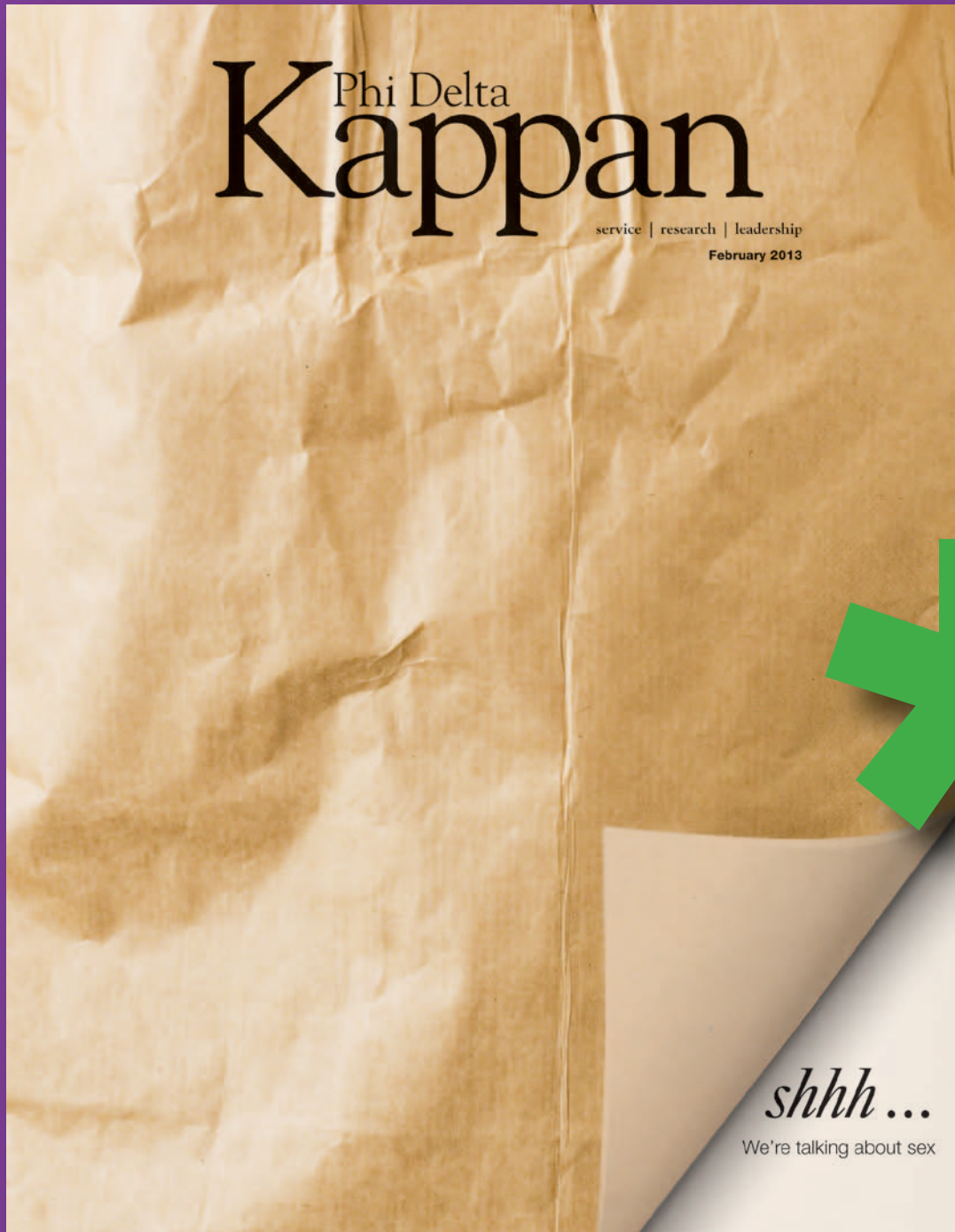


SUPPLEMENT TO PHI DELTA KAPPAN



for the  
February 2013  
issue

## PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT DISCUSSION GUIDE

By Lois Brown Easton

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## Using this guide

This discussion guide is intended to assist *Kappan* readers who want to use articles in staff meetings or university classroom discussions.

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# Knowing the warning signs of educator sexual misconduct

By Charol Shakeshaft

*Phi Delta Kappan*, 94 (5), 8-13

## OVERVIEW OF THE ARTICLE

Although knowledge of both the patterns and preconditions of educator sexual misconduct can help other educators identify when abuse has or is likely to occur, schools need strong, specific, and published policies; regular training on these policies and related procedures; immediate response to suspected incidents; and an overall environment that precludes abuse.

## KEY POINTS

- “Nearly 7% or about 3.5 million students report having physical sexual contact from an adult, most commonly a teacher or coach in their school.”
- Sexual misconduct means “inappropriate to criminal sexual behaviors and includes verbal, visual, and physical misconduct.”
- Predators and those who ignore their behavior create an unsafe environment for students and staff alike.
- There are two types of predators: the fixated abuser (usually likeable, seen as trustworthy, and even admired) and the opportunistic abuser (who take advantage of a situation to instigate their sexual overtures and actions).
- Several environmental conditions facilitate sexual misconduct, including the motivation of the adult, the adult’s ability to overcome internal and external inhibitions, the presence of an opportunity, and the ability of the adults to overcome the young person’s resistance.
- Schools and districts wanting to create a safe environment for students and adults must have clear and specific policies and procedures, and they must publish these as well as broadcast their commitment to preventing sexual exploitation.
- In addition, they need a clear process for identifying and reporting possible instances of sexual exploitation; this process should include the identification of a contact person to whom incidents should be reported.
- Districts and schools must ensure that all adults receive training on the policies and procedures as well as education about the importance of prevention.
- Through environmental monitoring, schools and districts should identify and remedy both areas of risk, such as covered classroom doors, and times of risk, such as before or after school.

## DEEPEN YOUR THINKING

Choose one or more of these individual inquiry topics for thinking and writing.

1. When you were a student were you aware of the possibility that the educators in your school might engage in sexual misconduct? If so, how did you know of this possibility, and what measures did your schools have in place to prevent adult sexual misconduct?
2. How many incidents of sexual misconduct in schools have occurred in the schools you know well?
3. What have been the reactions to these incidents (such as press coverage or firing a teacher)?
4. What policies and procedures are in place in the schools and districts you know to prevent educator sexual misconduct? What state laws govern this issue?
5. Are training and education programs available to educators and others in your system? Are they required or voluntary?

6. Has the community in which you reside made any public statement (such as letters to the editor) about the possibility of sexual misconduct in the community's schools?
7. What aspects of the environment in your community's schools might discourage child sexual abusers?
8. How can that environment be improved to create a safer place for children and youth in your community's schools?
9. How should the possibility of sexual misconduct by teachers and administrators in their schools be communicated to students?
10. To what extent is the subject of educator sexual predation a taboo subject in the schools and districts you know?

## **EXTEND YOUR THOUGHTS THROUGH ACTIVITIES FOR GROUP DISCUSSION**

The author of this article states that "districts should have clear policies and procedures" related to educator sexual misconduct. With colleagues, read and discuss the policy that follows according to the author's criteria. The name of the district has been omitted. How would you improve this policy?

*This district provides its students with a safe and supportive learning environment and protects its students from sexual misconduct and abuse. The responsibility to protect students from sexual misconduct and abuse is shared by the school board, superintendent, administrators, teachers, other school board employees, volunteers, parents, state agencies, and law enforcement.*

*This district encourages healthy relationships between students and adults that promote student achievement and success. At the same time, clear and reasonable boundaries for interactions between students and adults are necessary to protect students from sexual misconduct and abuse and to protect adults from misunderstandings and false accusations.*

*This policy applies to school board employees, school volunteers, employees of virtual school programs (to include but not limited to distance learning, online programs), and vendors providing instructional services to students. In this policy, these individuals will be referred to as "adults."*

### **Sexual Misconduct and Abuse Prohibited**

*Adults are prohibited from engaging in sexual misconduct and abuse of students, which includes dating; making sexual advances; seeking romantic or sexual relationships; having conversations of a sexual nature not related to the adult's professional responsibilities; and sexual contact.*

### **In-Person Communication**

*Personal contact between adults and students must be nonsexual, appropriate to the circumstances and unambiguous in meaning. Adults should avoid the appearance of impropriety in their interactions with students. Behaviors that can create an appearance of impropriety include, but are not limited to:*

- *Conducting ongoing, private conversations with individual students that are unrelated to academics, school activities, or the well-being of students and that take place in locations inaccessible to others;*
- *Inviting a student or students for home visits without informing parents;*
- *Visiting the homes of students without the knowledge of parents;*
- *Inviting students for social contact off school grounds without the permission or knowledge of parents; and*
- *Transporting students in personal vehicles without the knowledge of parents or supervisors.*

### **Electronic Communication**

*Digital technology and social networking provide multiple means for educators and other school board employees to communicate appropriately with students and personalize learning. Such communication between adults and*

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students must be transparent, accessible to supervisors and parents, nonsexual, appropriate to the circumstances, and unambiguous in meaning. Adults must restrict one-on-one, electronic communications with individual students to accounts, systems, and platforms that are provided by and accessible to this district.

If an adult does not have access to a district-approved communication device and there is a time-sensitive, school-related matter that must be communicated to students, the adult may use a personal communication device or personal social media to communicate this information. The adult must note the date, time, and nature of the contact and make this information available to a supervisor upon request.

Parents are encouraged to have access to their children's social networking and digital communications and to supervise their children's use of these methods of communication.

### **Reporting of Violations**

District employees are required to report any case of suspected sexual misconduct or abuse to the building principal, who shall report such information to the assistant superintendent for administrative services. District employees who are not based in schools shall make such reports to the department head. This requirement is in addition to the requirements for reporting cases of suspected child abuse or neglect under School Board Policy 12-345.

In addition, district employees are required to report suspected incidents of violations of this policy regarding in-person and electronic communications with students to the building principal, who shall report such information to the assistant superintendent for administrative services. District employees who are not based in a school are to immediately report suspected incidents of violations of this policy to their department head or designee.

### **Investigation and Consequences for Violations**

Personnel Services or its designee shall investigate reports of suspected violations of this policy. District employees are subject to the application of disciplinary procedures for violation of this policy. In the case of termination of employment for sexual misconduct or abuse, the district will notify the state superintendent of instruction. Consistent with the State Department of Education Guidelines, the district will disclose to school divisions seeking references any formal reprimands or dismissals for violating this policy.

### **Training**

The district will provide its employees and volunteers with training on the prevention of sexual misconduct and abuse, including providing them with this policy. All teachers are required to be trained during their recertification process. Contracts with virtual school programs and other vendors providing instructional services to students will include a requirement that those adults will comply with this policy.



# “I didn’t mean to. . .”: Practical suggestions for understanding and teaching students with sexualized behavior

By Nancy Rappaport and Jessica Minahan

*Phi Delta Kappan*, 94 (5), 21-26

## OVERVIEW OF THE ARTICLE

Students who display sexualized behavior because of social skills deficits, impulsive behavior, or abuse can be challenging to teachers and schools, but educators can use a variety of strategies, including modifying classrooms and schools and responding more effectively to such behavior, to help students function better in schools.

## KEY POINTS

- “Student sexually inappropriate behavior includes:
  - “Using sexual language, gestures, or noises;
  - “Engaging in pretend play that simulates sex;
  - “Making sexual invitations to others;
  - “Inappropriately touching another person; and
  - “Masturbating in the classroom.”
- Educators can develop appropriate responses to these behaviors
- Sexualized behavior may be caused by social skills deficits, impulsiveness, exposure to sexual material, and sexual abuse.
- Inappropriate social behavior may result from a lack of understanding about how to behave socially, the need to get a response, or a means for expressing frustration.
- Responding to students with past trauma requires understanding and eliminating triggers of the trauma for students and creating environments that are trauma-sensitive.
- Educators can address inappropriate sexual behavior by making accommodations and modifications in the classroom, including helping students understand personal space, supervising students better, teaching self-regulation and cues for appropriate behavior, and giving students appropriate forms of interaction.
- Responding to inappropriate behavior requires minimizing attention to the behavior, preventing the student from feeling shamed, helping the student process the incident, and giving praise for appropriate behavior.

## DEEPEN YOUR THINKING

Choose one or more of these individual inquiry topics for thinking and writing.

1. What did you know about student sexualized behavior when you went to school?
2. If there were incidents of sexualized behavior in the schools you attended, how were they handled?
3. In today’s schools, what percentage of students is likely to demonstrate social skills deficits, connected or not to sexualized behavior? How do schools help them learn social skills?
4. In today’s schools, what percentage of students is likely to demonstrate impulsivity, connected or not to sexualized behavior, in today’s schools?
5. In your opinion, how many students in schools today have experienced some kind of trauma, not necessarily sexual?
6. How are students who exhibit inappropriate sexualized behavior treated in the schools you know now?
7. What district policies — if any — govern the actions of teachers and administrators in the schools you know now?

8. In the districts and schools you know well, what kind of education about student sexualized behavior do educators receive?
9. To what extent is the subject of student sexualized behavior taboo in the schools and districts you know?
10. To what extent are students whose behavior is sexually inappropriate isolated from other students? From teachers?

### EXTEND YOUR THOUGHTS THROUGH ACTIVITIES FOR GROUP DISCUSSION

Among the references for this article is *The New Social Story Book: Over 150 Social Stories that Teach Everyday Social Skills to Children with Autism or Asperger's Syndrome, and their Peers* by Carol Gray (Future Horizons, 2010). According to Gray, a social story “describes a situation, skill, or concept according to 10 defining criteria. These criteria guide story development to ensure an overall patient and support quality, and a format, ‘voice,’ and relevant content that is descriptive, meaningful, and physically, socially, and emotional safe for the audience” (xxv). Gray “originally developed Social Stories™ in 1991 from working directly and collaboratively with children with autism and Asperger Syndrome” (xxvii) and started the Gray Center for Social Learning and Understanding ([www.thegraycenter.org/social-stories](http://www.thegraycenter.org/social-stories)).

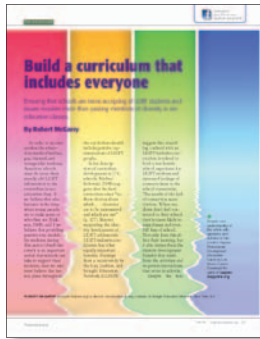
Storybooks, then, are one way educators can “help children learn the skills they need to make good choices that will increase their social acceptance and life skills” (Living Well with Autism, n.d.). They are one way educators can modify classrooms and schools and respond appropriately to sexualized behavior.

More specifically, Gray’s Social Stories describe “a situation, skill, or concept in terms of relevant social cues, perspectives, and common responses in a specifically defined style and format”. Most are illustrated, with one concept or idea per page, leading to the next concept or idea. Gray’s book gives specific guidelines for developing a story.

Here is the text from a social story. You can imagine the illustrations or go to the Living Well with Autism web site to see them ([www.livingwellwithautism.com/yahoo\\_site\\_admin/assets/docs/personal\\_space.222180413.pdf](http://www.livingwellwithautism.com/yahoo_site_admin/assets/docs/personal_space.222180413.pdf))

Page 1: Personal space	Page 2: What is personal space?
Page 3: It is the distance that makes people feel comfortable.	Page 4: This is TOO close!
Page 5: This is just right!	Page 6: What happens if I get too close?
Page 7: People feel uncomfortable.	Page 8: People feel scared.
Page 9: People walk away.	Page 10: No one plays with me.
Page 11: What happens if I give people space?	Page 12: People talk with me.
Page 13: People play with me.	Page 14: People eat with me.
Page 15: I make friends.	Page 16: Now I know what to do.

With your colleagues, imagine a story you would use with a student who demonstrates sexualized behavior. Select only one of the situations described in the article, and draft a story with one idea per page, leading to the next idea. Make note of the illustrations you might use. If possible, share your story with other educators and, if appropriate, with students.



# Build a curriculum that includes everyone

By Robert McGarry

*Phi Delta Kappan*, 94 (5), 27-31

## OVERVIEW OF THE ARTICLE

Schools can take responsibility for promoting the healthy development of all students by letting them understand themselves and the world around them through inclusive, nonbiased, and engaging curriculum materials that offer positive representations of people who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgendered (LGBT).

## KEY POINTS

- “Schools have a responsibility to promote the healthy development of every child, regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity/expression.”
- Conventionally, educators have attended to the issues of LGBT students through coverage in the sex education curriculum, if then.
- Current curriculum practices include the following:
  - Keeping LGBT people invisible, ignoring, or disregarding them;
  - Demonizing them (communicating that being LGBT is unacceptable or unnatural);
  - Stigmatizing them; and
  - Excluding transgender considerations.
- In order to learn, LGBT students need the following:
  - They need to feel connected to their schools.
  - They need positive representations of LGBT people in their classrooms.
  - They need materials that are free from bias.
  - They need to be safe from harassment.
- Teaching about LGBT issues and including LGBT people in the curriculum gives other students an understanding of their peers.
- Effective strategies include using diverse analogies, inclusive language, students’ preferred names and gender pronouns, using gender-neutral language such as “partner”; and addressing stereotypes.

## DEEPEN YOUR THINKING

Choose one or more of these individual inquiry topics for thinking and writing.

1. Think back to your own school years. What did you know of lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender issues? How were LGBT students treated?
2. What are popular attitudes today about LGBT people?
3. Has education changed to represent current attitudes?
4. What do you know about curriculum and instructional materials currently in use? To what extent do they take a positive approach to LGBT issues?

5. How does your district or school use the National Sexuality Education Standards: Core Content and Skills, K-12 (Future of Sex Education Initiative, 2012)? Or the Guidelines for Comprehensive Sexuality Education: Kindergarten through 12th Grade (2004)?
6. What policies are in place in your district or school regarding curriculum and instructional materials and LGBT issues? To what extent are these policies followed?
7. What could be done to improve the experiences of LGBT youth in schools you know?

## **EXTEND YOUR THOUGHTS THROUGH ACTIVITIES FOR GROUP DISCUSSION**

Working with colleagues, select one of the quotes below and use it as the beginning of a discussion about the experience of LGBT youth in schools. The quotes are from the March 1996 report of the Rhode Island Task Force on Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgendered Youth, *School Shouldn't Hurt: Lifting the Burden from Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgendered Youth* (<http://twood.tripod.com/safeschools.html>).

As part of your discussion, consider what educators in your setting could do to address the issues raised by the young people quoted in this report.

1. "People kept coming up to me and making fun of me, they would call me horrible names, and I would cry all the time. Letters were put in my locker saying things about AIDS and how my parents shouldn't have had me and how I should just die. Kids would threaten me after school and follow me home yelling things at me. No one should have to go through what I went through in school."
2. "I remember the first time I was called a faggot, it was in 2nd grade. It was when I kicked a ball to a foul. I didn't know what they meant, but I knew it was bad."
3. "I have been called a faggot and a sissy all my life. It is easy for adults to say that I should just ignore it, and that is generally what they say — I have been hearing that my whole life along with the saying 'sticks and stones will break my bones, but names will never hurt me' . . . . But that isn't really true. Words do hurt me, and besides that I have been pushed, punched, and threatened."
4. "I don't feel safe from abuse at my high school. I am relentlessly persecuted for being gay. By the time I was in 9th grade, listening without responding to others bashing homosexuals was more painful than the harassment I deal with now. Up to now, a person has masturbated in front of me while I was in the school lavatory, I have had cigarettes thrown at me, students have driven their car within a foot of me to drive me off the road while I was walking, and people call me vulgar names almost daily. What I am describing now is not simple child's play and name calling. It is very specific harassment that threatens my safety at school."
5. "When I was 15, a sophomore at East Providence High School, I came out to a few of my friends. Eventually, it got around the school. One day, on the second to last day of school, I went out to the parking lot and the captain of the football team met me in the hallway and said, 'You can't go by me, faggot' . . . I dropped the art project I was carrying, and he beat the crap out of me."
6. "From the time I was 3 years old, I was constantly harassed by my classmates. People would harass me verbally and physically. I have been stuffed into lockers, and I have had people beat me over the head with a baseball bat. I 'came out' my senior year, and during that year alone, I can remember countless incidents of people harassing me verbally, with literature, or physically; from people writing epithets on my locker to people physically threatening me, even a death threat when I accepted my boyfriend's invitation to his senior prom at East Providence High School."
7. "Whenever there was education about AIDS or anything, there was never a gay side to it, there was only the straight side to it."
8. "One of the other problems I have seen is that there are a lot of gay and lesbian teachers, principals, vice-principals . . . whatever, in this state. I know them, I've seen them. I have a lesbian director of a school telling my son it is OK for him to be gay and proud of himself, but not being able to be open about who she is. In the first school that my son was having a problem with, in elementary school, he was being called 'fag' and 'queer' on a daily basis, I felt lousy as a parent dropping him off there. I knew there was support in that school, there were people in that school that personally knew what my son was going through, but they didn't feel safe with their peers, so there was no way that the students could be safe."

9. "Straight people can talk about how they feel they sympathize with gays, lesbians, and bisexuals. But they don't know until they have to stand there in front of a group that hates them for who they are, and tell them that you are gay; you feel very threatened."
10. "I remember the first time I came out, I was four. I told my mother I wanted to marry my friend Joshua, and she said I couldn't because boys don't get married to each other. From that day on, I knew what I was, was bad. Being picked on, being shunned from games, teachers not taking the time to answer my questions in class, not being able to play with the boys because I was a faggot, and not being able to play with the girls because I was a boy left me by myself. The summer of 5th grade was when isolation for me personally was too hard to handle."
11. "When I would go to lunch, I would have to sit through 45 minutes of gay jokes and 'Oh my God, how could someone possibly be gay?!' A lot of the time I ate in the classroom by myself because I just couldn't stand it anymore."
12. "There was no one in my school for me to talk to about my issues. I felt completely alone and unsupported. I had nowhere to unload the burden I was feeling unless I ended it all."
13. "I left home when I was 15 years old. My family did not accept my way of life. Everybody found out in school. I left my house when I was 15, I didn't know where to go."
14. "By the time I was in 7th grade, I had learned to become a homophobic kid. I couldn't stand the fact that I was gay. The following year, my sister came out. My family became more supportive, and I became more supportive, and it was OK for other people to be gay, but it still wasn't OK for me to be gay — I still had a lot of homophobia in me."
15. "He said he liked the numbing effect of drinking or getting high, but also he despised himself for doing this. His depression deepened, he expressed feelings of self-loathing and worthlessness to me, and his mother was frightened by signs that David was cutting himself superficially in incidents of self-mutilation. He began acting out in school and discussing suicide. David was then placed in a psychiatric hospital for two months and prescribed medication to alleviate the profound depression he was experiencing. I once expected that David would graduate at the top of his class, attend a prestigious college, and contribute his many gifts to the world. Now, I don't know what the future holds for him, but I hope that other gay and lesbian students won't have to suffer as he did."
16. "I dropped out of school at 17, after being at different schools in Providence. I am gay and was made fun of so much that I got sick of being in school. I couldn't stand worrying about what was going to happen to me each day when I got there, so I stopped going. I was beaten up all during my time in school, and the fights and threats started when I was pretty young. As I said, I did try different schools including a private one. The last one was pretty good; but, by then, I was so fed up that I had lost any interest in school."
17. "It was really hard to go to school and to concentrate on my work. I went from an 'A/B' student to barely passing. It was hard to go to school because it seemed like nobody cared."
18. "To hear the words 'fag,' 'queer,' 'flamer' and 'homo' day after day, class after class can and will emotionally impair you. So, where do you turn when you are discriminated against in high school? Granted, there were certain people I could go to; but there were definitely more dead ends than anything else. I was gay bashed in school, and the assistant principal let it slide because it was an after-school function. On another occasion, I was called a gay slur too extreme to repeat. The assistant principal felt that this was freedom of speech."

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19. "Before I came out, I was respected by my teachers. But, soon after I came out, some of my teachers started to give me dirty looks, not calling on me in class, avoiding me at any cost and refusing to give me help after school. I actually had a teacher, as I walked by his desk, whisper under his breath 'God forgive her,' as if I were sinning just being alive. I've heard teachers in class make little comments about homosexuality and homosexuals. How are we supposed to respect each other if our mentors of today are condemning and not respecting the differences in people? How am I supposed to respect myself when someone I look up to say he hates who I am?"
  
  20. "Teachers feel that if they help a gay student out, it is guilty by associate[ion]. They don't want to help because they don't want to be labeled a gay man or lesbian. My psychology professor went through bashing, even though he has been married for 20 years with three kids. I think it comes down to teachers not wanting to become involved because of guilt by association."
  
  21. "I came out during my junior year. My senior year, I decided that it was time to have a Gay-Straight Alliance at my school. I was told by my principal that we don't have students like that in our high school, and, if we did, it is a problem of social workers and school psychologists. She simply said that we don't need groups like that in our high school. From that point on, speakers from the RI Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual Speaker's Bureau were denied in my classroom. I think that it is teacher ignorance that is the basis of this (harassment and insensitivity)."
  
  22. "Not only can students be cruel, but teachers can also be cruel. For the well-being of all gay and lesbian students, faculty should first be educated about these issues so they can be better prepared to deal with gay and lesbian issues. I also feel that schools should adopt a policy of safety for all students."
  
  23. "I think it is an unreasonable burden to expect students to educate the teachers (on gay and lesbian concerns)."
  
  24. "One thing that one of my schools did, when I was really getting picked on, was having the class read a book with a gay character in it in our English class. That seemed to help for awhile, and, even though I felt on the spot, the harassment was a little less. That teacher was the only teacher who stopped gay remarks."
  
  25. "Most of the students in the Gay-Straight Alliance identify as straight, but it's nice to know that they support me. I'm not scared of being 'out' because they would defend me."

# Applications

This Professional Development Guide was created with the characteristics of adult learners in mind (Tallerico, 2005):

- Active engagement
- Relevance to current challenges
- Integration of experience
- Learning style variation
- Choice and self-direction

## **As you think about sharing this article with other adults, how could you fulfill the adult learning needs above?**

This Professional Development Guide was created so that readers could apply what they have learned to work in classrooms (Marzano, Pickering, & Pollock, 2001):

- Identifying Similarities and Differences
- Summarizing and Note-Taking
- Reinforcing Effort and Providing Recognition
- Homework and Practice
- Nonlinguistic Representations
- Cooperative Learning
- Setting Objectives and Providing Feedback
- Generating and Testing Hypotheses
- Cues, Questions, and Advance Organizers

## **As you think about sharing this article with classroom teachers, how could you use these strategies with them?**

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# About the Author

**Lois Brown Easton** is a consultant, coach, and author with a particular interest in learning designs — for adults and for students. She retired as director of professional development at Eagle Rock School and Professional Development Center, Estes Park, Colo. From 1992 to 1994, she was director of Re:Learning Systems at the Education Commission of the States (ECS). Re:Learning was a partnership between the Coalition of Essential Schools and ECS. Before that, she served in the Arizona Department of Education in a variety of positions: English/language arts coordinator, director of curriculum and instruction, and director of curriculum and assessment planning.

A middle school English teacher for 15 years, Easton earned her Ph.D. at the University of Arizona. Easton has been a frequent presenter at conferences and a contributor to educational journals.

She was editor and contributor to *Powerful Designs for Professional Learning* (NSDC, 2004 & 2008). Her other books include:

- *The Other Side of Curriculum: Lessons From Learners* (Heinemann, 2002);
- *Engaging the Disengaged: How Schools Can Help Struggling Students Succeed* (Corwin, 2008);
- *Protocols for Professional Learning* (ASCD, 2009); and
- *Professional Learning Communities by Design: Putting the Learning Back Into PLCs* (Learning Forward and Corwin, 2011).

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