http://www.welcomingschools.org/2012/03/fun-stuff-2/>; <http://www.welcomingschools.org/wp-content/uploads/2009/07/Wel->

coming-Schools-Prominent-LGBT-People.pdf; and <http://www.stonewall-nationalmuseum.org/>

- Establish an open and trusting classroom atmosphere where all issues are open to discussion. Create a rainbow poster or order a Safe Space Kit at <https://safespace.glsen.org/about.cfm>
- Choose literature that avoids LGBT stereotyping and discrimination and helps promote discussions about LGBT-related issues. Go to WelcomingSchools.org and Tolerance.org to learn how.
- Join a district or school's committee that is responsible for purchasing materials and textbooks. Get involved on school councils and committees that order texts and materials to ensure the curriculum and materials have no evidence of stereotyping, invisibility, and discrimination.

Van Wormer and McKinney (2003) offered several ideas for positive change. The following suggestions may create a supportive elementary, middle, and senior high school environment for all youth:

- Institute programs that prevent bullying and the verbal abuse of students. Create a uniform classroom policy. Create the classroom rules collaboratively and have the rules reflect wording that is inclusive of all students, including LGBT youth.
- Organize workshops about multicultural education and sexual orientation for school leaders, staff, and administrators. Topics for professional development may include but are not limited to Critical Pedagogy theory; Contact Theory Hypothesis/Gay cultural proficiency; Multicultural Education's goals; the purposes for LGBT-themed children's literature; pedagogical training about sexual orientation and sexual diversity; LGBT youth as at-risk for suicides, hate crimes, and academic failure; and district/state policies (Flores, 2009).
- Invite LGBT people to conduct classroom discussions about their jobs and family lives to students.
- Provide support for LGBT youth and families; be welcoming, open, friendly, and an ally.
- Organize informal discussion sessions with students to dispel myths and accurately inform on LGBT people and culture.
- Provide the school library with useful information about homosexuality and LGBT people. Create a list of LGBT-themed children's literature that may be considered for purchase for the library. For elementary-aged children, some LGBT-themed books include but are not limited to DePaola's (1979) *Oliver Button is a Sissy*, Edmonds' (2000) *Mama Eat Ant, Yuck!*, Kennedy's (1998) *Lucy Goes to the Country*, Newman's (1989) *Heather has Two Mommies* and (2004) *A Fire Engine for Ruthie*, Valentine's (2004) *One Dad, Two Dad, Brown Dad, Blue Dads*, Willhoite's (1991) *Daddy's Roommate*, Zolotow's (1972) *William's Doll*, and

Richardson and Parnell's (2005) *And Tango Makes Three*. Books available for middle and senior high school children include but are not limited to Bauer's (1994) *Am I Blue? Coming Out from the Silence*, Crutcher's adventure novels *Ironman* (1995) and *Athletic Shorts* (1991), Haskins' (1997) biography of *Bayard Rustin*, Peters's novel *Luna* (2004), and Kaeser's (1999) *Love Makes a Family*. Visit the following Welcoming Schools' web page for a more thorough bibliographical list of LGBT-themed literature: <http://www.welcomingschools.org/2012/03/bibliographies-books-to-engage-students/>

- Provide a more inclusive multicultural education and include LGBT topics in social studies lessons. Visit the following GSA Network's web page to learn how to implement LGBT-inclusive lessons and activities in your classroom: <http://gsanetwork.org/fair>
- Maintain confidentiality at all times.
- Support sexuality education geared toward safe sex and discourages high-risk behavior.
- For teachers who may face significant challenges because of a lack of policy, suggestions may include increase empathy for bullied students, implement themes of respect, post inclusive pictures and graphics in the classroom, and read gender-nonconformative-themed literature, for example, Zolotow's (1972) *William's Doll*, DePaola's (1979) *Oliver Button Is a Sissy*, and Newman's (2004) *A Fire Engine for Ruthie*.

Implementing the aforementioned strategies may help create a supportive school environment, increase tolerance and acceptance of LGBT people, and provide a safe learning environment for all youth.

Children begin to construct their gender and racial identities by the age of three or four. Araujo and Strasser (2003) offered the following suggestions for dealing with differences and helping elementary children (preK-5) to become comfortable with diversity:

- Respond promptly and truthfully to children's concerns and questions about LGBT people and literature.
- Give simple answers and do not ramble.
- Model respectful behavior both verbally and nonverbally.
- Acknowledge children's fears.
- Clarify and dispel misconceptions and myths.
- Introduce LGBT themes, diversity, and differences through children's literature; children's literature can help build positive discussions and younger children tend to respond very well to literature (Aronson, 2004).

The aforementioned suggestions of Allan (1999), Van Wormer and McKinney (2003), and Araujo and Strasser (2003) can help create a safer learning environment in which children may become more comfortable with

and tolerant of the diversity in the world around them. Having a more inclusive multicultural education might then curb LGBT youth suicides or LGBT students falling victim to self-destructive behavior. Inclusive multicultural education programs are an important step in supporting students to grow into caring and compassionate adults.

CONCLUSION

It is important to note that teachers and staff must maintain a harassment-free and safe environment for LGBT youth (Bailey, 2005) because current laws and courts have addressed the issue of harassment of sexual minority students. Schools are liable if inaction and complacency to the needs of sexual minority students exist. The Equal Protection Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment, Title IX of the education amendments, and the National Education Association Resolution C26 protect sexual minority youth from sexual harassment (National Center for Lesbian Rights, 2004). Unfortunately, the No Child Left Behind Act does not address the issue of sexual orientation (National Center for Lesbian Rights; Satterly & Dyson, 2005).

If all stakeholders make an effort at new research, innovative professional development and training, and new ideas, then a step towards implementation of LGBT themes in the classroom and bridging the gap exists. Once LGBT themes are implemented in the classroom as part of a more inclusive multicultural education, perhaps a step towards higher achievement, increased tolerance and acceptance, and a safer learning environment that is conducive to learning for all students is possible. If no child is truly to be left behind, schools must provide a safe, supportive learning environment for all students, including LGBT youth (Goodenow et al., 2006; Wolfe, 2006).

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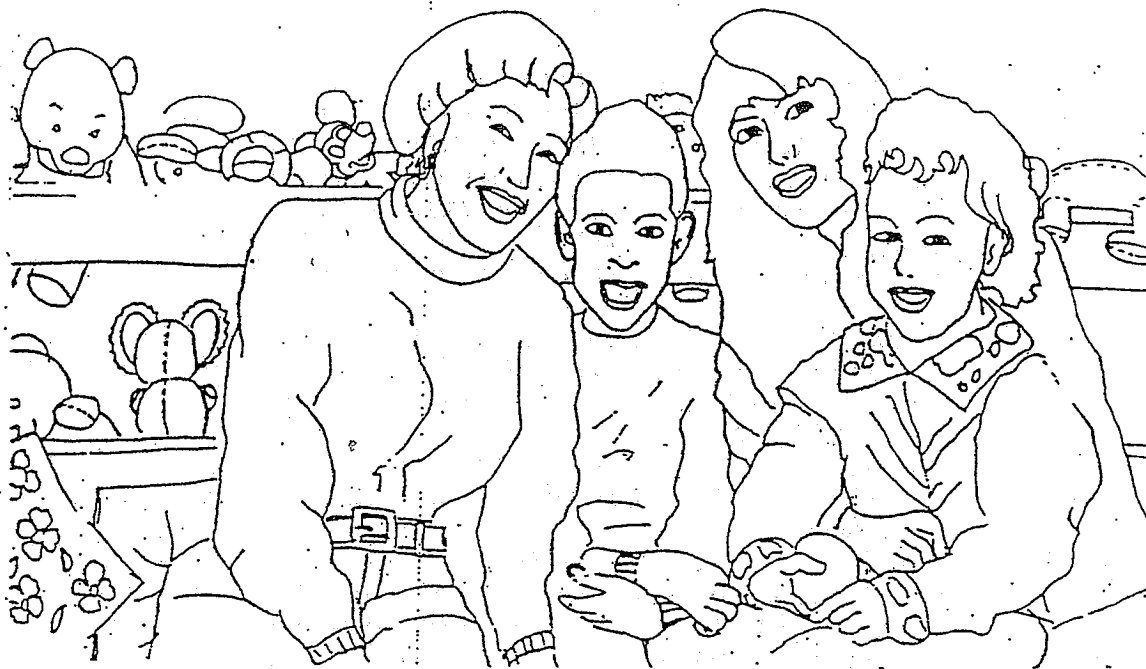
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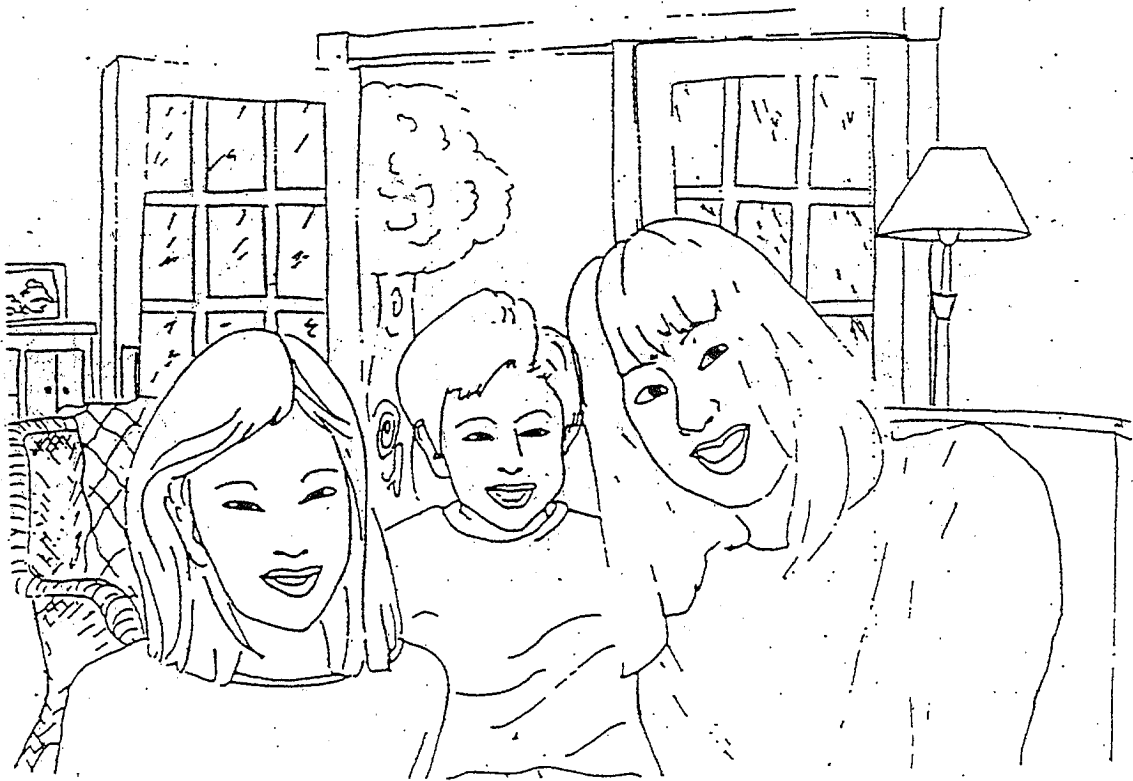
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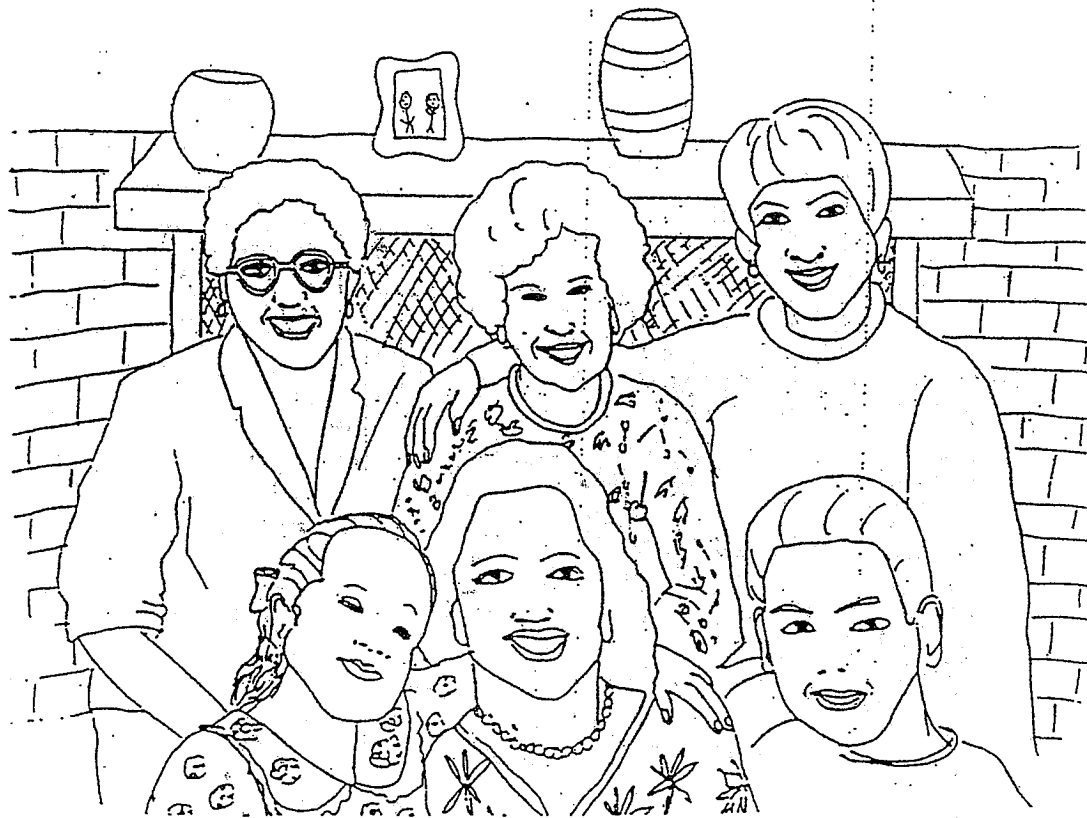
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ALL FAMILIES ARE SPECIAL
TODAS LAS FAMILIAS SON ESPECIALES

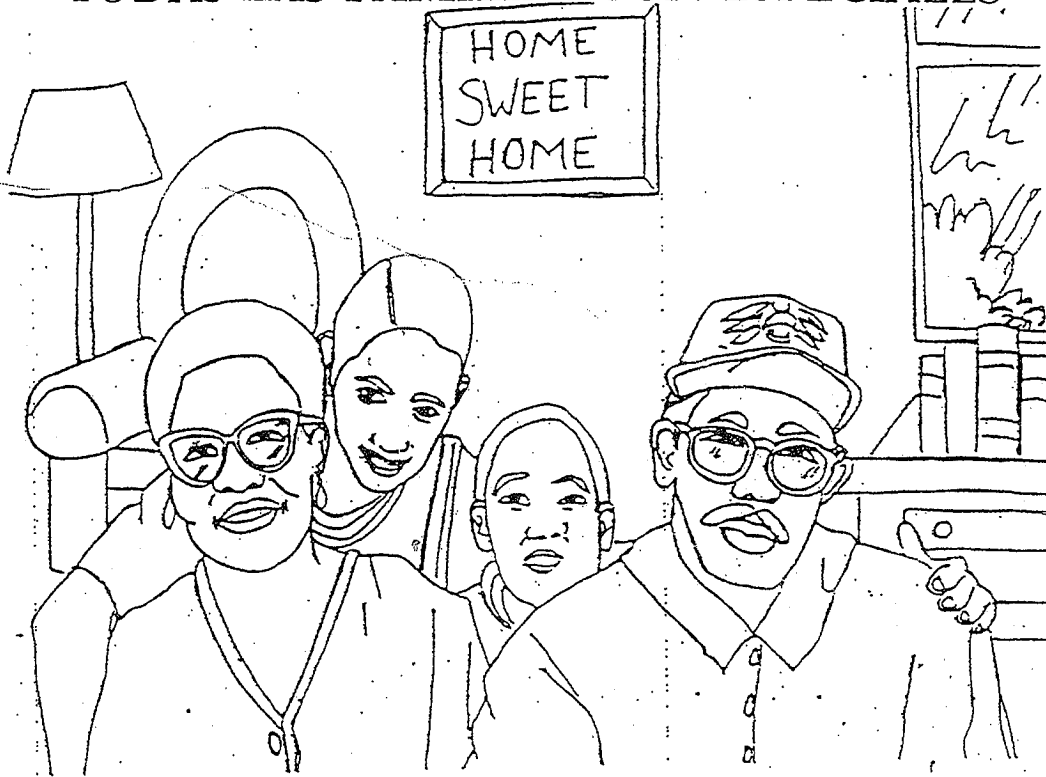


ALL FAMILIES ARE SPECIAL
TODAS LAS FAMILIAS SON ESPECIALES





ALL FAMILIES ARE SPECIAL.
TODAS LAS FAMILIAS SON ESPECIALES.



Family Members Graph

Make two different bar graphs of your family. Color in one square for each member. SELECT ONE OF THESE QUESTIONS TO GRAPH:

- How many people are in your family? (Include members who no longer live at home.)
- How many family members live in your home?

STUDENT INITIALS

12																			
11																			
10																			
9																			
8																			
7																			
6																			
5																			
4																			
3																			
2																			

Book: Jack and Jim by Kitty Crowther

Topic: Gay-Themed Literature-Gay Relationship/Inter-Racial Relationship

Duration: 30-40 mins

Grades: 1-3

RL.2.6. Acknowledge differences in the points of view of characters, including by speaking in a different voice for each character when reading dialogue aloud.

RL.2.3. Describe how characters in a story respond to major events and challenges.

RL.2.2. Recount stories, including fables and folktales from diverse cultures, and determine their central message, lesson, or moral.

Objective: Students will learn that they can have meaningful relationships with a same-gendered person or one of a different race. Students will learn not to make judgments based on one's color or race. Students will learn to appreciate other people's abilities.

Language Objective: Students will be able to complete the Venn diagram graphic organizer with details. Students will be able to note similarities and differences.

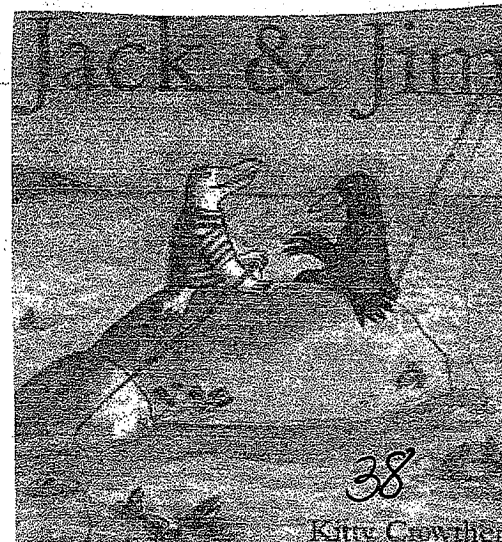
Materials: *Jack and Jim* book by Kitty Crowther and Venn diagram graphic organizer.

Procedure:

1. Discuss what problems might arise if someone joins a new group. Discuss what problems might arise if person is different.
2. Have students look at the book's cover and discuss why the two birds/boys might have problems in the story.
3. Read the book. Along the way, discuss the importance of their friendship. Discuss the unimportance of the racial issues, Discuss the special ability of the character and the misjudgment/prejudice toward him by the villagers.
4. Complete the Venn diagram graphic organizer. Write the similarities and differences between the characters Jack and Jim. Then, create another Venn diagram and compare and contrast the student's friendships to the character's friendship.
5. During the lesson, focus on similarities and why that is important. Also, discuss how being different makes us all unique and special.

Assessment:

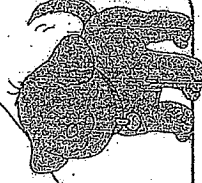
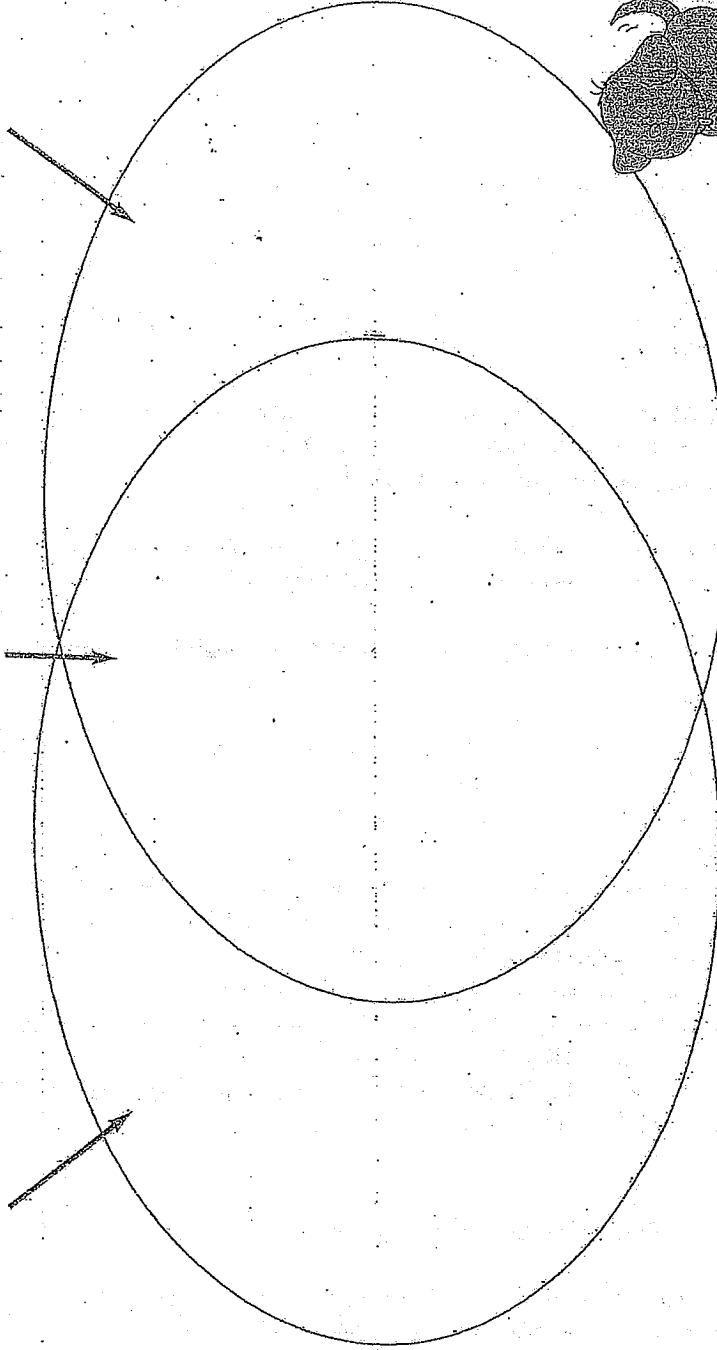
- a. Have students write about Jim's special ability and how that helped him achieve approval among the villagers.
- b. Discuss why Jim was misjudged by the villagers and why it was wrong.
- c. Have students write about the character's friendship and why it was special.



Venn Diagram

Name: _____

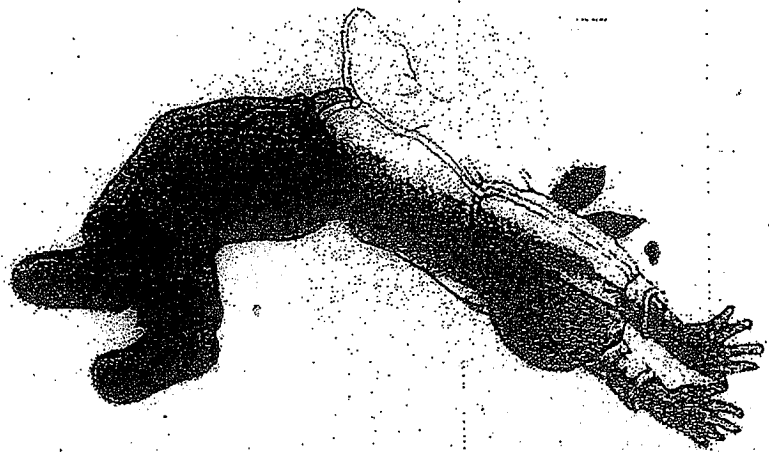
Both of us Name: _____



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WILLIAM'S DOLL

by CHARLOTTE ZOLOTOW
pictures by WILLIAM PÈNE DU BOIS



Book: William's Doll by Charlotte Zolotow

Topic: Gender Non-Conformity

Duration: 30-40 mins

Grades: 1-3

Objective: Students will learn that gender non-conformative behavior is normal and common.

Language Objective: Students will learn to complete the story map graphic organizer with all appropriate story elements, correctly.

Materials: *William's Doll* book and the story map graphic organizer.

Procedure:

1. Discuss that some people are gender non-conformative; some women have masculine behavior/traits and some men have feminine behavior/traits.
2. Discuss how it makes the students feel when they see gender non-conformative behavior and why. Have they seen children/people bullied when they act with gender non-conformative behavior? Would they defend the bullied person? Why should the bullied be defended?
3. Read the book. Ask questions while reading related to gender non-conformity and content. Focus on William's feelings, for example.
4. Complete the story map as a class. (Do not complete the 'ending' portion, see below)

Assessment:

- a. Have the students complete the story map's 'ending' independently. Discuss the students' endings.
- b. Discuss the solution to the story. (Grandma came and took William to a toy store to buy a doll.)
- c. Have students create different endings/solutions to the story.

Setting

Characters

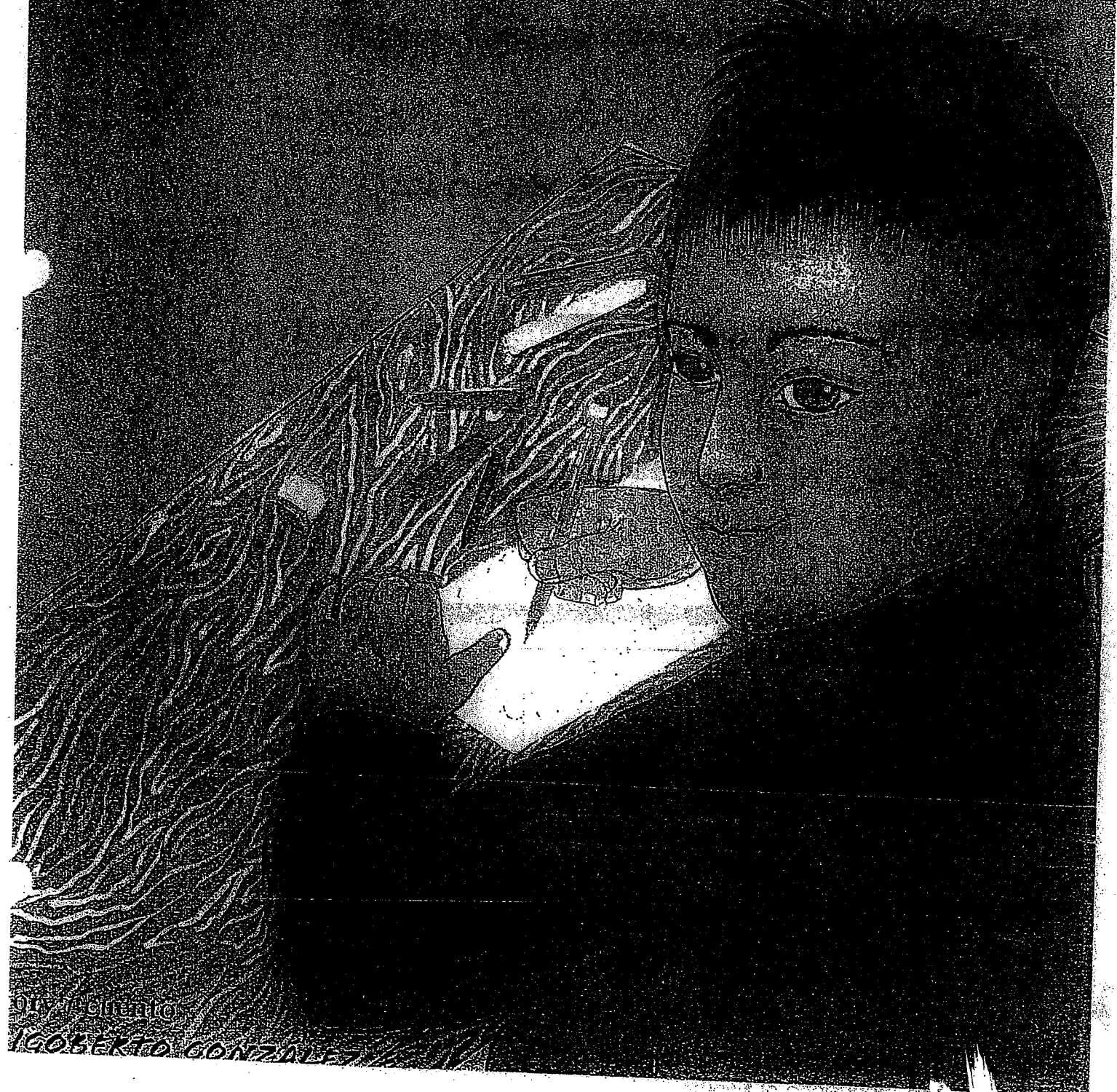
Problem

Events

Solution

Antonio's Card

La Tarjeta de Antonio



by Roberto
ROBERTO GONZALEZ

Book: Antonio's Card by Rigoberto Gonzalez

Topic: Gay-Themed Literature/Two-Mommy Lesbian Family

Duration: 40-50 mins

Grades: 3-6

Objective: Students will learn that some families comprise of two-mommies. Students will learn that lesbian-headed families are unique and have the same needs for food, love, and shelter.

Language Objective: Students will be able to complete the cause and effect graphic organizer and note the relationship between both.

Materials: *Antonio's Card* book by Rigoberto Gonzalez and the cause and effect graphic organizer.

Procedure:

1. Discuss that a family is a group of people who love, live and work together. Discuss the student's families found in class. Discuss that all families are special and unique and most importantly discuss that families are LOVE.
2. Read the book. Ask about the family and how it is unique and special. How is the family similar to their family? How is the child in the story similar to the students?
3. Complete the cause and effect graphic organizer. Discuss and write the details of the story: write the effect of each cause.

Assessment:

- a. Have students generate their own cause and effects from the story.
- b. Have students generate different cause and effects from the story, therefore, changing the story.
- c. Have students complete a story map.
- d. Have students write a summary.

CAUSE

Why Something Happens

EFFECT

What Happens

Cause and Effect Text Pattern

23

1. The first part of the document is a list of names and titles, including the names of the authors and the titles of their respective works. This list is organized in a structured manner, with each entry consisting of a name followed by a title and possibly a subtitle or a brief description. The text is arranged in a grid-like format, with columns and rows clearly defined. The names are written in a serif font, and the titles are in a smaller, possibly sans-serif font. The overall appearance is that of a formal document or a book's table of contents.



THE
END

Book: *The Harvey Milk Story* by Kari Krakow

Topic: Gay-Themed Literature/Biography.

Duration: 40-50 mins

Grades: 3-8

Objective: Students will learn about the politician Harvey Milk. Students will learn the importance Harvey Milk played in the Gay Civil Rights movement. They will learn about his accomplishments and how he changed California forever.

Language Objective: Students will be able to complete an expository structure map graphic organizer. Students will fill in the topic (Harvey Milk) and subtopics (accomplishments) with a conclusion. The subtopics will include detailed complete sentences.

Materials: *The Harvey Milk Story* book by Kari Krakow and expository structure graphic organizer.

Procedure:

1. Discuss what a biography is. Discuss the Harvey Milk Holiday (May 22) in California, Discuss how Harvey Milk was an important person in Gay Civil Rights.
2. Read the book. Along the way, discuss Harvey Milk's accomplishments in early life, mid life, and as a city supervisor. Discuss the accomplishments as a gay civil rights advocate. Importantly, discuss how, as a supervisor, he changed lives for all citizens of the city.
3. Write and complete the expository structure graphic organizer. The topic is Harvey Milk. Subtopics may be but are not limited to: a) early life, b) mid-life, c) city supervisor, d) civil rights. List the accomplishments and major points mentioned in the biography.

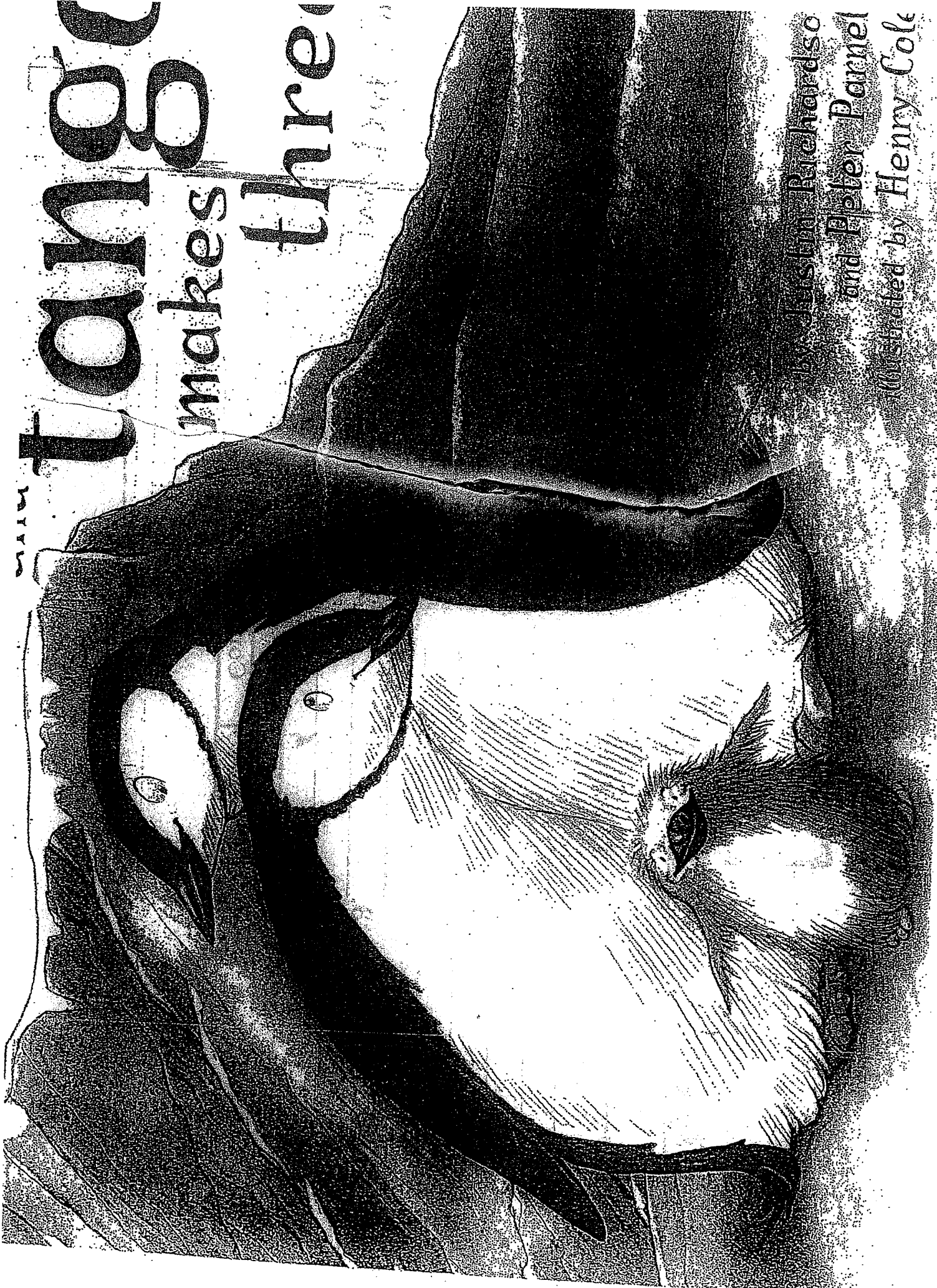
Assessment:

- a. Discuss the conclusion as a class. What conclusions does the class come up with to add to the graphic organizer?
- b. Have the students write and complete a summary of the story.
- c. Have students write the main idea of the biography with major points then draw an accompanying picture.

Expository Structure

Topic	Topic	Topic	Topic
Subtopic	Subtopic	Subtopic	Subtopic
1.	1.	1.	1.
2.	2.	2.	2.
3.	3.	3.	3.
Conclusion			

John
makes
three



by William Richardson
and Peter Parnell
Illustrated by Henry Cole

Book: *And Tango Makes Three* by Justin Richardson and Peter Parnell

Topic: Gay-Themed Literature/Two-Daddy Gay Family

Duration: 30-40 mins

Grades: 2-5

Objective: Students will learn that some families comprise of two-daddies. Students will learn that gay-headed families are special and have the same needs for food, love, and shelter.

Language Objective: Students will learn to complete the summarizing graphic organizer for fiction stories. Students will write in complete detailed sentences the beginning, middle, end and a summary for the story.

Materials: *And Tango Makes Three* book by Justin Richardson and Peter Parnell and summarizing graphic organizer for fiction stories.

Procedure:

1. Discuss that a family is a group of people who love, live and work together. Discuss the student's different families found in class. Discuss that all families are special and unique and most importantly discuss that families are LOVE.
2. Read the book. Ask about the story's family and how it is unique and special. How is the family similar to their family? How is the baby/child in the story similar to them? What is the problem for the characters and how does it get solved? Are the baby's needs met and how?
3. Work and complete the summarizing organizer. Include the title, beginning, middle, and end. You may also include other story elements such as author, events, climax, and solution, for example. Then, create the full summary by combining all of the aforementioned elements.

Assessment:

- a. Have the students create their own summaries mentioned above. Discuss the summaries created by individual students. Did the students discuss in their writing about the importance of the problem and solution and the love found in the family?
- b. Have the students draw a picture to accompany their summarizing graphic organizer.

Beginning

Middle

End

Summary

Summarizing Graphic Organizer F.5ifoo



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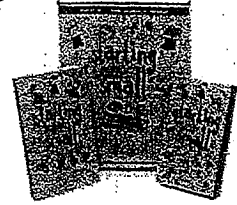
Starting Small

Level: Professional Development
Subject: Social Studies

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Level: Grades 6 to 8 Grades 9 to 12

Subject: Reading and Language Arts Social Studies Science and Health Arts ELL/ESL

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Bullied is a documentary film that chronicles one student's ordeal at the hands of anti-gay bullies and offers an inspiring message of hope to those fighting harassment today. It can become a cornerstone of anti-bullying efforts in middle and high schools.



Bullied includes:

- A 40-minute documentary film (DVD), with closed captioning and with Spanish subtitles
- A two-part viewer's guide with standards-aligned lesson plans and activities for use in staff development
- Additional materials online

Bullied is designed to help administrators, teachers and counselors create a safer school environment for all students, not just those who are gay and lesbian. It is also intended to help all students understand the terrible toll bullying can take on its victims, and to encourage students to stand up for their classmates who are being harassed.

Bullied has been endorsed by the NEA.

Note: Limit of one kit per school.

"This film is powerful, important and extremely realistic. It provides teachers with a rare opportunity to address bullying in a real and meaningful way." -- Lee Cutler, Secretary/Treasurer, New York State United Teachers


Listmania!

Excellent Children's Literature with Themes of Homosexuality

A Listmania! list by [John McDevitt](#) (The Dreaming)

The list author says: "This is a small selection of excellent children's and young adult books with homosexual, bisexual, and transgender themes. Many of them have won the most honored children's literary awards. The list begins with picture books and ends with chapter books."


1. The Family Book by Todd Parr



\$10.87 Used & New from: \$7.89
Average Customer Rating: (37)

[Add to Cart](#) [Add to Wish List](#)
[Create your own Listmania! with this product](#)

2. And Tango Makes Three by Peter Parnell




The list author says:
"AMERICAN LIBRARY ASSOCIATION NOTABLE CHILDREN'S BOOK"

\$11.19 Used & New from: \$7.00
Average Customer Rating: (74)

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3. King & King by Linda de Haan



\$10.17 Used & New from: \$9.03
Average Customer Rating: (36)

[Add to Cart](#) [Add to Wish List](#)
[Create your own Listmania! with this product](#)


4. King & King & Family by Linda De Haan



\$11.86 Used & New from: \$3.80
Average Customer Rating: (4)

[Add to Cart](#) [Add to Wish List](#)
[Create your own Listmania! with this product](#)

5. Jack and Jim by Kitty Crowther



Used & New from: \$16.05
Average Customer Rating: (5)

[See all buying options](#) [Add to Wish List](#)
[Create your own Listmania! with this product](#)

About this Listmania!

Author: [John McDevitt](#) (The Dreaming)

Qualifications: Children's Literature Enthusiast



List Stats

Last updated: 1/28/07
Read: 1,116 times
Rated: 11 out of 11 helpful



Rate it! Do you find this list helpful?
[Yes](#) [No](#)
(report this)

More Listmania!

China Adoption Books for Kids:
A list of 24 items by "ngandee"



Books for Teens w/ Gay and Lesbian Parents: A list of 40 items by rainbowheart

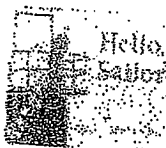



Retold Fairy Tale Standouts: A list of 13 items by Nicole Lowery




Books read in July 2003: A list of 20 items by Ref!

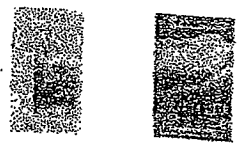





6. Hello, Sailor by Ingrid Godon

\$19.00 Used & New from:
\$9.15
Average Customer Rating:
★★★★☆ (1)

[Add to Cart](#) [Add to Wish List](#)
Create your own Listmania! with this product



And They Lived Happily Ever After (Part I) ...: A list of 18 items by Christina Hsu

[See the top 100 Lists](#)



7. The Duke Who Outlawed Jelly Beans and Other Stories by Johnny Valentine

\$8.76 Used & New from:
\$6.04
Average Customer Rating:
★★★★☆ (2)

[Add to Cart](#) [Add to Wish List](#)
Create your own Listmania! with this product

Search Listmania!

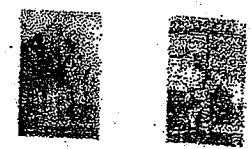


8. Antonio's Card / La Tarjeta de Antonio by Rigoberto Gonzalez

\$12.71 Used & New from:
\$7.22
Average Customer Rating:
★★★★☆ (2)

[Add to Cart](#) [Add to Wish List](#)
Create your own Listmania! with this product

More So You'd Like to...



read a page-turner: A guide of 50 items by Gaia Moore "Fargo"



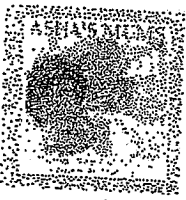
9. Felicia's Favorite Story by Leslea Newman

\$9.95 Used & New from: \$5.22
Average Customer Rating:
★★★★☆ (3)

[Add to Cart](#) [Add to Wish List](#)
Create your own Listmania! with this product



READ books that are sure to hook you! WARNING! A guide of 50 items by Mrs. Stacy Arnett "WestJrTeacher"



10. Asha's Mums by Rosamund Elwin

\$8.95 Used & New from: \$5.95
Average Customer Rating:
★★★★☆ (2)

[Add to Cart](#) [Add to Wish List](#)
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come out as a lesbian teenager: A guide of 13 items by Marisa Debowsky



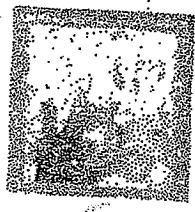
11. The White Swan Express: A Story About Adoption by Jean Davies Okimoto

\$12.00 Used & New from:
\$0.01
Average Customer Rating:
★★★★☆ (37)

[Add to Cart](#) [Add to Wish List](#)
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Read great books for adolescent girls...: A guide of 25 items by Caryn S. McGinty "Moenkopi"



12. Mom And Mum Are Getting Married by Ken Setterington

\$11.66 Used & New from:
\$7.65

[Add to Cart](#) [Add to Wish List](#)
Create your own Listmania! with this product



Know Patricia C. Wrede's books: A guide of 22 items by E. Thomas



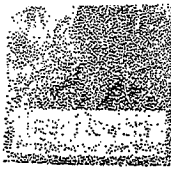
13. Molly's Family by Nancy Garden

\$10.88 Used & New from:
\$7.95
Average Customer Rating:
★★★★☆ (5)

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[See the top 100 So You'd Like to... Guides](#)

Search Guides



\$7.95 Used & New from:
\$1.75

[Add to Cart](#) [Add to Wish List](#)

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15. The Case of the Stolen Scarab (Candlestone Inn Mystery #1) (Candlestone Inn Mysteries) by Nancy Garden

\$8.95 Used & New from:
\$3.23

Average Customer Rating:
★★★★☆ (1)

[Add to Cart](#) [Add to Wish List](#)

[Create your own Listmania! with this product](#)



16. The Skull of Truth: A Magic Shop Book (Magic Shop Series, No 4) by Bruce Coville

The list author says:
"School Library Journal Best Book"

Used & New from: \$0.01
Average Customer Rating:
★★★★☆ (21)

[Add to Cart](#) [Add to Wish List](#)

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17. From The Notebooks Of Melanin Sun by Jacqueline Woodson

The list author says:
"CORETTA SCOTT KING HONOR BOOK"

\$5.99 Used & New from: \$0.42
Average Customer Rating:
★★★★☆ (13)

[Add to Cart](#) [Add to Wish List](#)

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18. The House You Pass on the Way by Jacqueline Woodson

\$5.99 Used & New from: \$1.22
Average Customer Rating:
★★★★☆ (6)

[Add to Cart](#) [Add to Wish List](#)

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19. Absolutely Positively Not (Sid Fleischman Humor Award) by David LaRochelle

The list author says:
"SID FLEISCHMAN HUMOR AWARD
BOOKLIST EDITORS' CHOICE"

\$11.53 Used & New from:
\$3.73
Average Customer Rating:
★★★★☆ (10)

[Add to Cart](#) [Add to Wish List](#)

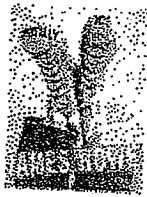
[Create your own Listmania! with this product](#)



20. The Misfits by James Howe

\$5.99 Used & New from: \$0.50
Average Customer Rating:
★★★★☆ (70)

[Add to Cart](#) [Add to Wish List](#)
Create your own Listmania! with this product



21. Totally Joe by James Howe

\$16.99 Used & New from:
\$0.82
Average Customer Rating:
★★★★☆ (9)

[Add to Cart](#) [Add to Wish List](#)
Create your own Listmania! with this product



22. 13: Thirteen Stories That Capture the Agony and Ecstasy of Being Thirteen by James Howe

\$7.99 Used & New from:
\$3.69
Average Customer Rating:
★★★★☆ (9)

[Add to Cart](#) [Add to Wish List](#)
Create your own Listmania! with this product



23. Am I Blue?: Coming Out from the Silence by Marion Dane Bauer

The list author says:

"MINNESOTA BOOK AWARD
GAY-LESBIAN-BISEXUAL BEST BOOK
AMERICAN LIBRARY ASSOCIATION BEST BOOK FOR YOUNG ADULTS"

\$7.99 Used & New from: \$0.34
Average Customer Rating:
★★★★☆ (27)

[Add to Cart](#) [Add to Wish List](#)
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24. Athletic Shorts: Six Short Stories by Chris Crutcher

The list author says:

"SCHOOL LIBRARY JOURNAL BEST BOOK
AMERICAN LIBRARY ASSOCIATION BEST BOOK"

\$6.99 Used & New from: \$0.01
Average Customer Rating:
★★★★☆ (20)

[Add to Cart](#) [Add to Wish List](#)
Create your own Listmania! with this product



25. Ironman by Chris Crutcher

The list author says:

"PARENTS' CHOICE AWARD
CALIFORNIA YOUNG READER MEDAL
SCHOOL LIBRARY JOURNAL BEST BOOK"

\$6.99 Used & New from: \$0.67
Average Customer Rating:
★★★★☆ (51)

[Add to Cart](#) [Add to Wish List](#)
Create your own Listmania! with this product



26. My Heartbeat by Garret Freymann-Weyr

The list author says:
"MICHAEL L. PRINTZ HONOR BOOK
BOOKLIST EDITORS' CHOICE
SCHOOL LIBRARY JOURNAL BEST BOOK"

Used & New from: \$3.77
Average Customer Rating:
4.5 (25)

[See all buying options](#) [Add to Wish List](#)

[Create your own Listmania! with this product](#)



27. Sunday You Learn How to Box: A Novel by Bill Wright

\$12.95 Used & New from: \$0.01
Average Customer Rating:
4.5 (22)

[Add to Cart](#) [Add to Wish List](#)

[Create your own Listmania! with this product](#)



28. Boy Meets Boy by David Levithan

The list author says:
"AMERICAN LIBRARY ASSOCIATION TOP TEN FOR YOUNG ADULTS
BOOKLIST EDITORS' CHOICE
LAMBDA LITERARY AWARD"

\$5.95 Used & New from: \$3.66
Average Customer Rating:
4.5 (51)

[Add to Cart](#) [Add to Wish List](#)

[Create your own Listmania! with this product](#)



29. Pedro and Me by Judd Winick

The list author says:
"AMERICAN LIBRARY ASSOCIATION NOTABLE CHILDREN'S BOOK
YOUNG ADULT LIBRARY SERVICES ASSOCIATION NOTABLE GRAPHIC
NOVEL
PUBLISHER'S WEEKLY BEST BOOK"

\$11.86 Used & New from: \$2.27
Average Customer Rating:
4.5 (37)

[Add to Cart](#) [Add to Wish List](#)

[Create your own Listmania! with this product](#)



30. Night Kites by M. E. Kerr

The list author says:
"CALIFORNIA YOUNG READER MEDAL"

\$6.99 Used & New from: \$0.01
Average Customer Rating:
4.5 (14)

[Add to Cart](#) [Add to Wish List](#)

[Create your own Listmania! with this product](#)



31. Briar Rose by Jane Yolen

\$5.99 Used & New from: \$1.59
Average Customer Rating:
4.5 (174)

[Add to Cart](#) [Add to Wish List](#)

[Create your own Listmania! with this product](#)



32. Living in Secret by Cristina Salat

\$8.95 Used & New from: \$2.42
Average Customer Rating:
★★★★☆ (2)

[Add to Cart](#) [Add to Wish List](#)

[Create your own Listmania! with this product](#)



33. Luna by Julie Anne Peters

The list author says:
"NATIONAL BOOK AWARD FINALIST
STONEWALL HONOR BOOK
LAMBDA LITERARY AWARD FINALIST
ALA BEST BOOK FOR YOUNG ADULTS"

\$7.99 Used & New from: \$1.77
Average Customer Rating:
★★★★☆ (41)

[Add to Cart](#) [Add to Wish List](#)

[Create your own Listmania! with this product](#)



34. Keeping You a Secret by Julie Anne Peters

The list author says:
"STONEWALL HONOR BOOK
LAMBDA LITERARY AWARD FINALIST
ALA BEST BOOK FOR YOUNG ADULTS"

\$7.98 Used & New from: \$2.70
Average Customer Rating:
★★★★☆ (55)

[Add to Cart](#) [Add to Wish List](#)

[Create your own Listmania! with this product](#)



35. Geography Club by Brent Hartinger

The list author says:
"YOUNG ADULT LIBRARY SERVICES ASSOCIATION MUST READ
LAMBDA LITERARY AWARD FINALIST
AMERICAN LIBRARY ASSOCIATION POPULAR PAPERBACK"

\$7.99 Used & New from: \$3.95
Average Customer Rating:
★★★★☆ (77)

[Add to Cart](#) [Add to Wish List](#)

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36. The Order of the Poison Oak by Brent Hartinger

\$6.98 Used & New from: \$1.96
Average Customer Rating:
★★★★☆ (32)

[Add to Cart](#) [Add to Wish List](#)

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37. Rainbow Boys by Alex Sanchez

The list author says:
"AMERICAN LIBRARY ASSOCIATION BEST BOOK FOR YOUNG ADULTS"

\$8.99 Used & New from: \$1.87
Average Customer Rating:
★★★★☆ (30)

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101 TOOLS FOR TOLERANCE
IDEAS FOR YOUR SCHOOL

Links for Teachers

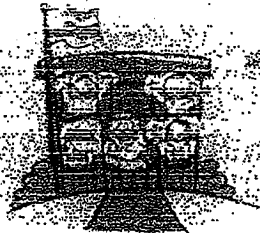
Ideas for Your School

Ideas for Your Workplace

Share Your Ideas

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English | Español

41. Donate tolerance-related books, films, magazines and other materials to school libraries. Organize a book drive.
42. Buy art supplies for a local school. Sponsor a mural about the cultural composition and heritage of your community.
43. Volunteer to be an advisor for a student club. Support a wide range of extracurricular activities to help students "find their place" at school.
44. Coach a girls' sports team. Encourage schools to provide equal resources for boys' and girls' athletics.
45. Sponsor a conflict resolution team.
46. Ask school counselors what resources they have for supporting gay and lesbian youth. Offer additional materials if necessary.
47. Assess your school's compliance with the accessibility requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act. Organize a class project to improve compliance.
48. Donate a tape recorder to a school that is conducting oral history projects. Suggest a focus on local struggles for civil rights.
49. Start a pen pal program. Get students in touch with people in different parts of the community, country or world.
50. Applaud the other team. Promote good sportsmanship and ban taunting.
51. Encourage schools to go beyond the "heroes and holidays" model to develop a rich, ongoing multicultural curriculum. Give tolerance materials to educators in your community.
52. Provide confidential methods for students to report harassment or bullying.
53. Encourage school administrators to adopt Internet-use policies that address online hate, harassment and pornography.
53. Discourage the use of divisive school emblems.
55. Ensure that schools comply with the McKinney Act, the federal law mandating educational services for homeless children.



56. Create a bilingual (or multilingual)

Tolerance Watch

- In the news
- Track U.S. hate groups
- Learn the truth about
- Find the truth behind music

Do Something

- 10 Ways to Fight Hate
- 10 Ways to Fight Hate on Campus
- 101 Tools for Tolerance
- Respond to hate at
- Mix it up at lunch
- Make every victim count
- Find a human rights
- Order our materials
- Speak up in our forum
- Get our newsletter

Dig Deeper

- Explore your hidden
- Deconstruct biased
- Explore hidden history
- Visit the Civil Rights

101 TOOLS FOR TOLERANCE

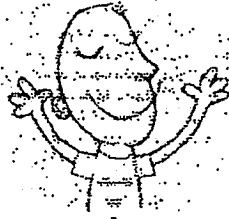
IDEAS FOR YOURSELF

Ideas for Yourself

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1. Attend a play, listen to music or go to a dance performance by artists whose race or ethnicity is different from your own.



2. Volunteer at a local social services organization.

3. Attend services at a variety of churches, synagogues, mosques and temples to learn about different faiths.

4. Visit a local senior citizens center and collect oral histories. Donate large-print reading materials and books on tape. Offer to help with a craft project.

5. Shop at ethnic grocery stores and specialty markets. Get to know the owners. Ask about their family histories.

6. Participate in a diversity program.

7. Ask a person of another cultural heritage to teach you how to perform a traditional dance or cook a traditional meal.

8. Learn sign language.

9. Take a conversation course in another language that is spoken in your community.

10. Teach an adult to read.

11. Speak up when you hear slurs. Let people know that bias speech is always unacceptable.

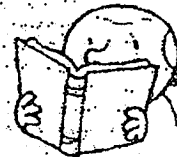
12. Imagine what your life might be like if you were a person of another race, gender or sexual orientation. How might "today" have been different?

13. Take the "Hidden Bias" test. Enlist some friends to take this "hidden bias" test with you and discuss the results.

14. Take a "Diversity Heritage" vacation. Tour key sites and museums.

15. Research your family history. Share information about your heritage in talks with others.

16. List all the stereotypes you can — positive and negative — about a particular group. Are these stereotypes reflected in your actions?



Tolerance War

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- Find the truth behin music

Do Something

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101 TOOLS FOR TOLERANCE

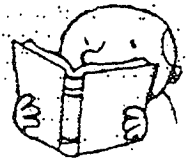
IDEAS FOR YOUR HOME

- 21. Invite someone of a different background to join your family for a meal or holiday.
- 22. Give a multicultural doll, toy or game as a gift.
- 23. Assess the cultural diversity reflected in your home's artwork, music and literature. Add something new.



- 24. Don't buy playthings that promote or glorify violence.
- 25. Establish a high "comfort level" for open dialogue about social issues. Let children know that no subject is taboo.

- 26. Bookmark equity and diversity websites on your home computer.
- 27. Point out stereotypes and cultural misinformation depicted in movies, TV shows, computer games and other media.
- 28. Take the family to an ethnic restaurant. Learn about more than just the food.
- 29. Involve all members of the family in selecting organizations to support with charitable gifts.
- 30. Gather information about local volunteer opportunities and let your children select projects for family participation.
- 31. Play "action hero" with your children. Are the heroes all aggressive males? Help your children see the heroic qualities in those whose contributions often go unrecognized (e.g., nurses, bridge builders, volunteers in homeless shelters).
- 32. Affirm your children's curiosity about race and ethnicity. Point out that people come in many shades.
- 33. Help young children make an illustrated list of what friends do or what friendship means.
- 34. Read books with diverse themes to your children.
- 35. Watch what you say in front of children when you're angry. Curb your road rage.
- 36. Watch how you handle emotional issues with girls and boys. Do you attempt to distract crying boys but reassure crying girls?



Tolerance Watch

- In the news
- Track U.S. hate groups
- Learn the truth about
- Find the truth behind music

Do Something

- 10 Ways to Fight Hate
- 10 Ways to Fight Hate on Campus
- 101 Tools for Tolerance
- Respond to hate attacks
- Mix it up at lunch
- Make every victim count
- Find a human rights organization
- Order our materials
- Speak up in our forums
- Get our newsletter


Dig Deeper

- Explore your hidden biases
- Deconstruct biased news
- Explore hidden history
- Visit the Civil Rights Museum

[Ideas for Yourself](#)
[Ideas for Your Home](#)
[Ideas for Your Children](#)
[Ideas for Your Workplace](#)
[Share Your Ideas](#)
[Download the PDF: English | Español](#)

101 TOOLS FOR TOLERANCE

IDEAS FOR YOUR WORKPLACE

61. Hold a "diversity potluck" lunch. Invite co-workers to bring dishes that reflect their cultural heritage.
62. Arrange a "box-lunch forum" on topics of diverse cultural and social interest.
63. Partner with a local school and encourage your colleagues to serve as tutors or mentors.
64. Sponsor a community-wide "I Have a Dream" essay contest.
65. Examine the degree of diversity at all levels of your workplace. Are there barriers that make it harder for people of color and women to succeed? Suggest ways to overcome them.
66. Cast a wide net when recruiting new employees.
67. Give everyone a chance for that promotion. Post all job openings.
68.  — the tendency to favor those who are similar to ourselves.
69. Value the input of every employee. Reward managers who do.
70. Avoid singling out employees of a particular race or ethnicity to "handle" diversity issues on behalf of everyone else.
71. Vary your lunch partners. Seek out co-workers of different backgrounds, from different departments, and at different levels in the company.
72. Start a mentoring program that pairs veteran employees with newcomers.
73. Establish an internal procedure for employees to report incidents of harassment or discrimination. Publicize the policy widely.
74. Add social justice funds to 401(k) investment options.
75. Ensure that your workplace complies with the accessibility requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act.
76. Push for equitable leave policies. Provide paid maternity and paternity leave.
77. Don't close your door. Foster an open working environment.

Tolerant Work

- In the news
- Track U.S. hate groups
- Learn the truth about music
- Find the truth behind...

Do Something

- 10 Ways to Fight Hate
- 10 Ways to Fight Hate on Campus
- 101 Tools for Tolerance
- Respond to hate at work
- Mix it up at lunch
- Make every victim count
- Find a human rights organization
- Order our materials
- Speak up in our forums
- Get our newsletter

Dig Deeper

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- Deconstruct biased language
- Explore hidden history
- Visit the Civil Rights Museum

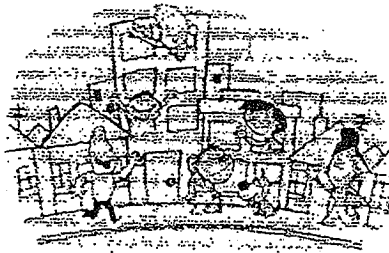
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[Ideas for Your Workplace](#)
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101 TOOLS FOR TOLERANCE

IDEAS FOR YOUR COMMUNITY

- 81. Frequent minority-owned businesses and get to know the proprietors.
- 82. Participate in a blood drive, or clean up a local stream. Identify issues that reach across racial, ethnic and other divisions and forge alliances for tackling them.
- 83. Start a monthly "diversity roundtable" to discuss critical issues facing your community. Establish an equity forum.
- 84. Hold a community-wide yard sale and use the proceeds to improve a park or community center. Celebrate the event with a picnic.
- 85. Build a community peace garden.
- 86. Make copies of the Declaration of Tolerance, encourage others to sign the pledge, and return it to:

The National Campaign for Tolerance
400 Washington Avenue
Montgomery, AL 36104
- 87. Start a "language bank" of volunteer interpreters for all languages used in your community.
- 88. Encourage fellow members of your congregation to be tolerance activists.
- 89. Create a town website.
- 90. Host a "multicultural extravaganza" such as a food fair or art, fashion and talent show.
- 91. Create a mobile "street library" to make multicultural books and films widely available.
- 92. Establish an ecumenical alliance. Bring people of diverse faiths together for retreats, workshops or potluck dinners. Be welcoming to agnostics and atheists, too.
- 93. Write a letter to the editor if your local newspaper ignores any segment of the community or stories about cooperation and tolerance.
- 94. Start a campaign to establish a multicultural center for the arts. Ask local museums to hosts exhibits and events reflecting diversity at home and elsewhere.



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101 Tools for Tolerance

I pledge to promote tolerance by exercising the following:

Ideas for your school

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Ideas for yourself

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Ideas for your home

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Ideas for your workplace

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Ideas for your community

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____
