

BRAINSTORMING FOR ESSENTIAL QUESTION:

Supporting LGBTQ and Transgender Students

LESSON PLAN

I. Lesson Number 1: Introduction, undergraduate pre-service art education students and senior high school (11th-12th grade), *Brainstorming for Essential Questions: Supporting LGBTQ and Transgender Students*, Duration (45 minutes).

II. Lesson Rationale:

The students will learn about key concepts and ideas related to LGBTQ issues and concerns by participating in a class brainstorming session. The ideas resulting from the brainstorming session will be organized into concepts in the form of a concept map. The purpose of the brainstorming session and concept map design is to create essential questions that confront misinformation, *prejudice/discrimination*, and violence against LGBTQ youth. This unit of study is significant insofar as it will help students understand and support anti-bias and anti-violence curriculum as a means to promote respect and embrace gender inclusive and a safe school environment for all students.

Terms: Prejudice and discrimination are related to each other. **Prejudice** is a bias against or negative feelings toward a person or their membership in certain groups. Prejudice is "a set of attitudes which causes, supports, or justifies discrimination." **Discrimination** is an action which is an unequal and unfair treatment directed against someone (Farley, 2012, p. 20).

III. Key Concepts:

LGBTQ, transgender, gender inclusive, gender nonconforming, anti-bias and anti-violence curriculum, ally,

IV. Essential Question:

How can educators be supportive of LGBTQ and transgender students?

How can educators help students understand, support, and promote anti-bias and anti-violence curriculum and embrace an affirming learning environment for all students?

V. Lesson Objectives:

The students will be able to:

Learn about LGBTQ terms, ideas, and concerns by participating in a class brainstorming session, for the purpose of creating a common language, concepts, and vocabulary that is affirming of gender variance.

Consider the socio-political impact of language, norms, and policies on LGBTQ and trans youth by developing essential questions that address structural inequality, discrimination, and violence.

Synthesize key arguments in LGBTQ studies by reading excerpts from articles and book chapters about gender nonconforming youth, as assessed by class discussion (Anti-Defamation League, 2016; Asaf Orr & Baum, 2015; Lambda Legal, 2007) (See "Teacher Resources" in "Lesson 1: Introduction" on this Website).

Demonstrate a positive increase in attitude toward LGBTQ students, as measured by actions and interactions such as the creation and support of anti-bias and anti-violence curriculum, lobbying for establishing gender inclusive school district policies, and creating forums where respectful and open dialogue can take place among gender nonconforming students and allies.

VI. Specific Art Content:

The content for this unit of study is LGBTQ issues and concerns and derives in large part from critical feminist and transgender studies. Visual culture studies play an important role in the analysis of (re)presentation and misrepresentation of gender and gender variant individuals in popular and visual culture.

VII. Resources & Materials for Teacher:

The instructional resources for this unit of study are housed on this website. Here, you will find videos, readings, literature, tutorials, images, lesson plans, sites, and links. Please see the “Teacher Resources” link, which contains three important publications about working with LGBTQ and transgender youth for Lesson 1.

VIII. Resources & Materials for Students:

White/Black board

List of terms resulting from brainstorming session

Computer

Concept map application(s)

Concept map

List of essential questions

Required readings

IX. Instruction and Its Sequencing:

1st Day of the Lesson: Brainstorming for Essential Questions (45 minutes).

Brainstorming for Essential Questions

Write the acronym “LGBTQ” on the white/black board. Most undergraduate preservice art educators and high school students will be familiar with the term. Begin the brainstorming session by asking the students: “What does the LGBTQ acronym mean? What does it stand for?” Most student responses will be based on what they have heard from family and friends as well as what they have seen on the media.

Keep in mind that some of the student responses surrounding LGBTQ issues might be based on stereotypes and misinformation. Accordingly, it is important to establish guidelines at the beginning of the unit of study. Encourage students to create a classroom culture that is respectful and sensitive to the types of comments and questions that are acceptable in school and social settings. For example, according to the Anti-Defamation League (2016):

If you have a guest speaker who is transgender or a student in your class willing and interested in talking about it, set some ground rules up at the beginning as to what are “appropriate” questions. Remind your students not to ask transgender people about (1) their relationships, (2) their surgery status or (3) their transition process. These are deemed personal and not acceptable to ask. (See GLAAD’s Tips for Allies of Transgender People for more information.) (p. 6)

It is also significant to acknowledge that students are attempting to answer question and come up with ideas based on what they know and on the socio-political discourses that surround LGBTQ issues and concerns. This is an opportunity for educators to identify discourses that are problematic, for example, the notion of “choice.” How might educators address ideas about “choice” and “lifestyle” in ways that are complex? How does the notion that LGBTQ youth have a “choice,” help deny or affirm civil rights? (Wishman, 2010).

In what follows, we list some of the ideas, categories, and concepts that preservice art education students offered

in participating in the brainstorming session. Their ideas were plotted in the form of a concept map on the white board. Students used the brainstorming session and organization of ideas into concepts as a springboard for group discussion, which resulted in the concept map (Fig. 1) and essential questions listed below.

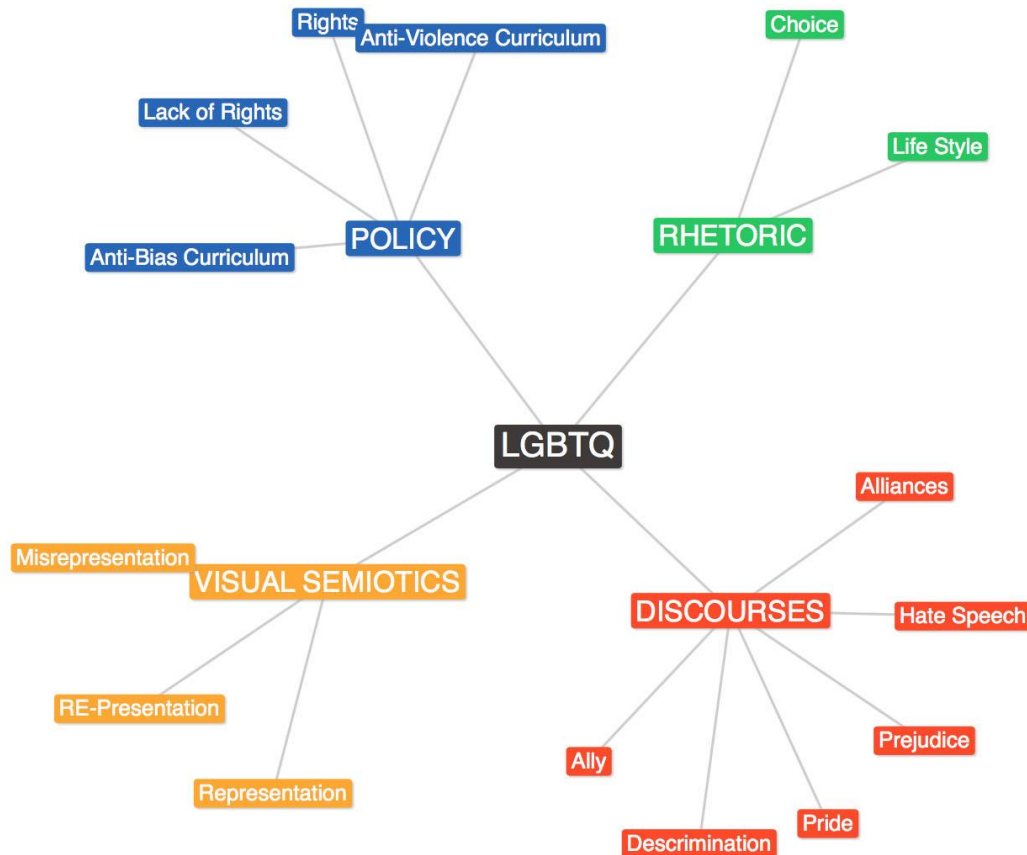


Figure 1: Brain storming concepts for essential question.
 (See concept map application, <https://www.text2mindmap.com>).

Potential Essential Questions Resulting from Brainstorming Session:

- How do LGTBQ Right(s) happen and /or are enacted?
- Could LGBTQ be a choice/lifestyle? What does it mean to say this?
- How is LGBTQ representation created and maintained (e.g., through visual culture)?
- What does it mean to be an Ally? What does it mean to form Alliances?
- How are judgments made?
- How do we create inclusive/ethical policy in education in order to enact protective measures for LGBTQ youth in schools (Denton Schools)?
- How is anti-violence education implemented in schools?
- What impact does anti-violence education, e.g., anti-bullying policy have on LGBTQ students and overall school climate?

The example offered in the unit of study can be used as a teacher resource to think through some of the main questions and essential knowledge surrounding nonconforming gender identity. It is also our hope that educators will use the introduction in this unit of study as a means to create dialogic spaces of teaching and learning with their (our) students. Each group is unique and the ideas and essential questions that you and your students create will most likely be different than ours, which is an exciting opportunity to engage in critical inquiry-based approaches to learning.

Recommendations: We recommend that this unit of study is taught toward the end of the school year, when you've had an opportunity to get to know and to build trust and community with your students. This will allow you to gauge the level of maturity of the students and prepare them for what might be considered a controversial topic or issue the students have not previously considered. Communicate with your school administrator(s) and let them know you plan to teach LGBTQ content. Find out what the school's policy is on teaching about gender diversity. Parents want to be informed about the course/class content. Therefore, it is especially important to let parents know when you will be covering content that might be considered sensitive. Find out if your school and school district has "opt-out" and "opt-in" policies and the best way to implement these rules. Craft a letter that outlines the content for the LGBTQ unit of study. Ask the school principal to review the letter and approve the content, before sending the letter to parents.

Guided Practice

The teacher will guide the students through the brainstorming session, concept mapping, and class discussion exercise.

Independent Practice

The students will demonstrate their knowledge of essential questions in forthcoming assignments, such as the zine and the public service announcement.

Closure

The students will be asked to reflect on the essential question and how the lesson helped them consider or reconsider issues related to gender identity.

Formative Evaluation

The teacher will monitor the development and implementation of the assignment and provide information about how best to revise and modify, improve, or extend the conversation about LGBTQ issues and concerns and the essential questions that resulted from the collaborative project and group discussion.

Classroom Management Procedures

The teacher will establish clear classroom routines and procedures.

Repeat 1-6, as needed, for each class session needed for this one lesson.

X. Summative Assessment and Evaluation: n/a

XI. Interdisciplinary Connections: LGBTQ and Transgender Studies

XII. References & Resources:

Anti-Defamation League. (2016). *Discussing transgender and gender non-conforming identity and issues: Suggestions for K-12 Teachers*. New York, NY: Anti-Defamation League (ADL).

Asaf Orr, E., Baum, J. (2015). *Schools in transitions: A guide for supporting transgender students in K-12 schools*. Retrieved from https://www.nea.org/assets/docs/Schools_in_Transition_2015.pdf

Farley, J. E. (2012). *Majority-Minority relations*. (6th ed.). Boston, MA: Prentice Hall

Lambda Legal. (2007). Working with transgender students. In *Out, Safe & Respected for Educators and Parents: A guide to LGBTQ youth in schools* (pp. 26-29). Retrieved from http://www.lambdalegal.org/sites/default/files/osr-admin_working-with-transgender-students.pdf

Reiff Hill, M., May, J., & Mack, R. (2014). *The gender book: Safe spaces pack*. Retrieved from <http://www.thegenderbook.com/safer-spaces-pack/4583019812>

Wishman, V. (2010). *Queer by choice: Lesbians, gay men, and the politics of identity*. New York, NY: Routledge.

XIII. Art TEKS covered in this lesson, indicated in * bold

<http://ritter.tea.state.tx.us/rules/tac/chapter117/ch117c.html>

§117.304. Art, Level III

§117.305. Art, Level IV

(c) Knowledge and Skills

(1) Foundations: observation and perception. The student develops and expands visual literacy skills using critical thinking, imagination, and the senses to observe and explore the world by learning about, understanding, and applying the elements of art, principles of design, and expressive qualities. The student uses what the student sees, knows, and has experienced as sources for examining, understanding, and creating original artwork.

(2) Creative expression. The student communicates ideas through original artwork using a variety of media with appropriate skills. The student expresses thoughts and ideas creatively while challenging the imagination, fostering reflective thinking, and developing disciplined effort and progressive problem-solving skills.

(3) Historical and cultural relevance. The student demonstrates an understanding of art history and culture by analyzing artistic styles, historical periods, and a variety of cultures. The student develops global awareness and respect for the traditions and contributions of diverse cultures.

(4) **Critical evaluation and response.** The student responds to and analyzes the artworks of self and others, contributing to the development of the lifelong skills of making informed judgments and reasoned evaluations.

XIV. National Art Standards

Anchor Standard 10: Synthesize and relate knowledge and personal experiences to make art.

Anchor Standard 11: Relate artistic ideas and works with societal, cultural, and historical context to deepen understanding. *see PDF at

<http://www.nationalartsstandards.org/sites/default/files/Visual%20Arts%20at%20a%20Glance%20-%20new%20copyright%20info.pdf>