

Lesson 3: Grades 8 & Up

The Exclusion of LGBT People from Societal Institutions: In-Group, Out-Group

Overview

In this lesson, students explore the concept of exclusion on personal and societal levels. After participating in an exercise in which they experience the effects of inclusion/exclusion in a social situation, students do reflective writing in response to historical photographs depicting the exclusion of various groups in society. In the final part of the lesson, students identify ways in which LGBT people are currently excluded from societal institutions, listen to interviews of LGBT people describing their experiences with discrimination and create portraits of the interview subjects that reflect what they have learned.

[NOTE: This lesson explores LGBT issues in an open and direct way. Given the absence of this topic in the curriculum and the disproportionate rates of anti-LGBT bullying and harassment, it is important to educate students about these issues. When discussing any new or sensitive topic, however, there is the potential for some students to react in stereotypical or disrespectful ways. It is therefore imperative that educators carefully review the lesson, assess students' maturity and readiness to engage in the lesson prior to implementation, and establish clear parameters with students that will ensure safe and constructive dialogue. See "[Establishing a Safe Learning Environment](#)" and "[Creating an Anti-Bias Learning Environment](#)" for guidelines on building safe forums for discussing sensitive issues.]

Objectives

- Students will reflect on the ways in which individuals and groups are included/excluded on personal and societal levels.
- Students will learn about the experiences of racial, ethnic and religious groups that have experienced exclusion historically.
- Students will increase their awareness about the ways in which LGBT people are currently included/excluded from societal institutions.

Time

Parts I and II: 50 mins.; Part III: at least 30 mins.

Requirements

Handouts and Resources:

- [Images of Exclusion](#) PowerPoint
- [The Struggle for LGBT Inclusion](#) PowerPoint
- *Kendall Bailey, James Dale and David Wilson* [Interview Backgrounders](#) (one of each per student in each small group; see Part III #4–5)

Other Material:

- Unheard Voices [audio interviews and transcripts](#) and [interview backgrounders](#)
- Chart paper, markers, note paper, pens/pencils, masking tape, art supplies
- Smart board or computer/projector/screen, speakers

Advanced Preparation

- Reproduce handouts as directed above.
- Chart the discussion questions in Part II #3.
- Prepare to show PowerPoints (see Part II #3, Part III #2 and #4).

Key Words

Amend
 Avowed
 Civil union
 Commitment
 Conflict
 Constitution
 Discharge
 Dissent
 Domestic partnership
 "Don't Ask, Don't Tell"
 Discrimination
 Exclusion
 First Amendment
 Gender identity
 Heterosexism
 Homophobia
 Inclusion
 LGBT
 Marriage equality
 Prejudice
 Racism
 Sexual orientation
 Systematic

- ☞ Prepare to play [audio interviews](#) (see Part III #5).
- ☞ Gather art supplies for creating portraits (see Part III #5).

Techniques and Skills

analyzing images, brainstorming, case study, connecting past to present, cooperative group work, creating visual art, critical thinking, debate, examining historical photographs, forming opinions, historical understanding, large and small group discussion, listening skills, reading skills, writing skills

Procedures

Part I: How Does it Feel to be Excluded? (20 minutes)

1. Ask for volunteers, one for each 5–6 members of the group. Instruct the volunteers to wait outside the room until you ask them to come in. Close the door so that the volunteers cannot hear the conversation inside the room.

NOTE: These volunteers will participate in an exercise in which they experience how it feels to be excluded. Select students who will not feel distressed by this simulation.

2. Instruct the remaining students to form circles with 5–6 people in each circle, standing shoulder-to-shoulder. Explain to the group that their goal is to keep the volunteers from becoming a part of their circle using any means possible except physical contact. Suggest that groups pick a subject and begin talking in a lively manner about the topic as volunteers return and try to join their circle.
3. Go to the volunteers and explain that when they go inside, their goal is to become part of one of the circles. Bring them into the room and assign each to a different circle. Allow 2–3 minutes for the interaction.
4. Instruct students to return to their seats and lead a discussion using some of the following questions:
 - If you were excluded from the group, how did it feel? What strategies did you use to try to get into the group? As time went on, did you feel like more like giving up or trying harder?
 - If you were part of the “in group,” how did that feel? What strategies did you use to keep the volunteers out? What were the benefits and costs of excluding others?
 - In real life, is there anything wrong with wanting to hang out with “your group” and exclude others? Explain your thinking.
 - In your experience, what are the reasons that some people are included or excluded?
 - How do patterns of including and excluding behavior affect the climate at school?
 - How do you think this exercise or theme relates to the way people are treated in the broader society?

Part II: Social Group Exclusion Historically (30 minutes)

1. Tell students that—bearing in mind what exclusion feels like when it occurs on a social level—you would like them to consider the impact and consequences when groups are excluded systematically on a society-wide level.
2. Explain that fear and prejudice has led to the organized exclusion of various groups from jobs, housing, goods, services and opportunities throughout history. Tell students that you will be displaying some images that illustrate this exclusion, and that they will be doing some brief reflective writing in response to one of the images.
3. Play the [Images of Exclusion](#) PowerPoint through once and instruct students to select one image for reflection. Post the prompts below and direct students to write a paragraph or two in response to one of the questions (you can either assign a third of the class to each question or allow students to choose). Emphasize that students should write in the voice (i.e., from the perspective) of the person identified in the question. Allow 10–15 minutes for students to write.
 - Imagine you are an individual from the targeted group coming across this sign/ad. What are your thoughts and feelings? What impact does it have on you?
 - Imagine you are the person who posted the sign/ad. What motivated you to do so, and what thoughts or feelings do you experience as you post it?

- Imagine that you are a member of the group responsible for the sign/ad (but not the actual person who posted it). What is your reaction and how do you respond (if at all)?

Optional: Open the PowerPoint as “Read Only” when prompted. Play the PowerPoint on a continuous loop while students write. The presentation has been set up so that slides advance automatically every ten seconds. Click on the Slide Show/Set Up and Transitions tabs to adjust settings or turn them on/off.

4. Ask for several volunteers to read their reflections aloud. Process them using some of the following questions.
 - Why did the image you selected stand out to you? How did it make you feel?
 - Why did you decide to write in the voice/from the perspective that you selected?
 - Where and when do you think signs like these existed? Why do you think these groups were targeted in that time/place?
 - What do you think was the impact of this type of discrimination on the targeted groups? On the broader community?

NOTE: Information about the images (date, photographer, location, etc.) is listed in the “Notes” section of each slide. For some of the images, limited or no source information is available.

Part III: Exclusion of LGBT people in Contemporary Times (at least 30 minutes)

1. Ask students if they think that images like the ones they viewed in the previous exercise—and the policies they represent—exist in today’s world and, if so, where and targeted at whom.
2. If students have not already identified LGBT people, suggest that this group is the frequent target of exclusionary policies. Display slide 2 of [The Struggle for LGBT Inclusion](#) PowerPoint (“Welcome or Unwelcome?”). Ask students what thoughts or feelings this image elicits and allow a few moments for them to react.
3. Comment that while signposts like this don’t literally exist (this one was Photoshopped to protest challenges to same-sex marriage in CA), the policies it represents did.
4. Tell students that they will be listening to an audio interview of a gay person who has experienced exclusion from a major institution due to his sexual orientation. Provide brief overviews of the interview subjects using slides 3–5 of *The Struggle for LGBT Inclusion* PowerPoint.
5. Divide the class into groups of 3–5 students and have each group select one of the interview subjects. Provide each group with the appropriate [interview](#) and accompanying [interviewee's background](#). Instruct groups to do the following:
 - Listen to their interview.
 - Read and discuss the background as a group.
 - Create a portrait (a visual depiction or representation) of their subject that reflects what they have learned. The portrait doesn’t have to literally resemble the subject, but should exhibit prominent themes from the interview and reading. The portrait may be drawn or fashioned from items including newspaper headlines, Web images, quotes and personal reflections.

Optional: If time is limited, skip the assignment to create a portrait or assign it as homework. If the small group structure of this activity is challenging, play one or more of the interviews to the whole class as time allows, and read/discuss the backgrounders as a large group.

6. Reconvene the class and display the portraits at the front of the room. Have each group describe the design and major themes of their portrait. Allow students to share their reactions and questions to the various portraits. Reinforce the importance of working toward laws, practices and policies that include rather than exclude people from society’s major institutions.