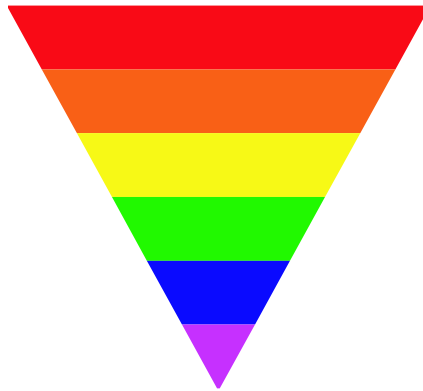


***Education's Missed
Opportunity to Influence
Tolerance:
The Absence of LGBT
Content in Curriculum***



Why is Inclusive Curriculum Important?

- Higher education has the responsibility to develop just citizenry to lead next generation
- Experiences students have in college will be part of their development that they take with them as they launch into the world

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- Attitudes of tolerance and acceptance of diversity can be shaped and promoted on college campus

***Inclusion of LGBT content
can have benefits for both
queer and straight students***



Benefits for Straight Students

- Contact Theory: greater exposure to people who are different will reduce bias, prejudice, and negative opinions.
- Greater exposure to LGBT people and issues can reduce ignorance, discrimination, and prejudice by providing positive experiences with and about people of difference

Benefits for Queer Students

- Reduces homophobic and heteronormative experience
- Provides opportunities to not be invisible, not marginalized
- Accepting, Inclusive environment provides opportunity for positive self and identity development

The Study

- Summer and fall 2006
- Email survey distributed to all students at ISU
- Examined student exposure to LGBT content in curricular and extra curricular at high school, college previous to ISU, and at ISU
- 718 student responses



General Results

- As students advanced in educational trajectory, they experienced more queer exposure
- Exposure had greater depth and breadth



In High School

- None Minimal Moderate Heavy
- 85% 14% .3% 0
- More exposure at extra curricular level than curriculum
- GSAs most common experience with queer exposure
- English/literature, psychology, sociology, and health most common classes

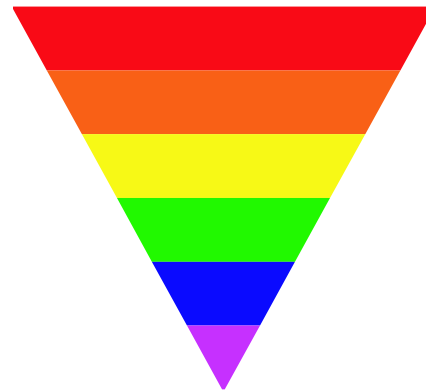
College prior to ISU

● None Minimal Moderate Heavy

● 73% 22% 3% .6%

● Most common courses include:

- Psychology
- Sociology
- Literature
- English



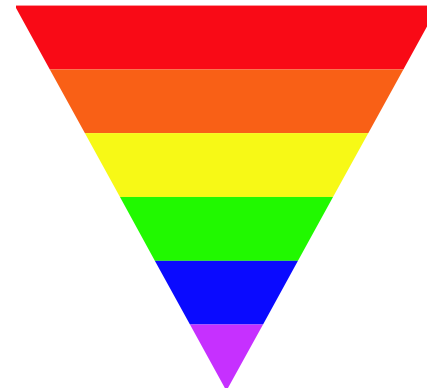
At ISU

- None Minimal Moderate Heavy

- 55% 36% 7% 2%

- Most common courses:

- Sociology
- Psychology
- Literature
- Education



Implications

- Although exposure to LGBT content is low, it does increase across educational trajectory
- Social sciences and humanities are most inclusive
- Relative absence of content is missed opportunity for both queer and straight students



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- Straight students who may not initiate contact with queer issues or queer community can increase their awareness and tolerance if this topic and exposure is “brought to them” through the classroom
 - Queer students can reduce their sense of invisibility and feel greater inclusion and validation

Recommendations

- Content can be appropriate in several gen ed courses
- In courses, when using examples, use examples that include queer as well as hetero experience
- Include readings from historically positive queer figures
- Use neutral and inclusive language in class



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- Promote a tolerant learning environment
 - Critical debate is part of a learning environment, but provide an environment where all students feel safe
 - Promote zero tolerance for prejudice and discrimination