Cultural Competency in the Learning Environment: Promoting the Development of Diversity Training for Pre-Service Educators
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ABSTRACT

Anti-gay bias among teachers within early stages of education can have lasting effects on students identifying as LGBTQ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgendered, and Questioning), particularly in terms of hate crime victimization. Pre-service teachers throughout the country currently have no regulated courses within their curriculum that focus specifically on diversity issues, specifically LGBTQ individuals and the sexual minority as a whole. Moreover, teachers do not receive diversity training to promote a culturally competent learning environment. This creates a gap in that the students they teach are not challenged to embrace diversity and the teachers are not equipped to deliver such an environment. This study will utilize a Systematic Research Synthesis methodology to explore two themes in the literature: victimization and education. The purpose is to develop a literature search that supports the need for pre-service teachers to be educated on diversity and to identify evidence-based educational practices with this population.

HYPOTHESIS

If pre-service educators are required to complete diversity training, cultural competency will increase and therefore lower instances of bullying and victimization, particularly regarding LGBTQ youth.

METHODS

This study will utilize a Systematic Research Synthesis methodology to explore two themes in the literature: victimization and education. The purpose is to develop a literature search that supports the need for pre-service teachers to be educated on diversity and to identify evidence-based educational practices with this population.

WHY DOES IT MATTER?

1 in every 25 students in a classroom will identify as LGBTQ or “something different.”

Inadequate diversity training courses for pre-service educators can have a long-lasting negative effect on LGBTQ students as well as their heterosexual peers.

- Heterosexual students will be unable to learn about diversity and acceptance of others that identify as LGBTQ, which leads to increased instances of bullying and hate crimes.
- LGBTQ students do not have the support of the teacher as an authority figure when facing issues at home or at school due to a lack of understanding.
- LGBTQ students often report feeling uncomfortable reporting victimization or hate crimes to administrators, and see little if any response.

STATISTICS ON BULLYING

In a study of LGBTQ victimization conducted in the late 1990’s:

1 in every 3 homosexual boys reported physical abuse in the past year versus 1 in every 8 heterosexual boys

Bisexual and lesbian girls are twice as likely to experience physical abuse when compared to their heterosexual female peers

1 in every 4 lesbian and bisexual girls reported a history of sexual abuse versus 1 in every 10 heterosexual girls

1 in every 4 homosexual boys reported a history of sexual abuse versus fewer than 1 in every 10 heterosexual boys

LGBTQ AT-RISK FACTORS

Studies have shown a positive rapport with a teacher can encourage LGBTQ students to remain in school and continue their education post-graduation. Without this support system as well as the support and understanding of their peers, LGBTQ students are at a higher risk of experiencing:

- Depression, Anxiety Disorders, Homelessness, Physical and Emotional Abuse, Isolation, Substance Abuse, Sexual Promiscuity, Suicide, Runaways, Hate Crimes, School Drop-outs

REFERENCES

