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What will **YOU** do?

Facts, figures, ideas and activities for
Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual Trans History Month
February 2011



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February 2011

This is the month to make a difference, by raising awareness of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Trans people and issues at Gloucestershire College.

Whether it's awareness raising in the classroom with your students, with colleagues, with clients or customers, or even just becoming more aware yourself.

Why is LGBT History Month important?

Lesbian, gay, bisexual, and trans people still experience discrimination, prejudice, harassment and bullying on a daily basis throughout the UK. This can take place at work, in school, at university or college, or within their own peer group or family.

Gloucestershire College is committed to ensuring that all staff and students have an awareness of the issues that LGBT people face, so that they can help them feel safe and included at college.

This leaflet will give you information and ideas for raising awareness of LGBT issues, to help students to understand the facts about LGBT people, and the difficulties they may face in their daily lives.



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LGBT?

In modern usage, the term LGBT is intended to emphasise a diversity of "sexuality and gender identity-based cultures" and is sometimes used to refer to anyone who is non-heterosexual instead of exclusively to people who are homosexual, bisexual, or trans.

To recognize this inclusion, a popular variant adds the letter **Q** for those questioning their sexual identity (e.g., "**LGBTQ**" or "**GLBTQ**").



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LGBT Myths

Where does prejudice against LGBT people come from?

Prejudice against LGBT people is sometimes described as the 'last acceptable prejudice' as LGBT people are still seen as leading unacceptable lifestyles by certain groups, countries, or faiths.

Lesbian, gay and bisexual people are still sometimes thought of as leading 'different' lives to heterosexual people, by being perceived to be in non-committed relationships, not being part of the 'normal' family that society sees as important and being perceived to be not contributing to the upbringing of children.

These are either completely untrue, or only happen because society refuses to allow them to take part in what they consider to be important aspects of society, such as marriage, parenthood and family.

Only recently have lesbian, gay and bisexual people been able to have a civil partnership and adopt children.

Gay fashion designer Tom Ford has been with his partner Richard Buckley for 25 years... much longer than the average heterosexual marriage.



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LGBT Myths

Trans people, sometimes known as 'Transgender', often suffer more discrimination and harassment than any other group. Trans people can range from gender non-conforming (where they do not necessarily behave in a gender-normative way) to people who seek gender reassignment surgery to become the opposite sex.

There is a lack of information about the experiences of Trans people, and the difficulties they suffer in society because of a lack of understanding about who they are.

Transgender is often portrayed in the media as being comedic and for entertainment purposes, with television personalities such as Lily Savage, Dame Edna Everage, and Pantomime characters such as Widow Twankey. It is really no wonder then that Trans people are often not taken seriously, and find it difficult at work and in social settings.

The truth about Trans people is that they sometimes find their Trans status difficult to cope with, especially if they feel they have been born as the wrong sex. The struggle with behaving in the way that society expects, and sometimes lose the support of friends and relatives who don't understand them.

This is often why Trans people are discriminated against, bullied and harassed. **In fact, Trans people probably need the most support out of any group.**



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Facts and Figures

- ➔ Approximately 600,000 people in the UK identify as Lesbian, Gay or Bisexual.
- ➔ There are approximately 25,000 people in the UK who identify as transgender.
- ➔ 1 in 5 LGBT people experience discrimination in the UK on a regular basis.
- ➔ 25% of trans people who have experienced harassment at work ended up changing jobs.
- ➔ 73% of trans people feel that their personal safety is at risk.

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Teaching and Learning: Engaging Students in LGBT issues

Student Perception

LGBT students are three times as likely as non-LGBT students to say that they do not feel safe at school or college. By openly acknowledging their status we can remove some of the worries and barriers that might be in place, perceived or real.

Challenging behaviour in the classroom

You can help counter negative LGBT sentiment by showing your students positive examples of LGBT people in our society. Mention the influences prominent and everyday LGBT people have on our culture. Speak with comfort and confidence, mentioning LGBT people or issues in casual conversations.

Embedding diversity into your lessons

Use a little creativity and do a little homework of your own to introduce diversity into your lesson plan. Teaching English? Dedicate time specifically for LGBT authors. Are you the drama instructor? Mention actors that are children of LGBT people, such as Anne Heche, Dorothy Dandridge and Judy Garland.

Being a role model

Your students take your lead, especially at impressionable teen ages. Their view of the world is still developing and can often be wrongly influenced if they aren't shown other alternatives. How you speak of, portray or act towards lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender people can have a lasting impact on your students' view of LGBT people and LGBT issues.

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LGBT in Popular Culture

Students may not realise that many of their favourite celebrities are LGBT people.

Simon Amstell

An English Comedian, born 29 November 1979.

Beginning as a children's TV presenter for Nickelodeon UK, Amstell was fired because his sarcasm upset children. It was embraced, however, by the viewers of his next programmes, *Popworld* the popular Sunday mornings TV spot that took an irreverent look at the world of popular music. He left last year to replace Mark Lamacz as the presenter of the late night musical comedy panel game show *Never Mind the Buzzcocks*. In both these shows he's been entirely open about his sexuality, using it as a very successful and often talked about comedy point when playing off against the homophobic remarks of artists such as Beanie Man.



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LGBT in Popular Culture

John Barrowman

A Scottish Actor, born 11 March 1967.

Barrowman was in the public eye over 10 years ago as a presenter of BBC Children's Saturday morning offering *Live & Kicking*. Splitting his time before and since between the UK and the US, he recently regained fame, first as the mysterious character Captain Jack in *Doctor Who* (and later starring in the spinoff *Torchwood*) and then as one of the judges in the musical theatre talent searches *How do You Solve a Problem Like Maria?* and *Any Dream Will Do*. Barrowman came out in between his two bouts of fame, and has recently had a civil partnership with British partner Scott Gill - although he objects to the term "marriage" for his partnership, saying "why would I want a 'marriage' from a belief system that hates me?"



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LGBT in Popular Culture

➡ Jodie Foster

An American Actress, Born 19 November 1962.

Jodie Foster has been making headlines since she was 14 when she appeared as an underage prostitute in the De Niro film Taxi Driver. Since then she's starred in many acclaimed films and has won several awards, including two Oscars. Although there had been rumours about Foster's sexuality for several years, she only finally came out in December 2007, paying tribute to her partner of 14 years, Cydney Bernard, after winning a Women in Entertainment award. Foster and Bernard met on the set of the film Sommersby in 1993 and are raising two boys, ages 9 and 6, in their home in Malibu.



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LGBT in Popular Culture

➔ Eddie Izzard

An English Comedian, Born 7 February 1962.

Izzard began to toy with comedy at the University of Sheffield with partner and friend Rob Ballard. After leaving his accountancy degree course, they took their act to the streets, often in Covent Garden. After his first solo appearance as a stand up comedian at the Edinburgh Festival in 1987, where he met then partner and actress Sarah Townsend, in the same year made his first appearance at The Comedy Store, London. He refined his material throughout the 1980s and in the early 1990s, in part at his own club "Raging Bull" in Soho, he finally began earning some measure of recognition through his edgy improvisation.

Izzard describes himself as an "executive", "action" and "professional" transvestite, as "a male tomboy" rather than a drag queen. He regularly cross-dresses both on and off stage and makes it clear that cross-dressing is for him.



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LGBT Lesson Plans

Information from LGBT History Month Toolkit for Schools*

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*Some information has been summarised.

LGBT in the Curriculum

You can incorporate information on LGBT in the curriculum, to make students aware of different LGBT people that contributed to different areas.

Maths: Explore the work of Alan Turing, (a gay man), known as the Father of Computers.

English: Read James Baldwin (a gay man), and explore how his sexual orientation affected his work. Jackie Kay, a lesbian of black Scottish heritage is another interesting writer students can study.

Media: Explore the images of LGBT people and why they are predominately young and male and white people.

Art: Use art to produce images of LGBT people that could be used in College.

Drama: Use LGBT History as the basis of an improvised play to educate and entertain other students on the issues.

Modern Foreign Languages: Use diverse case studies when developing vocabulary which includes LGBT people.

The logo features a stylized sun with rays in shades of purple and white. The text 'lgbt' is written in large, white, lowercase letters with a slight shadow effect. To the right of 'lgbt', the words 'lesbian', 'gay', 'bisexual', and 'trans' are stacked vertically in a smaller, white, sans-serif font. Below 'lgbt', the words 'history month 2011' are written in a bold, white, sans-serif font.

lgbt
lesbian
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bisexual
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The logo consists of the letters 'GC' in a bold, black, sans-serif font. Below the 'GC', the words 'gloucestershire college' are written in a smaller, black, sans-serif font.

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For use in English or Drama lectures/tutorials



Session 1 - Prejudice

Learning Outcomes

1. To interrogate my reactions and feelings towards people who are lesbian/bisexual/gay.
2. To stimulate debate and facilitate the early exploration of attitudes towards prejudice and discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation.

Explain main points of above statement to the students.

Agree the rules of the session

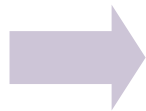
- 1. The students are free to express any opinion that they wish but that the group also have the power to challenge this view.**
- 2. The opinion of one person or group is not superior to any other. There are no right or wrong answers, just different thoughts and feelings.**

Explain that opinion can often best be gauged on a continuum. It is not often that we definitely agree or definitely disagree with something.

Assign the two concepts 'agree' and 'disagree' at opposite ends of the room. Tell the young people that you will read a statement and ask them all to move. They can stand at any place along the continuum but they cannot be exactly in the middle. If you are working with a large group it can be easier to ask them to move and then sit down while you manage the debate.

Ask all the students to stand at the front of the room so that they all begin on an 'equal footing'.

For use in English or Drama lectures/tutorials



Session 1 - Prejudice

Main Activity

Read each of the following statements (or any others you might like to add) and then ask the students to move. Try to encourage them to go quickly, working on 'gut feeling' rather than waiting to see where other people go.

After each one, ask if anyone would like to explain why they have chosen that place on the line. It might be particularly useful to try and speak to people who had a difficult time making their choice as well as those who seemed to have a definite and immediate decision.

After discussion you can allow the young people to move to a different place on the continuum if they would like.

1. Two lesbian women should be able to adopt a baby together.
2. Lesbian, Gay and Bi-sexual people should be able to serve openly in the army and navy.
3. Two gay men should be able to kiss in public.
4. Gay men make good teachers and youth workers.
5. It's trendy to be gay at the moment.
6. It's trendy to be a lesbian at the moment.
7. Most people know they are gay and have come out by the time they are 16.
8. Gay people are treated unfairly.
9. People choose to be bisexual.
10. Most lesbians are cat lovers, and most gay men are hairdressers.
11. Bisexual people aren't brave enough to just be gay.

For use in English or Drama lectures/tutorials



Session 1 - Prejudice

Plenary

The teacher should be aware that this session may have evoked unexpected emotions and/or reactions in the young people. There may also have been strong discussions between individual members of the group. It is therefore important that this is resolved before the young people leave the class.

Team game- Untying the Knot

Encourage all of the students to stand in a circle. Ask them to put their arms in the air and walk into the middle together. When they get to the centre ask them to reach out and grab the hands of two other people (preferably not the people either side of them!). When everyone has two hands tell the group that they have 5 minutes to untangle themselves without letting go. It is very unusual to completely untangle the knot so when they have made a good go at it stop the activity and praise the group for working well together.

This game can be substituted by any 'team game' that you feel would work better within your setting. The idea is simply to bring the group back together before the session ends.

For use in English or Drama lectures/tutorials



Session 2 - English

Learning Outcomes

1. To think about 'belonging' and what it means to 'belong' to a certain society or group within a culture.
2. To explore the issues of displacement and difference that are often felt by LGBT young people.

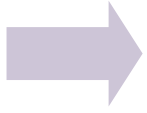
The following session is based around the exploration of two poems. Langston Hughes' 'I too' and the Jackie Kay poem 'In my Country'.

Langston Hughes was a Black, American writer who was born in 1902 and died in 1967. He was also gay and, whilst he was a great champion for black civil rights, he often felt unable to speak out about his orientation, preferring to 'code' gay messages through his poetry as was conventional with many lesbian and gay writers. This session focuses on one of Hughes later poems, 'I, too'.

The Isaac Julian film 'Looking for Langston' attempts to chart and acknowledge his gay identity using footage of underground gay clubs and meetings between Hughes and various male partners. There are numerous early recordings and interviews with Langston Hughes on You Tube.

Jackie Kay is a black, Scottish, Lesbian Poet. She was born in 1961 in Edinburgh. Her poetry is often about her childhood and the feelings that were evoked for her from being the only person who was racially different in her surrounding area. She often uses her own life as the initial stimulus for her poetry. This session focuses on one of Kay's shorter poems 'In my Country'.

For use in English lectures/tutorials



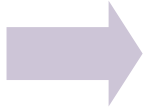
Session 2 - English

Main Activity

Read/ Play the Poem- 'I, Too'

- Why is the word 'too' in the title important?
- Who is the majority that is conventionally considered to 'sing America'? And to whose poetry is this a reference?
- How does the poem change from the word 'tomorrow'?
- What is the voice's aspiration?
- Why would there be any doubt that the voice 'is American'?
- Extension- What is 'The American Dream' to which Hughes refers in the preface to this poem? Who invented this concept? Why might minority groups (for instance Hughes was both Black and Gay) feel in some way removed from the ideology of The American Dream? You can find plenty of information on this if you search the internet for 'The American Dream' and/or James Truslow Adams, who coined the term.

For use in English lectures/tutorials



Session 2 - English

Main Activity

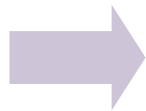
Read/ play the poem, 'In My Country'

- What is the voice in the poem feeling?
- Why do you think the woman doubts the heritage of the voice?
- Why is the river in the poem 'honest'?
- How is the landscape represented differently to 'the woman'? Which is represented more positively?
- How does the tone and pace of the poem change when 'the woman' is introduced?

Plenary

Has there ever been an occasion when you have felt that you don't belong or that you don't fit? Allow the students to discuss the different ways in which we can feel we belong. Do they feel part of their College community? How do they think the College community reacts to people who are different? Is this the same or different to the way in which the wider community responds to racial differences? Or differences of orientation or gender?

For use in English and History lectures/tutorials



Session 3 - History

Learning Outcomes

1. To gain a greater understanding of LGBT history

Give each of the students a copy of a blank timeline or you may like to draw it on the board and work together. Tell them that you are going to give them some key events in LGBT history and that they are to site these events on the timeline.

Read the 'titles' of the events below.

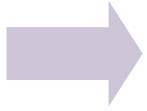
Allow debate around each of the events but try not to allow any one train of thought to influence or hinder other discussion or choice.

Events that could be included in the timeline:

- Gay Times is first sold in high street stores (1995)
- The first gay March is held in the UK (1971)
- The first gay march in the UK took place in London, ending with a rally in Trafalgar Square protesting against the uneven age of consent for gay men (which at this stage were 21)
- The first gay TV series is shown; Gay Life (1979)

For more dates, see the LGBT History Month toolkit for schools, page 16 onwards.

For use in Art lectures/tutorials



Session 4 - Rainbow Flag

Learning Outcomes

1. To understand how the rainbow flag is used as a symbol of unity and celebration with lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender communities.

The Rainbow flag has been used as a symbol of the gay community since 1978. The first flag was designed by the artist Gilbert Baker in response to calls for a unified, LGBT community symbol. Before this point various colours had been used to connote the gay community including purple, pink (as in the pink triangle) and, in Victorian England, green.

Red: Life

Orange: Healing

Yellow: Sunlight

Green: Nature

Blue: Harmony

Purple: Spirit

In this session it is suggested that you allow the students to create a flag which also incorporates the messages behind each of the different colours.

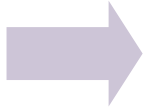
Examples of how to do this might include:

Individual collages of the flag using mixed media and words/letters/ images taken from newspapers and magazines.

One large class flag with each group being asked to contribute a different stripe.

One large flag with each person being asked to create a small piece to be joined like a patchwork quilt.

For use in Media lectures/tutorials



Session 5 - Images of Gay men in television

Learning Outcomes

1. To explore images of gay men on television and discuss how such images have changed.
2. To dissect and analyse images of gay men as presented by media and to discuss the constructed nature of such images.

This lesson uses clips of television programmes taken from Youtube. The links are given below.

Main Activity

Show initial clip (available from <http://uk.youtube.com/watch?v=FIcR6KsDYbw>) or by searching for Are you being served? On Youtube.

Ask the group for comments on how the gay characters were presented. How do you know which character is 'supposed' to be gay? What is the gay character like? Even though it seems 'obvious' to us that this character is gay, is he being open about his sexuality in this clip?

Write up any comments they may have. The second clip is taken from the BBC TV show 'Beautiful People' which is currently being shown on BBC2. It is available from <http://uk.youtube.com/watch?v=OGYgSif36ic> or by searching for Beautiful People BBC on Youtube. Ask for comments and make notes.

How has the perception of gay people changed? Ask them to discuss this in groups and then feedback to the whole class.

What will YOU do?

If you've been inspired to use any of this information in your lectures or tutorials, or raise awareness with your colleagues, we want to know about it!

Let your Equality and Diversity Advanced Practitioner, Jason Brogden, or E&D Coordinator Megan Smith know what you've done, and we'll put it in @GC to show excellent LGBT awareness raising at the College!



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