


Chapter 11


Curriculum Design, Queer Pedagogy, and Representation of LGBTQIA+ Issues in Teaching

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ABSTRACT

Schooling is never politically neutral territory, and nowhere is this more evident than in decisions about what gets taught, to whom, and why. This chapter takes up three interrelated concerns—curriculum design, queer pedagogy, and the representation of LGBTQIA+ identities in teaching—drawing on scholarship published predominantly between 2021 and 2026. The argument developed here is that genuine inclusivity in education cannot be achieved through content additions alone; it requires a structural rethinking of the normative assumptions that organize learning itself. Relevant literature from teacher education, curriculum theory, policy studies, and disciplinary education research is brought into dialogue, with particular attention to the challenges facing LGBTQIA+ students and educators in contexts shaped by restrictive legislation, heteroprofessional cultures, and inadequate preservice preparation

1. INTRODUCTION

What a school chooses to teach—and what it ignores—is never an innocent administrative decision. Behind every approved textbook, every literature syllabus, every health education policy lies a set of assumptions about whose lives count as sufficiently real and worthy of scholarly attention. For students who identify as LGBTQIA+, those assumptions have historically been inhospitable ones. Curricula across much of the English-speaking world continue to centre heterosexual family structures, binary gender norms, and an implicitly cisgender conception of human development, leaving queer students to navigate educational spaces that routinely fail to acknowledge their existence (Martino, 2022; Martino et al., 2024). The costs of this erasure are neither trivial nor abstract: LGBTQIA+ youth report markedly higher rates of school-based harassment, diminished belonging, and poorer academic engagement than their peers (Herry & Mulvey, 2024; Leung et al., 2022).

These are not new observations. Scholarship on sexuality and schooling has accumulated for several decades, and yet the distance between what research recommends and what schools actually do remains frustratingly wide. Part of the explanation lies in the politics. Since 2022 in particular, a wave of legislation in the United States—and in several other countries—has explicitly curtailed educators' freedom to discuss gender identity and sexual orientation in classrooms, creating legal risk for teachers who might otherwise support their LGBTQIA+ students more openly (Tran & Loecher, 2023; Knipp, 2025). Part of the explanation also lies in teacher preparation: study after study finds that preservice programs still devote little systematic attention to gender and sexual diversity, leaving graduates

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