

LGBTQ-Inclusive Lesson Planning Guide – March 2009

Teachers who are planning your lessons for **February** may find it helpful to integrate some of the following, to infuse LGBTQ/2-spirit* cultural awareness into the every day life of your classroom. Especially those teaching **history, civics, social studies, family & consumer sciences, or language arts**. Item #4 will be useful in teaching **writing skills**.

BELOW:

- (1) Some dates to recognize in your March lesson plans ...
- (2) Then, in honor of **Women's History Month**, women-loving-women born this month ...
- (3) And some not born in March, but worth teaching about in this month of women's history ...
- (4) And, finally, some quotes from lesbian, bisexual and trans women to inspire your students' journaling ...

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>

* **LGBTIQ** = Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex, Questioning and Queer. **LESBIAN**, as it is used here refers to women who are more likely to get crushes on or to fall in love with another woman. It also refers here to women, living or dead, who have/had romantic partners of their own gender, people who consider themselves "women-who-partner-with-women" or "women-loving-women," and those who call themselves "lesbian." Similarly, **GAY** is used here to refer not only to men who are more likely to get crushes on or to fall in love with another man. It also refers here to people who identify as gay and to men, living or dead, who have had same-sex romantic or sexual relationships. **BISEXUAL** refers to people who get crushes on people of different sexes, people who identify as bisexual or "bi," and those who've had romantic relationships with people of more than one sex. Some people call themselves "pansexual" because they object to the assumption that gender is a binary phenomenon. **TRANSGENDER**, according to gender.org, "is an umbrella term used to describe Gender Variant people [those who cannot or choose not to conform to societal gender norms associated with their physical sex] who have gender identities, expressions or behaviors not traditionally associated with their birth sex." **INTERSEX** has replaced the (now disrespectful) term "hermaphrodite." The Intersex Initiative says, "Intersex (also known as DSD, or disorder of sex differentiation) refers to a series of medical conditions in which a child's genetic sex (chromosomes) and phenotypic sex (genital appearance) do not match, or are somehow different from the "standard" male or female." **Why QUESTIONING?** Because it's developmentally healthy for many youth (and some adults) to know that their most comfortable gender expression or sexual orientation is not typical -- not like their friends' or their culture's norms -- but to have not yet figured out a label to describe themselves that makes emotional sense. The term **QUEER** is used here as it is some people's proud identity. Like *transgender*, it's an umbrella term sometimes preferred by those who object to more narrow labels. However, enough people still find it insulting that schools should prohibit its use, just as they do racial and religious slurs. **TWO-SPIRIT** is a term of honor to describe a Native American or other Indigenous LGBTIQ person, implying their special role as a spiritual bridge among genders. Usually the term is not chosen by an individual to describe him or herself (which would seem self-aggrandizing to many in Indian Country). More often it is a designation of respect conferred upon an individual by an elder.



- (1) Some dates to recognize in your March lesson plans ...

March, 1935 -- "**Bessie Smith records the song 'B-D Woman' in praise of 'bulldaggers,'** perhaps the first popular release to pay tribute to butch lesbians."
<http://www.aarongayinfo.com/timeline/Ftime30.html>

March 6, 1475 - **Michelangelo** is born. He will one day paint the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel and sculpt the David. Michelangelo is widely believed by historians to have been homosexual.

March 8 - **International Women's Day** -- First celebrated in the US on February 28, 1909, the International Women's Day has become a worldwide event to acknowledge women's contribution to international peace and security and highlight their ongoing struggle for equality and security. For info about the day, go to <http://www.internationalwomensday.com>.

March 8-14, 2007: **Fifth Annual LGBT Health Awareness Week** -- More info at <http://www.lgbthealth.net/awarenessweek09/>

March 13, 1906 -- **Susan B. Anthony** dies. Anthony was an abolitionist, a teacher and education reformer, a labor activist, a temperance worker, a feminist and, of course a suffragist. She never married and she is believed by historians to have had three intimate relationships with women in her life. More at: http://www.paulsgaystamps.com/Age%20of%20Mechanization/Age_of_Mechanization_Susan_B_Anthony.htm and http://www.glbtc.com/social-sciences/anthony_sb.html

March 17, 1938 - **Rudolph Nureyev** is born to Muslim peasant parents in Siberia. Nureyev has been called "perhaps the greatest dancer who ever lived" and is known to have had intense affairs with men. Nureyev defected from the Soviet Union and lived in France and the U.S. on and off. He died in Paris of AIDS-related complications on January 6, 1993. Read about him at: http://www.tutorgig.com/encyclopedia/getdefn.jsp?keywords=Rudolf_Nureyev and http://www.glbtc.com/arts/nureyev_r.2.html

March 17, 1912 - **Bayard Rustin** is born Bayard Taylor Rustin to Florence Rustin and Archie Hopkins. Rustin was a Quaker and an African-American. He was a Gay man and a pacifist; a scholar and a human rights activist at home (working to protect the property of interned Japanese-American families during WWII, to abolish chain gangs, to desegregate busses) and all over the world. He was also the organizer of the 1963 March on Washington, where King made his famous "I have a dream..." speech. Read more at: http://www.quakerinfo.com/quak_br.shtml and <http://rustin.org/>

March 21, 2000 - The remains of **Steen Keith Fenrich** are discovered. It turns out that the gay, African-American teen was tortured and murdered by his white, homophobic, racist stepfather. Read more at: <http://www.stophate.us/memorials/steen.html> and <http://www.thetaskforce.org/node/1219>

March 21 - **International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination**. In Sharpeville, South Africa on March 21, 1960, police killed 69 people who were demonstrating peacefully against the apartheid 'pass laws.' In 1966, the day was officially designated by the United Nations as a marker of efforts to eliminate all forms of racial discrimination. More info: <http://www.un.org/depts/dhl/racial/>

March 24, 1987 - 1987 - **ACT UP** stages its first major demonstration. Seventeen protestors are arrested. Listen to an oral history project about Act Up here: <http://www.actuporalhistory.org/>

March 25, 1947 - Multiple Grammy-winning singer/songwriter **Sir Elton John** is born (and named Reginald Kenneth Dwight). John would one day collaborate with lyricist Tim Rice to create the soundtrack to the Walt Disney Pictures blockbuster "The Lion King." More at <http://web.eltonjohn.com/index.jsp>

March 26, 1985 - The **U.S. Supreme Court** overturns (in a tie vote) a law that would have banned gay and lesbian people (or people who "promote the lifestyle") from teaching in Oklahoma public schools.

March 31, 1940 - **Barney Frank** is born. A United States Congressman since 1980, Frank was one of the first openly gay elected officials in the world. Read more at: <http://www.house.gov/frank/> and <http://www.planetout.com/pno/news/feature.html?sernum=9>

March, 1997 - **Everything we thought we knew about gender as malleable is called into question when David Reimer's story is finally told ...** David Reimer, an identical twin, was mutilated at 8-months old in a botched circumcision and then surgically reassigned by Dr. John Money and raised as a girl. But he never felt female on the inside (even though his parents followed Money's advice and hid the fact of his birth sex from him), despite Money's claims to the contrary. His life, especially at school, was sheer hell because others never really perceived him to be a girl either, despite his girl *drag*. By age 16, Reimer underwent a second reassignment at his own insistence so that he could live as the boy he knew himself to be. In the meantime, however, Money had convinced the medical establishment and the lay public, despite growing evidence to the contrary in his "girl" twin, that babies could be arbitrarily assigned a gender with no psychological consequences. Today, still, five children a day are surgically "corrected" at birth because of this one "case study" and Money's defense of his handling of David's life. With the help of Drs. Milton Diamond and H.K. Sigmundson, Reimer would finally tell the medical establishment the truth about his life in 1997 in the **Archives of Adolescent and Pediatric Medicine**, ["*Sex reassignment at birth. Long-term review and clinical implications*" Arch Pediatr Adolesc Med, Mar 1997; 151: 298 - 304.], challenging the firmly established medical and popular myth that gender was mostly a function of nurture rather than nature. Later that year, Reimer would work with author John Colapinto to tell his story to the lay public, first under a pseudonym, in **Rolling Stone** [http://www.healthyplace.com/Communities/Gender/intersexuals/article_john_joan.htm] and eventually, in his own name, in Colapinto's book, **As Nature Made Him: The Boy Who was Raised as a Girl**.



(2) Then, in honor of Women's History Month, women-loving-women born this month ...

March 19, 1894 - Actress and comedienne **Jackie "Moms" Mabley** is born. Mabley was African-American; more at: <http://www.alterheros.com/english/dossier/Articles.cfm?InfolD=175&ss=&is=>

March 21, 1962 - **Rosie O'Donnell** is born. Rosie's heritage is Irish-American. She will grow up to be an actress, comedienne, talk show host, children's advocate and mom ... and an openly lesbian partner and defender of gay/lesbian adoption.

March 25, 1971 - WNBA star **Sheryl Swoopes** is born. More at <http://sports.espn.go.com/wnba/news/story?id=2203853> and <http://www.outsports.com/women/20051026sherylswoopes.htm>

Also born this month are some wonderful women -- **Queen Latifah** (March 18th), **Tracy Chapman** (March 30th) -- who prefer to keep their sexual orientations and love lives private, but who also keep them ambiguous in interviews and lyrics. *Do they do that out of solidarity with lesbian and bisexual friends and family members? Do they do it out of deserved personal boundaries? It seems unlikely that it's a matter of their being homophobic – neither seems offended by the rumors, so much as the pestering. Is it a reasonable business decision given fans' homophobia? Nobody knows. Some might ask whether the sex lives of celebrities are anyone's business or why their sexual orientations matter. Still others hunger for strong role models who are like themselves in one way or another.*



(3) And some not born in March, but worth teaching about in this month of women's history ...

Jane Addams was a Nobel Prize winning pioneer social worker and a feminist. Addams was European-American, born into a wealthy family in 1860, long before anyone defined themselves as "lesbian," but she "shared her life for 40 years" with Mary Rozet Smith. She founded Hull House, a Chicago immigrant resettlement center "which established one of the first kindergarten programs in the country" and she helped found the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) and the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). See <http://history-and-education.blogspot.com/2007/02/jane-addams-project-irresponsible.html>

Dr. Paula Gunn Allen is an award-winning Laguna Pueblo/Sioux/Lebanese/Scottish poet and novelist and professor and an out lesbian. See http://www.nativewiki.org/Paula_Gunn_Allen and http://www.queertheory.com/histories/a/allen_paula_gunn.htm

Rita Mae Brown is openly lesbian, a novelist and playwright and an activist for African-American (as an ally - she's European-American) and GLBT civil rights. When reporter Liz Smith asked her, "Why do you have to tell people you're gay? What purpose does it serve?" she answered that it was wrong to lie. Smith replied, "Keeping quiet isn't lying." Rita Mae: "It's lying by omission." See http://www.queertheory.com/histories/b/brown_rita_mae.htm and <http://www.ritamaebrown.com/content/index.asp>

Dr. Grethe Cammermeyer was the highest ranking U.S. military officer ever discharged for being honest about being lesbian. The book *Serving in Silence* and the movie by the same name starring Glenn Close tell her story. Cammermeyer was born in Norway, immigrated to the U.S. at age 9, and became a U.S. citizen when she turned 18. See <http://www.cammermeyer.com/>

Cheryl Chase / Bo Laurent is a pioneer activist for the rights of intersex people, founding the Intersex Society of North America (ISNA). ISNA's now-archived web site says, "Her ongoing efforts to improve the social and medical treatment of intersexed people have been recognized with the year 2000 Felipa de Souza Human Rights Award, and in diverse publications and numerous television and radio programs including Newsweek, the New York Times, NPR's Fresh Air, NBC Dateline ...". See <http://www.isna.org/about/chase>

God-des & She are mid-western Hip-Hop & Soul singers who got their first big break when they made their television debut on the Season 3 finale of Showtime's hit series "The L Word." Check out the lyrics to their song "**Stand Up**": <http://www.metrolyrics.com/stand-up-lyrics-goddes-and-she.html>

Marga Gomez is an openly lesbian, Latina comedian whose live performances have been featured on HBO, VH1, Comedy, Central, A&E, and public television. See <http://www.margagomez.com/> and <http://www.myspace.com/margagomezcomedy>

Alberta Hunter, April 1, 1895 - October 17, 1984, was a jazz and blues singer, a lyricist and an actress of international stature. She's believed by historians to have been lesbian. See <http://www.windycitymediagroup.com/gay/lesbian/news/ARTICLE.php?AID=1393> and http://www.glbtq.com/arts/hunter_a.html

Janis Ian (born April 7, 1951) is a Grammy-winning American songwriter, singer and musician. One of her claims to fame, besides her amazing talent: She was the first performer to sing on Saturday Night Live, on their very first show. Ian married her long-time partner Patricia Snyder in 2003. See <http://www.janisian.com/>

"It was we, the people; not we, the white male citizens; nor yet we, the male citizens; but we, the whole people, who formed the Union.... Men, their rights and nothing more; women, their rights and nothing less."

-- Susan B. **Anthony**

"The reward for conformity was that everyone liked you except yourself."

-- Rita Mae **Brown**

"We must recognize that racism and ethnocentrism -- just like homophobia and transgenderphobia -- exist in every community and every society, and we have an obligation to address bigotry in all its forms, wherever we may find it."

- Pauline **Park**

"If you always do what you always did, you'll always get what you always got."

-- "Moms" **Mabley**

"I have noticed that as soon as you have soldiers the story is called history. Before their arrival it is called myth, folktale, legend, fairy tale, oral poetry, ethnography. After the soldiers arrive, it is called history."

-- Paula **Gunn Allen**

"No government has the right to tell its citizens when or whom to love."

- Rita Mae **Brown**

"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**

"When I picketed for Welfare Mother's Rights, and against the enforced sterilization of young Black girls, when I fought institutionalized racism in the New York City schools, I was a Black Lesbian. But you did not know it because we did not identify ourselves, so now you can say that Black Lesbians and Gay men have nothing to do with the struggles of the Black Nation. And I am not alone. When you read the words of Langston Hughes you are reading the words of a Black Gay man. When you read the words of Alice Dunbar-Nelson and Angelina Weld Grimke', poets of the Harlem Renaissance, you are reading the words of Black Lesbians. When you listen to the life-affirming voices of Bessie Smith and Ma Rainey, you are hearing Black Lesbian women. When you see the plays and read the words of Lorraine Hansberry, you are reading the words of a woman who loved women deeply."

-- Audre **Lorde**, in response to the charge that Black lesbians and gay men were not part of the African American civil rights movement

"Where, after all, do universal human rights begin? In small places, close to home - so close and so small that they cannot be seen on any map of the world."

- Eleanor **Roosevelt**