

**Toolbox**  
**Inclusive higher education with reference to sexual and gender diversity**



**STUDENT PRIDE NL**

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## Introduction

This toolbox was commissioned by Student Pride Netherlands with the aim of providing teachers in Dutch higher education with tools to achieve a more inclusive curriculum regarding sexual and gender diversity for students. Sexual diversity refers to diversity in sexual orientation, gender diversity refers to diversity in gender identity. Gender identity is described as the inner feeling of being a boy, a girl, both or neither (Flemish government, 2016).

The tools in this toolbox have been selected so that they can be used by different teachers within different courses and studies. The focus has been deliberately placed on short-term changes in education as propagated by the teachers and over which they have the power themselves, without this requiring adjustments in the organizational structure.

The tools in the toolbox have been selected on the basis of 19 interviews with LGBTI+ students at various studies within Dutch higher education, in which they were asked in particular about their needs when it comes to inclusive higher education in regards to sexual and gender diversity. The tools are based on best practices (examples that have been shown to be successful in practice), that specifically meet the most frequently mentioned needs of the research group. The best practices can be found in the resource list at the end of the toolbox, in case of wanting to delve deeper into a specific tool. Furthermore, teachers from various fields of education were involved in the creation of the toolbox. Discussions were held with them about what they do (or do not do) when it comes to inclusiveness of the curriculum in regards to sexual and gender diversity and where the challenges lie. Additionally, two draft versions of the toolbox were presented to a group of teachers, where they were given the opportunity to indicate what they were still missing in the toolbox and where any ambiguities were. The received feedback has been incorporated into the current version of the toolbox.

This toolbox is not meant to force a certain way of teaching. It offers various guidelines that can be used to determine for oneself with which one is comfortable and how they fit within one's curriculum. The toolbox can be further developed and expanded over the years.

### Disclaimer

Diversity is intersectional, which means that it is never only about sexual and/or gender diversity. Various forms of discrimination reinforce each other and must be understood in relation to each other. For example, experiences of gender are always linked to one's ethnic and sexual backgrounds (Wekker et al., 2016; Crenshaw, 1989). This toolbox focusses specifically on inclusivity with regards to sexual and gender diversity, because this form of inclusivity is still relatively underexposed. Keep in mind that people from different partial identities exist together (a multiple identity), which make people who they are in their totality (Repáraz & Ardjosemito-Jethoe, 2020). How someone deals with their own sexual and/or gender identity and what someone encounters within this subject depends on someone's multiple identity and differs per person.

Teaching with inclusivity is not about doing it without ever making a mistake or saying something wrong. What matters most is that when a student or a colleague corrects you on something, you take the feedback seriously and you do something with it. One of the respondents said: "What I do really like is that when a teacher is pointed out that something has to be done differently, that people will actually listen and that change will also take place."

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## Different types of sexual and gender diversity and concepts

When we talk about sexual and gender diversity, we often talk about the LGBTI+ community. However, people who are not part of this community also have a sexual and gender identity. Below is an overview of different types of sexual orientations and gender identities and associated concepts.

- **Sex:** the categorization of sex that is assigned on the basis of biological characteristics (Municipality of Amsterdam, Diversity Department, 2018). These categories are 'man', 'woman' and 'intersex' (Ainsworth, 2018).
- **Gender identity:** the internal experience and naming of gender. It may match or differ from the designated sex at birth. Gender is seen as a spectrum and is not limited to two possibilities (male or female) (Gender Spectrum, 2019).
- **Gender expression:** refers to the way in which you express your gender experience (Municipality of Amsterdam, Diversity Department, 2018).
- **Cisgender:** refers to a person whose gender identity matches the sex that was assigned at birth (Koster, 2019).
- **Sexual orientation:** emotional, romantic or sexual feelings that a person has for other people or no people (PFLAG, 2021).
- **Heterosexual:** when you have sexual feelings for the sex opposite from yours (Van Dale, sd).

LGBTI+ includes anyone who is not cisgender and heterosexual. Sometimes the letters Q, A and P are added to the abbreviation. The letters in LGBTI(QAP)+ stand for the following sexual orientations and gender identities (Felten & Boss, 2019; Anker, 2017):

- **Lesbian:** women and non-binary people with a connection to womanhood that feel emotionally, sexually and/or romantically attracted to women. This includes people with various gender expressions and people with varying relationships with the lesbian community (PFLAG, 2021).
- **Gay:** a term for people that feel emotionally, sexually and/or romantically attracted to people of the same gender. In this context this means men and non-binary people with a connection to manhood (PFLAG, 2021).
- **Bisexual:** people that feel emotionally, sexually and/or romantically attracted to more than one gender (PFLAG, 2021).
- **Transgender:** an umbrella term for people that do not identify with their assigned gender at birth. This term includes women who were labelled as boys at birth because of their physical characteristics (trans women), men who were labelled as girls at birth because of their physical characteristics (trans men) and people that identify as **non-binary** (people that do not identify with the gender binary 'man' and 'woman'). Non-binary can also be used as an umbrella term (PFLAG, 2021).
- **Intersex:** an umbrella term for various congenital conditions in which the development of the chromosomal, gonadal or anatomical sex differs from the norm.
- **Queer:** a term for LGBTI+ people to describe themselves and/or their community. This term is overarchingly inclusive for the entire community, but is also often used by people to describe their more 'fluid' or complex identities. This is a loaded word, so it should only be used for self-identification or to reference people who self-identify as queer (PFLAG, 2021).
- **Asexual:** refers to an individual who does not experience emotional, romantic and/or sexual attraction. Asexual people exist in a spectrum and can experience their (lack of) attraction in various ways (PFLAG, 2021). Someone that does not experience romantic attraction, but does experience other attraction is called **aromantic** (AT5, 2018).
- **Pansexual:** people that feel emotionally, romantically or sexually attracted to people regardless of gender identity (PFLAG, 2021).

## Inclusive language use

Inclusive language use is a way of speaking in which everyone in the group feels addressed; not just people who fall within a certain norm. This can help avoid making certain potentially incorrect assumptions about someone's sexual orientation and/or gender identity.

### Reshaping words and sentences

One of the ways to be more inclusive in the use of language is to replace binary words with gender-neutral, inclusive words (Lubbers, sd):

- **Parents** instead of **fathers and mothers**
- **Partner** instead of **boyfriend/girlfriend**
- **Students** instead of **boys and girls**

Another way is making the sentence plural:

- We expect of every student that he/she is present in the workgroups and that he/she has his/her study material with him/her.

Becomes:

- We expect of all students that they are present in the workgroups and that they have their study material with them.

### Pronouns

The use and discussion of personal pronouns are also part of inclusive language. This concerns the personal pronoun with which someone wants to be addressed: he/him, she/her, they/them, etc. and possibly other, lesser known pronouns like xe/xyr, xe/xim, ze/hir, ey/em, etc.

It is not always predictable which pronouns students want to be addressed as. Moreover, the name on the class list is not always correct: sometimes someone has already gone through a social transition including a change of name and personal pronouns, but the old name and pronouns are still in the school system because they haven't been formally changed on their passport. Following are a few tips to find out how students want to be addressed in a new group.

#### 1. The introduction round

Some teachers include personal pronouns in the introduction round. This makes someone's name and preferred pronouns immediately clear to the class. No special emphasis needs to be placed on it. For example, during introductions, you can be asked about your name and pronouns in the following ways:

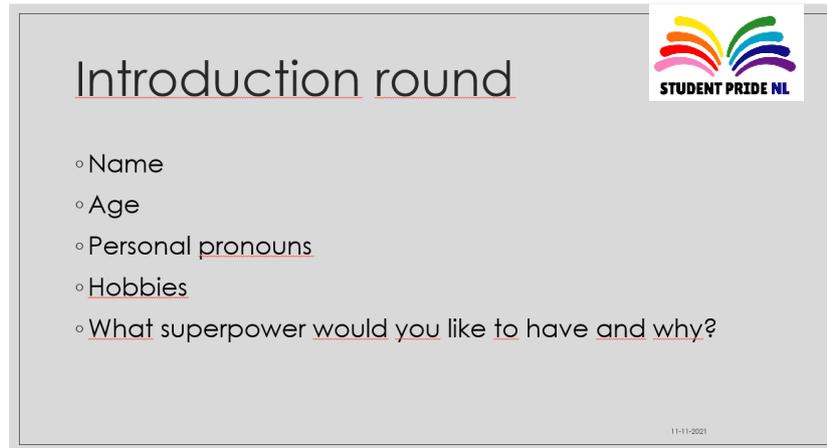
"Tell us your name, age, how you identify yourself and what you do in your spare time."

Or:

"Tell us your name, age, how you would like to be addressed and what you do in your spare time."

It is important that, when dealing with personal pronouns, all students are given the option to share their (chosen) name and pronouns. Do not only ask students that you suspect may be non-binary and/or transgender (Harbin, Roberts, Nelson, & Purcell, 2020).

If you use a PowerPoint presentation, you could incorporate the following slide:



Vanderbilt University further provides the following tips for handling personal pronouns (Harbin, Roberts, Nelson, & Purcell, 2020):

#### 2. Google Forms

It is possible to not yet feel comfortable dealing with personal pronouns openly in the group. In this case it may be an idea to send a Google Form (or something similar) to the students before the first lesson, in which they can provide their name and personal pronouns.

#### 3. Paper form

A variation on the previous tip is to have a registration- or seating form circulated during the first lesson, on which students can indicate their name and personal pronouns. Rather keep an open space for pronouns than letting the students choose from a few options; this gives them the option to indicate various different pronouns.

#### 4. Personal attention

Encourage students to visit you during office hours to discuss what they need to learn and thrive in the workgroup or course. This can bring up a variety of topics of conversation, including names and personal pronouns.

#### 5. Different contexts

Some students might be out to their own class, but not to the entire study/course or to their family. Consider asking students if there are any contexts where they would like you to use a different name or personal pronouns for them.

#### 6. Sharing own personal pronouns

Promote the importance of not making assumptions about personal pronouns by introducing yourself with your own pronouns, and invite others to do the same if they wish.

There are also teachers that, for example, put their own pronouns underneath their emails. This can contribute to the normalization of sharing personal pronouns.

## Terminology to avoid

There are a number of terms that can be experienced as offensive within the LGBTI+ community, such as '(pseudo)hermaphrodite' instead of 'intersex person' and 'conversion/converted' instead of 'transition/transitioned'. In 2018, the Municipality of Amsterdam issued a guideline for respectful and inclusive communication (Municipality of Amsterdam, Diversity Department, 2018). The following two pages contain tips from this guide about which terms should not be used and which terms should be used instead. The tips have been translated to education for the purposes of this toolbox.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>+ Please use</li> <li>- Please do not use</li> </ul>	Example	Explanation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>+ LGBTI+ persons/people</li> <li>+ LGBTI+ students</li> <li>- Homosexual students</li> <li>- LGBTI+'s</li> </ul>	It is important that LGBTI+ students can be themselves at school. You can assume that every school has LGBTI+ students, although you may not know who they are.	Gender identity, sexual orientation and sex characteristics are only a part of a person's total identity. It is therefore often better to not use LGBTI+ as a noun, but as an adjective. "Homosexual or gay students" refers only to gay men. That is alright if that is what you mean to say, but if you actually mean the broader group of LGBTI+ people, this is not appropriate.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>+ LGBTI+</li> <li>- Gay students/people/persons</li> </ul>	In the summer during pride, we celebrate diversity of the LGBTI+ community.	The abbreviation LGBTI+ shows that it contains a diversity in sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression and sex characteristics, in a broad sense. Gay refers only to men who are attracted to men and sometimes to women who are attracted to women. You can also show diversity by adding other letters, but because the abbreviation then becomes very long and some groups are still excluded, LGBTI+ can be a nice solution.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>+ Rainbow</li> <li>- Homosexual</li> </ul>	Amsterdam is a member of the Dutch and international network of Rainbow Cities.	The rainbow refers to the diversity within the LGBTI+ group. Homosexual only refers to gay men.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>+ A lesbian woman/student</li> <li>+ A homosexual man/student</li> <li>- Dyke, lesbo</li> <li>- Faggot, homo</li> </ul>	Since the first of April in 2001, homosexual men and lesbian women in the Netherlands can get married.	Someone's sexual orientation is a characteristic of a person and can best be used as an adjective and not a noun. Words like lesbo or homo (especially dyke and faggot) are often used derogatorily.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>+ Sexual orientation</li> <li>- Sexual identity</li> <li>- Sexual preference</li> </ul>	We want all students to have a pleasant and safe study environment, where their sexual orientation should not be able to get in the way.	Not all people experience sexual orientation as a part of their identity and the word 'preference' can give the impression that someone, for example, chooses to like women, when this is not a choice.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>+ A bisexual person</li> <li>+ Bisexual people</li> <li>+ A bisexual student</li> <li>- A bisexual</li> </ul>	In the summer of 2016, a conference was held about the position of bisexual people.	Sexual orientation is one of many characteristics of a person, and should therefore be used as an adjective and not as description of a person (noun).
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>+ A trans(gender) person</li> <li>+ A trans(gender) student</li> <li>- A transgender</li> </ul>	There is less research done on trans persons than there has been done	Being transgender is an umbrella term for all forms of gender diversity or gender non-conformity. It is becoming more and more

	on people that are not transgender.	common to use the term trans person, trans woman, trans man, etc.
+ Transitioning/transitioned/ transition - Converting/converted/ conversion	If you are a trans person and you want to undergo a medical transition, there are often (long) waiting times.	The word 'convert' sounds rude and disrespectful. Avoid using this word!
+ A transgender student/person - Transvestite	Transgender students are still being bullied because of their gender identity.	A transvestite is a person who likes to occasionally dress as someone with a different gender identity than they have, but unlike transgender people, (usually) have no desire to actually transition.
+ Assigned/registered male/female at birth + A different gender than is registered in the birth certificate - Born as male/female	He was registered female at birth and also raised that way. When he got older he started to live according to his male identity.	The terms in which someone talks about themselves are leading. If someone indicates that he is a man, and always has been, we respect that and do not say that the person before that was a woman or a girl. He was always a man or a boy, but was registered and raised as a girl.
+ Intersex student/person/people/man/woman - Intersexual	Sandra tells the class about her experiences as an intersex woman.	When it concerns the characteristics of a person, adjectives are used instead of the description of a person (noun).
+ Intersex student/person/people/man/woman - (Pseudo)hermaphrodite	Different from other boys, Sander was born with an extra X-chromosome. He is an intersex boy.	The term (pseudo)hermaphrodite is generally experienced as hurtful and has a controversial medical background.
+ When you know the person you are addressing is male or female: Dear Mr. Jansen or Dear Ms./Mrs. Maduro. + If you do not know: Dear S. Jansen or Dear T. Maduro. - Asking without strict necessity whether someone is a man or a woman, for example by ticking a box on a form.	Dear S. Jansen, Dear T. Maduro.	When you cannot deduce (from previous contact) how someone would like to be addressed, it is better to renounce gendered terms. It is then agreed to address people with an initial, last name and 'you'.

## Visibility and representation

The interviews that have been conducted with LGBTI-students for this study showed that visibility and representation of sexual and gender diversity in the curriculum are important. “Representation is really important. If I have the feeling that there are stories that I can identify with, it makes me feel a lot better,” said one of the respondents. The following are three tools from the University of Birmingham (Ward & Gale, 2016), Vanderbilt University (Harbin, Roberts, Nelson, & Purcell, 2020) and Utrecht University (van den Bogert, Linders, & Sanches, 2019) to improve visibility and representation on the subject of sexual and gender diversity in the curriculum.

### 1. Role models

One of the ways to increase visibility and representation is through role models. These can be present within the teaching team, but can also come from outside.

#### - Guest lectures

A tip from the University of Birmingham that was also mentioned as one of the needs by many of the respondents of this study, is to invite LGBTI+ people for guest lectures. This does not mean that the lecture has to actually be about being LGBTI+. Check with yourself whether you always invite the same kind of people with the same background and whether there might be room for more (sexual and gender) diversity.

Tip for finding various professionals/guest speakers: Parea Nederland (<https://pareanederland.com/>) is a network of LHBTI+-professionals of color.

#### - Highlighting successful LGBTI+ role models

Another way to contribute to greater visibility of sexual and gender diversity within the discipline in which you teach, is to highlight successful LGBTI+ role models. You can, for example, pay extra attention to this around theme days.

#### - Sharing one’s own identity

As a teacher, you can also act as a role model for students by sharing your own identity with them, such as having a sexually- or gender diverse background.

### 2. Examples and cases

A simple way to increase visibility and representation in the curriculum is by providing inclusive examples and case studies. This can be done, for example by occasionally replacing the personal pronoun 'he' with 'those' or 'them' in tests or assignments, and in giving example sentences, for example, one can occasionally use 'Bob loves Bill' instead of 'John loves Mary' (Ward & Gale, 2016). The point is that different types of people are represented in the teaching material.

Some studies, programs or classes do not use a lot of examples, case studies, tests or assignments in which one or more people are clearly involved. Nevertheless, it is usually still possible to pay attention to more visibility in the field of sexual and gender diversity in the curriculum of those studies, programs and classes. Vanderbilt University only deals with the representation of non-binary persons in ‘Teaching Beyond the Gender Binary’ (Harbin, Roberts, Nelson, & Purcell, 2020); for this toolbox, this has been extended to LGBTI+ persons where possible.

- In statistics: avoid the use of binary male/female labels and/or discuss the limitations of such categorizations and the impact they can have on understanding, for example, non-binary experiences.
- In business administration: include case studies for companies that develop products for LGBTI+ clients, for example a company that makes corrective underwear and swimwear for people who want to dress according to their confirmed gender or as a different gender.
- In technical and IT courses: encourage students to think about how existing technologies can be adapted when considering the needs of LGBTI+ people, such as the LGBT+ friendly traffic lights in Alkmaar or an app that contributes to the safety of LGBTI+ persons.
- In biology: pay attention to the variation in gender identity and expression and variation in biological sex characteristics (for example when it comes to sex chromosomes).
- At the Erasmus University within the medicine study, people are working on a project to make the study more inclusive. Examples to be more inclusive on the subject of sexual and gender diversity in medicine are to pay attention to the specific medical needs of transgender and/or non-binary people, but also to include LGBTI+ people in case studies when it is not about medical needs that mainly or exclusively concern LGBTI+ persons.

### 3. Literature scan

In the 'Toolbox Diversity in Education' (van den Bogert, Linders, & Sanches, 2019), Utrecht University offers tools that can help you achieve a diverse, inclusive selection of literature.

The tool consists of two 'rounds'. The first round helps you to become critically aware of which perspectives are offered in a particular course and to what extent these perspectives are currently balanced. The second round focuses on recognizing shortcomings in a specific literature selection and offers steps to recognize and name which literature can still be included and how.

Avoid the 'add-on': each literature selection positively presents some worldviews and is silent about other worldviews, while the selection is often presented as 'neutral', 'normal', 'central', or 'universal'. This means that just adding 'additional' perspectives to the mainstream canon is not enough and can even be counter-productive.

#### **Round 1: What does the current literature selection look like?**

Look at the (partially completed) sample chart from Utrecht University on the next page to scan the current selection of literature. Use the various columns of the chart as guidelines to reflect and to become critically aware of the choices made in the selection of these particular authors. An empty version of this diagram can be found in the appendix at the end of the toolbox. When analyzing the literature selection, do not forget to also look for authors who are not included in the course literature list, but who do appear in the lectures.

**(!)** The point is not that you know how to fill in all the details in the schedule. Sometimes certain information is not known. The point of the exercise is to help you think critically about the composition of the literature selection and to reflect on how the different backgrounds of the authors matter in their inclusion – or absence! – in a specific literature selection.

Literature (themes and authors)	(Sub)disciplinary training and/or (explicit) (sub)disciplinary perspective e.g. marxist anthropology, postcolonial studies, masculinity studies	Educational/Geographical trajectories e.g. country or region where authors grew up, are trained or where they work	Social Backgrounds/Identities (if known or explicitly identified) e.g. gender, race/ethnicity, nationality, LGBTQI, dis/ability, class, religion
<b>Course Book: DeMello</b>	Anthropology of the body	US	
<b>Week 1: Introduction fem anthropology</b>			
Henrietta Moore	Feminist anthropology/ anthropology of gender	UK	
Chandra Mohanty	Outside anthropology, namely: postcolonial feminist theory	US (BA and MA Delhi)	
<b>Week 2: Sex and gender concepts</b>			
Stimpson	Outside anthropology, namely: feminist English scholar	US	
Herdt	Queer anthropology/ Anthropology of sexuality	US (Phd Aus)	
Scott	Outside anthropology, namely: feminist historian	US	
<b>Week 3: sexuality and gender</b>			
Vance	Queer anthropology/anthropology of sexuality	US	
Janssen	Other in anthropology, namely: masculinity studies	Western/Northern cont. Europe	
<b>Week 4: THEME</b>			
Literature x			
... etcetera ....			

## Round 2: What is missing?

Now that you have identified the perspectives that are currently in your course, you can start thinking about which perspectives are over- or underrepresented or absent. The challenge is figuring out what to include or change in the literature selection and how to present it in such a way that it recognizes that the material in a course is always a selection.

The following three steps will help you with several ways you can make the literature selection more diverse without randomly “adding” authors because they are “missing” in the literature selection.

**(!)** Chances are that it will be impossible to make a literature selection that covers your entire wish list for a balanced and inclusive literature list. What matters is that the list is well-informed and that you are able to explain your choices and the selectivity of the material to colleagues and students. This also opens up the debate with colleagues and students where they can help to find perhaps missing literature or suggest possible collections of knowledge/publications on a specific theme.

### Step 1: Theming

Look at the themes of the course and then at the authors who have been selected. Is this a theme that only matters to the people from the same backgrounds as the authors in the list?

Questions to ask yourself about the literature selection:

- Are all social groups represented as being influenced by the interactive structures, or just a particular group?
- Is knowledge about thinking about gender and sexuality extended throughout the syllabus or are they treated as 'special topics' or as 'social problems'?

### Step 2: Decolonize

Have you looked beyond the well-known 'founding fathers' of your course? Does the literature selection contribute to a decolonial perspective and a decolonial practice that recognizes and critiques colonial history and its lasting legacy in your own discipline? Look again at the literature selection with this focus in mind, and ask yourself the following questions:

- What voices have historically been marginalized or silenced in the development of the discipline regarding the topics of your course? Can you include some of these voices in the literature selection?
- Are the experiences of one group seen as the 'norm' against which the experiences of other groups are measured and evaluated?
- Is a group dominant in defining other groups, or are groups defined by themselves?
- Does the material in the course reproduce exclusive perspectives and power relations that are the product of colonial and imperialist foundations of scientific institutions or does it expose them and does it enable to pose critical questions?
- Does the literature selection (possibly) contribute to the production of knowledge and education that also achieves social and sustainable justice?

### **Step 3: Balancing**

Diversity also means disconnecting authors with a certain background from certain themes and showing that they can also contribute to broader debates within the discipline. It is sometimes difficult to find the right balance here.

For example, when dealing with specific themes (e.g. feminism) it is important to cover authors who are specifically related to those themes because of their background (feminists) and who have played a historical role in the development of that academic field (women). However, this does not mean that you can only treat feminists or female authors in relation to this topic. Nor does it mean that you can't choose feminists or female authors to cover other topics: women and feminists have written on many more topics than just topics related to their own backgrounds.

Questions to ask yourself about the literature selection:

- Are the social and disciplinary backgrounds of the authors in the bibliography specifically related to the topics they write about? If so, why, and is that always necessary/logical?
- In the process of diversifying the perspectives in your course, have you accidentally created "add-ons" by "adding" perspectives to the mainstream or dominant canon, in such a way that it diminishes the marginal position of certain perspectives correctly?

### **General tips for finding and selecting suitable literature**

- Consider leaving a number of places in the bibliography blank. As an assignment, ask students to bring literature with them.
- Be open and transparent about the literature selection (and possible shortcomings therein) towards colleagues and students. Perhaps they lack certain perspectives and can recommend certain literature.
- Whenever you come across people who bring up a different perspective, you can bring them into the course.
- Use the literature scan as a starting point for a discussion with colleagues about which perspectives are missing.
- Look in another library.
- It's okay to take a certain position, we're not neutral: we want certain marginalized authors to be read.
- At the initiative of students at the University of Amsterdam, the online Queer Communication Library has been established, a platform on which queer literature is shared around various themes within communication sciences. Link: [https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1ptN96Y\\_UqywE3Z7uBiuMVvEiKxKTxHfwDx9wEFhD1zl/edit#gid=1378038074](https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1ptN96Y_UqywE3Z7uBiuMVvEiKxKTxHfwDx9wEFhD1zl/edit#gid=1378038074)

## Preventing undesirable behavior

### Common values

To prevent unwanted behaviour, offensive remarks and bullying in the course, it can be useful to draw up a number of rules of conduct (common values) that everyone in the group must adhere to.

In 'Toolbox Diversity in Education' (2019), Utrecht University states that creating a scheme with shared values can serve as a 'manifesto of interacting with each other' in which joint agreements and rules are laid down to guarantee inclusion and a safe learning climate. Reference can be made to this joint manifest at any time. It is strongly recommended that you compile the list of common values together with students. This is essential for reaching agreement and achieves broadly supported values within your education.

Examples of shared values may include "No one laughs at each other" and "No incriminating language regarding race, ethnicity, class, gender, or social or cultural origin."

### Conversation instead of discussion

Teachers often take a position as neutral facilitators. In order not to hurt or exclude anyone, all opinions and perspectives are seen as equal, because "there is no truth". However, this may mean that certain harmful and dominant perspectives are equated with perspectives that have been structurally historically oppressed. This is described as "harmful tolerance" (van den Bogert, Linders, & Sanches, 2019) and can make students who belong to a minority group feel unsafe. "Sometimes in the working groups we have a statement that we have to discuss and then the statement is 'Do you think Christian schools should be allowed to refuse gay people?' and then I just have to discuss it with people who then say to me: 'Yeah, but I am also discriminated against if I do have to admit gay people to my school,' said one of the student respondents.

However, this does not mean that you should ignore or avoid certain topics in your lessons. One way to ensure the (social) safety of all students is not to present topics that affect someone's identity such as ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation and gender identity as a topic for discussion, but as a topic for conversation. In this way, someone's identity is not a point of discussion where students have to convince each other that they are right.

Rather than presenting it as a statement, "*May Christian schools reject people because of their sexual orientation?*", it is presented as a topic of conversation, for example, "*Some Christian schools want to reject people because of their sexual orientation. Does this go against Article 1 of the Constitution?*"

### Not portraying an individual as a representative or a group

When discussing a sensitive topic about a historically marginalized group, be careful not to portray certain students as representatives of this group.

Example:

If the discussion is about LGBTI+ and human rights in Asia, don't assume that the LGBTI+ student from India can (or will) offer the perspective from the 'Asian LGBTI+ community'. The suggestion that these students could, would or should do that is offensive, as it is stereotyping and limits the student's identity to only that identity that is the subject of structural discrimination (van den Bogert, Linders, & Sanches, 2019).

## Undesirable behavior from teachers

It is possible that students experience undesirable behavior from teachers, often in the form of loaded jokes or being publicly 'outed' (= revealing someone's sexual orientation or gender identity without permission). The intention is usually not bad, but it can have a negative influence on the social safety of the student. As a teacher you have a responsibility to lead by example. Therefore, here are two examples of situations in which the social safety of LGBTI+ students was affected by statements by teachers and how you can prevent this for yourself and colleagues.

### **Jokes**

When respondents were asked whether they would have found someone a better teacher if they hadn't joked about sexual orientation or gender identity, the answer was always 'yes': "Yes, I would have taken him more seriously if he didn't do it that way," said one of the respondents. It may therefore be advisable as a teacher not to joke about someone's personal characteristics or identity.

### **Getting outed**

Just because a student has told you about their gender identity or sexual orientation, it doesn't mean that the rest of the class or program is aware of it, or that the student in question wants more people to know about it. In a survey of the acceptance of LGBTI+ people in Amsterdam earlier this year, one of the respondents spoke within the theme 'Safety at school': "There was once an incident where a teacher outed me to the class. I can see why he did it, because my research was about trans people, but I really didn't like it because it was private information and I didn't know my classmates well yet. I immediately felt watched by everyone and I just really didn't feel relaxed, and this is just something I want to tell people myself." Similar incidents also took place within this study: "I have two teachers who randomly discussed someone's transition during the break on Teams. That's pretty personal information, and everyone could hear it while they were still sitting in front of their laptop."

If you know of private information about a student, do not share it with a wider audience unless the student has expressly consented to it or has asked you to share it with others. Often it is something that people themselves want to share with others when they are ready for it themselves.

### **Make agreements, talk to each other**

To prevent situations such as those described above from occurring, it may be a good idea to make agreements about this within the teaching team. Also consider addressing colleagues if you see or suspect that they (unintentionally) affect a student's social safety.

## Dealing with undesirable behavior

### Step-by-step plan

Unwanted behavior and/or hurtful comments can never be completely prevented in a group. GLSEN (Gay, Lesbian & Straight Education Network) has developed a roadmap that you can follow if you notice that a student is being called names, bullied or harassed based on sexual orientation or gender identity (GLSEN, 2019).

- 1. Immediately address name calling, bullying or intimidation.** Focus on ending the behavior in that moment. Sometimes it's a simple response to hearing a derogatory term that says, "That language isn't accepted in this classroom." Remember: no action is an action.
- 2. Give the behavior a name.** Describe what you saw and label the behavior. "That word is derogatory and considered swearing. That language is unacceptable."
- 3. Use the learning moment (or create one).** Be sure to teach after ending the behavior. Decide whether to teach now or later, and whether it will be public or private. If you decide to teach later, you will have to create the learning moment. You can take this opportunity to teach a class, entire course, or institution about which words and behaviors are acceptable and which are not.
- 4. Support the victim.** Support the student who was the target of the name-calling, bullying, or intimidation. Don't make assumptions about what the student is experiencing. Ask the student what they need or want. You will have to decide whether to do this at the moment or later, and whether it will be public or private.
- 5. Hold students accountable.** Check the policy and impose the appropriate consequences. Ensure measures are applied equally to all forms of name-calling, bullying and harassment.

### Joke or discrimination?

Sometimes it is difficult to identify unwanted behavior. What is seen as a joke by one person, is seen as discrimination by another. If you do not know whether or not something falls under undesirable behavior or discrimination, you can first look at the rules of conduct/common values that you have drawn up together with the group. Is one of the agreed rules that no jokes are made about someone's identity/(personal) characteristics? Then that is a reason to react to it and to point out to the student the common values.

Whether something is discrimination is determined by the effect of the joke. What the joker meant doesn't matter (College of Human Rights, sd). Therefore, be alert to the reaction of the student at whom the joke was directed. Also be aware that victims of unwanted behavior sometimes laugh at the joke when they are actually hurt. In this case, consider asking the student whether the behavior went beyond the limit for that person (GGZ, sd).

## Positive representation

One of the pain points that was present among many of the student respondents is the negative way in which LGBTI+ persons are represented, in which in many cases only attention is paid to the issues surrounding being LGBTI+. "When you say something about Pride, don't make it so negative. It's great fun, and then only attention is paid to the fact that people only get beat up at those moments," said one of the respondents. To bring some balance here, a list of a number of examples of positive representation of LGBTI+ persons follows. This list can be expanded at any time.

Example	Explanation
ANNE+	Tv-series about a lesbian woman in her twenties who is living on her own in Amsterdam. In the series she flashes back on her love life during her college years and thinks about how multiple girls and relationships have made her the person she is today.
Please Like Me	Tv-series about a guy in his twenties who goes through a couple of big changes in his life, while navigating his first decennium as a grown up. After his girlfriend dumps him he realises that he is gay.
SpangaS (season 14   De Campus)	First tv-series featuring a non-binary person (Lesley). Lesley is a rebellious sensation seeker filled with little plans.
CoupleGoals the podcast	Podcast in which a queer couple, Mandy and Roos, speak with all sorts of different couples. How did they meet? What do they fight about? And does something like 'couple goals' actually exist?
Supergirl season 4	First tv-series with a transgender superhero as a character (Nia Nal). Nia Nal is a young journalist who eventually fulfils her destiny by transforming into a superhero called Dreamer.
Hij is een zij (He is a she)	Tv-program in which young transgender people are followed for a year. It shows what it is like to be born in the wrong body. What do they have to go through to become who they are?
Girl in Red	Singer-songwriter who writes songs about queer romance and mental health.
Geslacht! (Gender or sex!)	In the tv-program Geslacht!, Raven van Dorst asks themself which role gender plays in our society. Why do we still think in the boxes 'man' and 'woman'? And is there something in between?
Sense8	Nomi is one of the lead characters in this tv-series. She is a political blogger and hacktivist. Aside from that, she is a proud lesbian and transgender woman.

Brooklyn99	Comedic police series with a gay and bisexual character in the main cast. Raymond Holt is strict, hardworking, hard and professional on the outside, but is a warm, emphatic and compassionate man in the inside. Rosa Diaz is a smart, tough and mysterious detective.
Stranger Things (seizoen 3)	In this season of the science fiction series set in the 80's, Robin, who is sarcastic and a little arrogant on the outside, but sweet and helpful on the inside, comes out as a lesbian.
Transparent	Comedy-drama series in which one of the parents of a family turns out to be transgender.

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