



LGBTQ-Inclusive Lesson Planning Guide - December 2008

Teachers who are planning your lessons for **December** may find it helpful to integrate some of the following, to infuse LGBTQ* cultural awareness into the every day life of your classroom. Especially those teaching **history, civics, social studies, home and family life, or language arts**. Item #7 will be useful in teaching **writing skills**.

- (1) **Some dates to recognize in your December lesson plans, including World AIDS Day, International Human Rights Day**
- (2) **World AIDS Day, December 1st -- making it LGBTQ youth inclusive for a change**
- (3) **International Human Rights Day, December 10th**
- (4) **Why is the bisexuality of the champion of the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, Eleanor Roosevelt, worthy of mention here?**
- (5) **What is an ally and how is December 10th, International Human Rights Day, a day to celebrate allies?**
- (6) **How is December 10th, International Human Rights Day, a day for discussing marriage equality?**
- (7) **Some quotes to inspire your students' journaling**

* LGBTQ: Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Questioning (and for some young people, especially White youth and young adults on the coasts, the "Q" may also signify a personal identity as "queer." However, we still advise schools that the word is still considered derogatory by many LGBTQ people.)

NOTE: You will find recent past email messages **archived** at <http://www.safeschoolscoalition.org/listserve/index.html> and all of these monthly history messages are **archived** at <http://www.safeschoolscoalition.org/blackboard-history.html>

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- (1) **Some dates to recognize in your December lesson plans, including World AIDS Day, International Human Rights Day**

December 1 - World AIDS Day. This listserv has traditionally avoided much coverage of HIV/AIDS, since schools have many more sources for that information than they do about sexual diversity ... and because, too often, educators seem to think that "covering" AIDS is sufficient ... that they don't ALSO have to address gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender people as whole human beings and contributing members of the school community. However, on this December 1st, we are making an exception. Partly we make this exception because **schools have bent too far backward NOT to link gay issues and HIV. See more in item #2, below.**

December 5, 2005 - A New Jersey **court** rules that school districts have the same responsibility to stop harassment of students that employers have to prevent harassment of employees, ending, at least in NJ, a tougher standard of proof for student complainants than for adults in the workplace.

December 5, 1935 - African American rock artist **Little Richard** is born. He will grow up never trying to hide his flaming femininity and still rocket to the top of his profession. More at http://www.glbtc.com/arts/little_richard.html and <http://www.rockabilly.net/articles/littlerichard2.shtml> and http://www.vh1.com/artists/news/520443/12041999/little_richard.jhtml

December 10, 2003 - Two brigadier generals and a rear admiral, all retired, [announce](#) they are gay on the 10th anniversary of the military's "**don't ask, don't tell**" policy, prohibiting honesty among GLBT service members.



December 10, 1948 - The United Nations adopts the **Universal Declaration of Human Rights**. Among its key architects was former first lady, and human rights activist Eleanor Roosevelt. Roosevelt had lifelong emotional support for her human rights work from her husband, Franklin, as well as from her beloved companion, Lorena A. Hickok. Besides Roosevelt of the United States, the other major players in drafting this amazing declaration were René Cassin (France), Charles Malik (Lebanon), Peng Chun Chang (China), Hernan Santa Cruz (Chile), Alexandre Bogomolov/Alexei Pavlov, (Soviet Union), Lord Dukeston/Geoffrey Wilson (United Kingdom) William Hodgson (Australia), and John Humphrey (Canada). **See more in items #3-6, below.**

December 14, 2006 - Actress **Kate Fleming** is trapped in a flooded basement room in her Seattle home. Her partner of ten years, **Charlene Strong**, follows the ambulance to the hospital and is prevented by hospital staff from being at Kate's side for a number of torturous minutes until Kate's biological family can be reached on the east coast. Charlene is with Kate, finally, when she dies. Afterward, a funeral director refuses to shake Charlene's hand or allow her to make arrangements, even with the full support of Kate's mother. Charlene will testify and help pass a Washington State domestic partner law that -- had it been in force that December -- would have allowed her to be by Kate's side and would have protected her Kate's right to let Charlene speak for her at the funeral home. *For My Wife* is a feature documentary chronicling Charlene's journey into activism following Kate's death.

December 15, 1973 - The **American Psychiatric Association** deletes homosexuality from its official list of mental disorders. The board bases this decision on its finding that most lesbians and gay men are clearly satisfied with their sexual orientation and show no signs of mental illness.

December 24, 1924 - The state of Illinois issues a charter to a non-profit organization called Society for Human Rights, the **first US-based gay human rights group**. The Society is quickly shut down, however, after a member's wife complains to the police and its founder, Henry Gerber is arrested for "obscenity".

December 27, 1973 - Singer/actor **Wilson Cruz** is born. Cruz grew up in a Puerto Rican family in New York and now lives out west with his boyfriend. Speak-truth.com reports, "Cruz says his portrayal of Rickie [his character on the TV drama *My So-Called Life*], who was frequently conflicted and in trouble, grew out of his relationship with his father and his adolescent anger with the treatment of gay people in society. His fervor has remained but his anger has cooled. He is still unhappy with everything from the Catholic Church (his attitude being 'if they don't want me, why should I want them?') to what he sees as the current 'being gay is a party' trend (he thinks frequently of those still dying of AIDS) but he is using his feelings in a constructive way to be a voice in Hollywood for the gay and Latino/a communities."

December 31, 1993 - Transgender youth **Brandon Teena**, age 21, is murdered by the same young men who raped him a week or so earlier after discovering he'd been born female. This notorious hate crime would be memorialized by Hilary Swank in **Boys Don't Cry**. For more, go to: <http://www.cnn.com/2003/US/Central/12/28/brandon.death.transgender.ap/> and <http://www.gender.org/remember/people/brandonframe.html>

December 31, 1901 - African-American, gay artist **Beauford Delaney** is born. Read about him at: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Beauford_Delaney and <http://www.cnn.com/2003/TRAVEL/DESTINATIONS/03/15/delaney.yellow.ap/>

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(2) World AIDS Day, December 1st -- making it LGBTQ youth inclusive for a change



Educators want to ensure that *all* teens recognize their vulnerability to HIV and other sexually transmitted diseases. And they want to avoid stereotyping gay men. So they have been trying for the last couple of decades to communicate the message that STDs don't discriminate, that anyone who has unprotected sex with an infected partner can become infected. And that is true.

But in this effort to include *heterosexual* youth in the conversation, and perhaps out of our own discomfort as well, we have often failed to address the gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender and questioning (GLBTQ) teens in our classes *at all*. We haven't said that we recognize their presence in the classroom, whether they are out to us or not. Or that we value their lives. And we haven't spoken to the elevated risk they face once they become sexually intimate.

After all, about 48% of all people diagnosed with AIDS in the U.S. probably caught the HIV infection through male-to-male sex; about 18% were probably infected heterosexually. Of course, recent shifts mean that girls and women do need to pay greater attention: Historically, about 19% of people diagnosed with AIDS have been girls and women, whereas, among those diagnosed in 2006, 27% were female.

In any case, it's time we stopped trying so hard to avoid stigmatizing GLBTQ people and spoke to the fact that some of our students are especially vulnerable to HIV. The fact is, according to a study published in the American Journal of Public Health, ***"GLB youths in schools with gay-sensitive instruction reported fewer sexual partners, less recent sex, and less substance use before last sex than did GLB youths in other schools."*** *

What might be some of the reasons their risk is elevated?

- First, their potential partners belong to a **smaller population** than other teens' partners (i.e., there are fewer gay, lesbian and bi people than there are heterosexuals), and disease just spreads more quickly in smaller pools of people.
- Also, some LGBTQ youth have sex or choose parenthood as a way to cope with **emotional and physical harassment**. When you've experienced a lot of stigma and rejection, it's not uncommon to feel depressed. Drugs and sex are ways of comforting yourself. Sex under-the-influence is often risky sex.
- Sometimes heterosexual dating and sex are seen as potential "fixes" for something that society has taught us is **broken**. And the risk for lesbian and bi teenage women may be elevated - despite the fact that heterosexual young women get HIV in greater actual *numbers* - because when lesbian and bi young women have heterosexual sex, it's often (as it is with *most* people) with their closest friends, some of whom are gay and bi teenage men.
- There's less **social and legal support** for long-term same-sex relationships. When teens can't bring their boyfriend or girlfriend to a school dance or party, when they can't invite them home for dinner or even hang out together at the mall for fear of assault, the stress of that social isolation on the relationship may lead to faster break-ups. And therefore more total lifetime partners. And therefore greater risk of HIV and other STD's.
- There are certainly exceptions among people of all genders, but in general, men tend to have more partners in their lives than women have. But heterosexual guys may not have as many total partners as they're hard-wired or socially programmed to have, due to what some sociologists call "the **moderating influence**" of women, to whom monogamy may matter more. (Although the generalizations speak **ONLY** to the disease's epidemiology and it is very important that educators not stereotype girls *or* guys, regardless of their sexual orientations.)



- Some LGBT teens get **sexually assaulted** (a sad reality for a much higher proportion of LGBTQ youth than for their heterosexual peers). Youth who've been sexually assaulted may feel less worthy of protection and may find it particularly tough to practice safer sex.
- Finally, given the fact that some studies have found as many as 40% of homeless youth are gay, lesbian or bisexual, some of their sex -- heterosexual and homosexual -- may be "survival sex" (a barter for a meal or a place to sleep). **Survival sex** is often risky sex.

When teachers teach about HIV in a way that *ignores* LGBTQ students, those students tune out. Understandably. So the way we've been educating in schools has done nothing to slow the spread of HIV among LGBTQ teens, even at a time when teens in general are delaying first sex and increasingly using protection!

The Safe Schools Coalition calls upon all its members and list subscribers, GSA leadership and adults alike, to make THIS World AIDS Day an LGBTIQ-visible event!

A classroom teacher might begin an HIV lesson by saying something like this,

*"Almost everybody here will probably have sex some day. That means **everybody** here needs to know about HIV and how to protect yourself. However, some of you are even **more** likely than others to someday have a partner who's HIV positive, whether that person knows it or not. That includes*

- *those of you who are gay or bi young men ... or who like sex with other guys, whether you think of yourself as gay or not;*
- *girls of any sexual orientation who have sex with a boy has had sex with another boy;*
- *those who have sex with someone from a part of the world where the epidemic is really huge (that's Sub-Saharan Africa, the Caribbean, South America, and South and Southeast Asia);*
- *those who have injected drugs if they've ever shared a needle;*
- *and those who date people who've ever injected illegal drugs or had other STD's (besides HIV).*

Does that mean that every person in these groups has HIV? Not at all. For instance, gay, lesbian, and bi youth who've abstained altogether or used protection really carefully may actually have lower risk than their straight friends. Same goes for people from parts of the world with raging HIV numbers. And people who inject drugs haven't all shared needles! It's not who you are; it's what you do and who you do it with that puts you at risk. Still, I hope those of you who know that your risk might be higher than average will pay closer attention during these next few lessons than you've paid to any lesson all semester. And I hope to make these lessons worth listening to."

And then the teacher ought to go on to teach not just **knowledge** about HIV [e.g., HIV is a virus, it destroys the immune system, living with HIV even if you can afford treatment is no piece of cake, etc.] but also **skills and attitudes**:

- how to figure out what you want and don't want in a dating relationship, even when that means abstaining -- and that you have a right to figure that out for yourself;
- how to communicate clearly to a partner what you want and don't want -- and that you have a right to be heard;
- when to take no for an answer -- and how to do so without losing face;
- how to negotiate condom or other barrier use with a partner - without feeling foolish;
- how to use barriers (including condoms) correctly - and that they don't have to interfere with "the moment";
- where to obtain barriers -- and that you can do it confidentially and without dying of embarrassment.

anywhere. Without concerted citizen action to uphold them close to home, we shall look in vain for progress in the larger world."
-- Eleanor Roosevelt

What is your family, your class, your club, your school district or your agency planning to do next, for instance, to ensure that nobody is "**subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment**" as promised by the Universal Declaration? What are you doing to ensure that every person "**has the right to freedom of peaceful assembly and association**"? How about that each of us "**has the right to education**"? Let us all work toward peace on earth and the full recognition of the human rights of every member of the human family.

Web sites with more include: <http://www.un.org/cyberschoolbus/humanrights/index.asp> and <http://www.pdhre.org/chre/index.html> and <http://www.hrusa.org/advocacy/Partners.shtm>

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(4) Why is the bisexuality of the champion of the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, Eleanor Roosevelt, worthy of mention here?

Was Roosevelt bisexual? Many historians have concluded that Roosevelt was bisexual (according to our current understanding of the concept).

How do we know? She had long-term relationships with her husband, Franklin, and her dear friend, Lorena Hickock. Some of their love letters have been preserved. For more information, see a series of biographies by Blanche Wiesen Cook, entitled *Eleanor Roosevelt* and also see *Empty Without You: The Intimate Letters of Eleanor Roosevelt and Lorena Hickok* by Eleanor Roosevelt, Lorena A. Hickok, and Rodger Streitmatter. This page offers a quote from their personal correspondence: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eleanor_Roosevelt. This interview with Cook explains her perspective as a historian: <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/eleanor/filmmore/reference/interview/cook09.html>.

But Roosevelt would never have described herself as bisexual, would she? No. In the era in which she grew up, the term was still used to mean what we now call intersex (someone whose chromosomes, reproductive system or endocrine system isn't considered 'standard' for either male or female). And during her adulthood, bisexuality was incredibly stigmatized; she died seven years before the 1969 Stonewall Rebellion. But she loved Franklin (though, like many long-term relationships, theirs had ups and downs) and she loved Lorena. Today, many people who are capable of loving someone male and someone female describe themselves as bisexual.

So why must schools talk about Roosevelt's bisexuality?

- a) Because bisexual youth -- like young people of *any* identity group -- deserve heroes and role models.
- b) Because other youth need to know, too, of bisexual people who have changed the course of history and who contributed, as Roosevelt did enormously, to human rights everywhere. *We all* need to know that she was not only a first lady, but also in love with a woman, because that knowledge enriches us. It makes it less possible to objectify or demonize or stereotype bisexual people. Just as we all need role models of every color and ethnicity and of every religion and gender, so do we all need role models of every sexual orientation.
- c) And because biographer Blanche Wiesen Cook is very sure that Roosevelt's passion for social justice was strengthened and her spirit emboldened by her love for Lorena Hickock.

So who was this hero? She was a tireless human rights activist. She once wrote of the need to save the Jewish people of Europe, "*We will be the sufferers if we let great wrongs occur without exerting ourselves to correct them.*" She worked to pass anti-lynching legislation. She wrote a column urging congress not to further abrogate the sovereignty of American Indians. She resigned from the DAR (Daughters of the American Revolution) when they refused to let opera

star Marian Anderson sing in their hall because Anderson was African-American and she arranged instead for her to sing at the Lincoln Memorial. She publicly opposed Apartheid long before world sentiment was united about it. She was one of the most admired women in America in her day.

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(5) What is an ally and how is December 10th, International Human Rights Day, a day to celebrate allies?

What is an ally? The Safe Schools Coalition's glossary [<http://www.safeschoolscoalition.org/glossary.pdf>] defines an ally [al' - eye] as "a member of a historically more powerful identity group who stands up against bigotry."

Weren't all, or nearly all, of the drafters of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights acting as allies? While many developing countries helped draft the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, most of the individuals representing those countries were male, most were people of means, all were adults, the majority were white and heterosexual. Who, after all, served as ambassadors to the United Nations in 1948?

And yet they signed on to this incredible document, committing their own governments to "promote respect for these rights and freedoms" and "to secure their universal and effective recognition." Whose rights and freedoms? Everyone's, "without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status." It commits its signers to end **slavery, torture, unequal protection of law**. It commits them to providing **trials** for the accused in which innocence is presumed until disproved. It promises that each country will honor our **freedom to own property and to associate** peacefully and **to vote**. It says we all have a **right to work**, and to be **paid equally** for that work and to a decent **standard of living**. It commits its member countries to providing free elementary **education**. And it promises the people of member nations the right to **marry** [see more on that, below].

The actual individuals who voted in the General Assembly that day weren't themselves enslaved. They mostly had never personally experienced torture. If their nations' laws contained inequities, they were the beneficiaries of those inequities! They had not been jailed without trial. Most owned property already and associated with whomever they chose. Most were married. They already had their educations and every single one had a job that paid well ... as ambassador to the U.N. Many ambassadors represented countries where everyone was already allowed to vote. Women had had that right in the U.S. since 1920 and African-Americans had, in theory, since 1870, although practically speaking it would not be until the passage of the 1965 Voting Rights Act that the Federal government would outlaw literacy tests and other racially discriminatory devices, and guarantee direct federal supervision of voter registration, voting procedures, and elections in every state. [For more on African-American suffrage, go to: <http://www.people.virginia.edu/~cak5u/AFRICANAMERICANSUFFRAGE.doc>] And some would argue that in 2004, inequities in polling equipment continue to disenfranchise millions of people living in poorer jurisdictions.

That said, these were people, mostly men, of great privilege. They acted 58 years ago today on behalf of the rights of people with a lot less privilege. They acted as our allies. Now, granted, they made promises that have **yet** to be fulfilled in many, many cases. But we owe a debt of gratitude to those who made those promises. It's our job to carry on their work and insist that our nations live up to those promises. Which brings us to the next question ...

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Safe Schools Coalition

"Gay people are the sweetest, kindest, most artistic, warmest and most thoughtful people in the world. And since the beginning of time all they've ever been is kicked ..."

-- Openly gay singer, **Little Richard**

"Equality is more than tolerance, compassion, understanding, acceptance, benevolence, for these still come from a place of implied superiority: favors granted to those less fortunate. These attitudes suggest that there is still something wrong, something not quite right that must be overlooked or seen beyond."

-- Openly lesbian author, Suzanne **Pharr**

"The good we secure for ourselves is precarious and uncertain until it is secured for all of us and incorporated into our common life."

-- Jane **Addams**, social worker & feminist ... she lived long before anyone defined themselves as "lesbian," but she "shared her life for 40 years" with Mary Rozet Smith

"Freedom makes a huge requirement of every human being. With freedom comes responsibility. For the person who is unwilling to grow up, the person who does not want to carry his own weight, this is a frightening prospect."

-- Eleanor **Roosevelt**, ambassador, first lady, human rights activist ... who had two loves in her life, her husband, Franklin, and her partner, Lorena

"There are many persons ready to do what is right because in their hearts they know it is right. But they hesitate, waiting for the other fellow to make the first move -- and he, in turn, waits for you."

-- Marian **Anderson**, opera star who was African-American who, in 1939, when she was prohibited from singing a concert at Constitution Hall in Washington, D.C., sang instead, with the support of first lady Eleanor Roosevelt, at the Lincoln Memorial.

"If you are neutral in situations of injustice, you have chosen the side of the oppressor. If an elephant has its foot on the tail of a mouse and you say that you are neutral, the mouse will not appreciate your neutrality."

-- Bishop Desmond **Tutu**

"We can love what we are, without hating what — and who -- we are not. We can thrive in our own tradition, even as we learn from others, and come to respect their teachings."

-- Kofi **Annan**, former United Nations Secretary-General, recipient of the 2001 Nobel Peace Prize

"I want American history taught. Unless I'm in that book, you're not in it either. History is not a procession of illustrious people. It's about what happens to a people. Millions of anonymous people is what history is about."

-- James **Baldwin**, openly gay, African-American novelist, college professor and civil rights activist who lived his latter years in France

"Prejudice is a definitely a learned behavior. You aren't born hating a black person or an obese person or a gay person ... Growing into myself, I realized that different is good, and different sets you apart."

-- Marissa **Whitley**, Miss Teen USA 2002, who is biracial

"A mature person is one who does not think only in absolutes, who is able to be objective even when deeply stirred emotionally, who has learned that there is both good and bad in all people and all things, and who walks humbly and deals charitably with the circumstances of life, knowing that in this world no one is all-knowing and therefore all of us need both love and charity."

-- Eleanor **Roosevelt**, ambassador, first lady, human rights activist ... who had two loves in her life, her husband, Franklin, and her partner, Lorena