

## **Classroom Management Module**

This module focuses on managing classrooms to facilitate learning; these courses go by a variety of names and topic areas including classroom management, school relationships, school culture, designing and facilitating learning experiences, and interpersonal and professional relationships. This content is also often integrated into multiple other courses and content areas.

### **What does it mean to queer classroom management courses?**

- Classroom management courses in B.Ed. programs provide an opportunity to incorporate 2SLGBTQ+ content in lessons and prepare pre-service teachers to recognize and address homo/bi/transphobia in the classroom through proactive interventions, as well as when problems arise.
- Pre-service teachers can learn to incorporate anti-oppressive pedagogies that seek to address systems of power/normativity in the classroom environment.
- Teacher candidates can work proactively to include 2SLGBTQ+ content in their lessons from Kindergarten through Grade 12 to model for students that 2SLGBTQ+ people and stories are a valued part of the classroom, and that there is no room in the classroom for anti-2SLGBTQ+ language and behaviours (Ryan et al., 2013).
- This involves exploring with teacher candidates the pervasiveness of verbal, physical, and sexual harassment that 2SLGBTQ+ students encounter from peers and teachers; fear that students might feel about being 2SLGBTQ+ and/or being out at school; the harm that results from observing over many years the exclusion of 2SLGBTQ+ people and experiences in lessons (Yep, 2002, p. 165); and the isolation that 2SLGBTQ+ students may experience either because they are different or because they are afraid of being targeted by other students.
- It is a teacher's legal and ethical responsibility to help all students to feel safe in the classroom and to advocate for 2SLGBTQ+ students in the classroom and elsewhere in the school. This responsibility often also extends to online/social media environments in the context of bullying and harassment.
- In classroom management courses, teacher candidates can develop strategies for helping all students, including 2SLGBTQ+ students, to foster belonging, connectedness, and attachment to the school environment, which are essential to student resiliency in homo/bi/transphobic environments. Ideally, such resiliency will not be required when school cultures are transformed in such a way that the responsibility does not fall on 2SLGBTQ+ students to be able to bounce back from subtle and overt homo/bi/transphobic events.
- Queering classroom management also involves exploring the normative assumptions about sexuality and gender that lead to exclusion and harassment in the first place, so that teachers can learn to proactively build inclusive classrooms where gender and sexuality are

understood as naturally diverse and are not policed through silence, omission, and/or harassment.

- The challenge is also for teacher candidates to think about how their own biases and misconceptions might inform their responses to anti-2SLGBTQ+ behaviour in the classroom. It is important to note that anti-2SLGBTQ+ behaviours may be expressed overtly or covertly, and attention must be given to both.

### Why do we need to do this?

- A scan of core B.Ed. curriculum at 22 Canadian universities revealed that the focus of classroom management modules rarely includes mention of managing anti-2SLGBTQ+ situations or behaviours—despite findings of the *Every Class in Every School* report, which found that 70% of participating students (LGBTQ and non-LGBTQ) reported hearing expressions such as “that’s so gay” every day, and 48% of students said they heard words like “faggot,” “dyke,” and “lezbo” every day in school (Taylor & Peter et al., 2011; see also Peter et al., 2021). In fact, 10% of the time students reported hearing these comments directly from their teachers. The national survey also found that most LGBTQ students and students with LGBTQ parents did not feel safe at school. One of that study’s key recommendations was that B.Ed. programs incorporate 2SLGBTQ+ material in core courses so that students can develop competence before entering the field.
- Classroom management courses can include content about establishing classroom cultures of respect for gender and sexual diversity, establishing anti-oppressive learning practices and social spaces, and countering anti-2SLGBTQ+ attitudes, behaviours, and systems in the classroom. 2SLGBTQ+-expansive content can also help teacher candidates proactively address harmful misconceptions and systemic attitudes of oppression, exclusion, and marginalization from the outset in their classrooms.

### How do we do it?

- *Classroom set-up.* Teacher candidates can learn about decolonizing and queering approaches to classroom set-ups, responding to problematic behaviour, and in their pedagogical strategies. Preservice teachers should also learn about resisting binary divisions based on “boys” and “girls” in classrooms, whether in working with partners/groups in class or when delivering content.
- *Classroom “rules.”* Strategies for “managing” students’ behaviours should involve student input. For example, when beginning a class, teachers might consider developing conduct agreements with students to give them a voice in how classrooms operate and to discuss what disruptive behaviours and actions look like; this can be a useful way of having conversations about 2SLGBTQ+ people/topics, safety, inclusion, etc. This does not have to be a “one-and-done” conversation but could be a regular feature in classrooms throughout the year.

- This approach could involve talking with students about assessment and how grading will work (possibly including discussions about the limitations of grading, etc.), how the classroom will function, and the way that anti-2SLGBTQ+ behaviour, both overt and covert, will be addressed.
- *Self-reflection.* Work with teacher candidates to prompt reflection on their own conscious and unconscious biases, instilling in them that it will make them better teachers if they are able to understand themselves and work through blocks or questions they may have. The context here is related to 2SLGBTQ+ students and content, but self-reflection is a tool that will help them to effectively manage classrooms and support students throughout their careers. For instance, a vital piece of student-centred learning *must* involve understanding student identities, circumstances, and contexts in order to be effective—and self-reflection is a crucial step toward understanding how to relate to students and understand them effectively.
- *Teachable moments.* Using instances of classroom disruption to make clear pedagogical points and create learning opportunities around heterosexism, cisgenderism, homophobia, transphobia, racism, ableism, classism, etc. It's important to keep in mind that bullying and harassment are not always the problem—language and behaviours that reinforce heteronormativity and erase the existence of 2SLGBTQ+ people can be just as harmful (see exercise below “Taking the heteronormativity out of Mother’s Day”). Educators can use these teachable moments to explore the root causes of homo/bi/transphobia and make clear what is acceptable behaviour and language instead of treating homo/bi/transphobic gestures in the same way as other disruptions. For example, a student throwing erasers is not the same as a student calling someone a homophobic slur, and the response should not be the same; case studies might be a good pedagogical approach to help students explore various 2SLGBTQ2+ classroom management scenarios and how they would respond.
- *Inclusive language.* Use of *they* as a singular pronoun and as a gender-neutral pronoun, which is recommended by [APA](#) and is included in the [Oxford dictionary](#) (see also the [OED's “A brief history of the singular ‘they’”](#)) and [Merriam-Webster dictionary](#) (see also “[A note on the nonbinary ‘they’](#)”). Use language of parents, guardians, or “your adults” in place of mom and dad, use siblings rather than brothers or sisters, and so on.
- *Gender pronouns:* Introduce your own gender pronouns to students (e.g., “My name is Dr. Anna Cho and my pronouns are she/her”) to introduce the concept of pronoun diversity. However, beware of putting students on the spot by requiring them to publicly share their pronouns. This can have the unintended consequence of forcing students to reveal information they are not prepared to share or, alternately, cause them to hide who they are for fear of anticipated negative consequences. Teachers can make it clear to students that they want to use the students’ pronouns by explaining it at the beginning of the term and as needed after that, making it clear that they will respect them and work to make their classrooms places where this practice is important.
  - One way to learn students’ gender pronouns without putting them on the spot publicly is to distribute confidential questionnaires at the beginning of term asking if

students use a pronoun or a name different from the one on the class list, and to inquire if it is ok for the teacher to use their pronoun/name in front of others. In the spirit of expansive education and accessibility, this is also a good opportunity to ask students if there is anything else they would like the teacher to know about them. Teachers can let students know that they are aware that a student's name or pronoun may change over the course of the term and that it is okay to discuss this with the teacher at any time. Talking with teacher candidates about this also provides an opportunity for them to reflect in advance on how they will participate in these practices, whether they have thoughts or questions beforehand, and where to find support if/when they need it.

- *Managing homo/bi/transphobic situations begins before they happen.* Have conversations with teacher candidates cautioning them not to use disciplinary tactics to regulate or moderate 2SLGBTQ+ expressions of identity (e.g., requiring attire approval for a transitioning or nonbinary student; thinking that if only a student would “tone down” their mannerisms then they would be harassed less frequently, which is a form of victim blaming; see Orr & Komosa-Hawkins, 2013).
- *Changing school culture.* Changes to individual teachers' responses or in individual classrooms are possible and certainly helpful, but in order for circumstances to improve for 2SLGBTQ+ students more broadly, systemic, cultural change is required. Schools and school boards/districts need to work together in recognition and appreciation of the sexual and gender diversity that already exists in schools (Meyer, 2010, p. 128). Creating comprehensive, stand-alone sexual orientation and gender identity policies and procedures is a good example of supporting cultural and structural change.
- *Naming harmful language/behaviours and ensuring accountability.* Even if students insist they were not being homo/bi/transphobic and suggest an alternate meaning for what they said or did, it is important for educators to take the opportunity to address homo/bi/transphobia directly and its consequences. Silence can be more harmful than the initial event because it communicates tacit approval, dismissal, or an inability to intervene. Silence never reads as benign neglect; rather, it communicates that homo/bi/transphobia is “unspeakable” and not fit to be discussed in the classroom (Pride Education Network, 2010, p. 10). These situations may also provide educative opportunities to talk about intention/effect, and how unintentional biases, attitudes, and inferences may impact others and have a marginalizing effect beyond what was intended.
- *Practice activities.* Incorporate classroom exercises that help B.Ed. students imagine the harm that homo/bi/transphobic remarks, heteronormative and cisgender-normative comments, and exclusionary language can cause for 2SLGBTQ+ students and those with 2SLGBTQ+ loved ones. The exercises can help B.Ed. students develop skills for identifying and managing homo/bi/transphobia in the classroom, give them practice in understanding how to do so, and may even provide opportunities to think about and develop strategies to deal with potential resistance from students, parents/guardians, or colleagues in advance.
- *Classroom management courses are ideal for helping pre-service teachers develop the “knowledge, confidence, and authority” they will need to effectively respond to*

*homo/bi/transphobic behaviours and language that they will inevitably encounter in classrooms and possibly staff rooms and administrative settings as well* (Zack et al., 2010, p. 99). Group projects, role playing scenarios, and developing responses are excellent ways to practice in Classroom Management courses (see Exercise C in Teaching Activities below).

## Teaching Activities

Teaching activities that explore the structures of heteronormativity and gender normativity and the ways that B.Ed. students can avoid perpetuating these structures before they enter the K–12 classroom.

### Exercise A: Using non-gendered pronouns

1. Discuss the reasons that non-gendered pronouns are preferable and how they are already used.
2. Students can roleplay classroom situations using non-gendered pronouns. For example:
  - intervening when they recognize that a student in the classroom is being harassed by a classmate
  - explaining a classroom management issue to a colleague or supervisor using non-gendered pronouns
3. Students can discuss discomfort they may feel, embarrassment about using non-gendered pronouns, where that comes from and how to challenge it.
4. Students can write reflections about the experience, insights about their attitudes, behaviours, feelings, and thoughts, including what they have learned about helping all students to feel safer.

### Exercise B: Taking the heteronormativity out of Mother's Day

(*Note: You may wish to choose another example and adapt this exercise; or you may want to think more broadly about what days are chosen for special observances throughout the year and why, who they honour or give space to, how they are bound up with religious, national, colonial, capitalist projects, etc.*)

1. Discussion about inclusion in classroom activities, using the example of Mother's Day cards. What about kids who have two mothers, two fathers, one father, or who live with another relative.
2. Teacher candidates strategize ways that they can engage K–4 students in an age-appropriate discussion about safety and inclusivity, and also how to adapt activities so that they are not hetero/gender-normative and are inclusive of all students and families.

3. Practice introducing the activity differently and encourage K–4 students to make a card for whoever is important to them. How do students imagine addressing challenges? What will they say to a child (or parent/guardian or supervisor) who objects?
4. Practice (through role-play or reflection) emphasizing that the goal is to help every child in the class feel as safe and included as possible.

### Exercise C: 2SLGBTQ+ Case Studies

#### *Case Studies #1: Show-and-Tell*

Laurie, a Grade 1 teacher, is called in to meet with the principal, Sheila. Sheila has been called by a concerned parent of one of the students in Laurie’s class. This student was supposed to be the Student of the Week, which involves bringing in pictures of the student’s family and doing a show-and-tell. But when the student brought pictures of himself and his two dads (one of whom is trans) to his teacher, Laurie simply cancelled the show-and-tell without explanation. Sheila explains that the child was crushed, and that his parents are quite upset and asking for an explanation. Laurie responds: “I felt bad about it too, but I just froze! I didn’t know what to do, and I felt badly about exposing Grade 1 students to this kind of lifestyle. I mean it’s fine what people do in the privacy of their homes, but I know that I’ll get angry calls from parents if we have a discussion about having gay or trans parents during class. It was the only thing I could do!”

#### *Discussion Questions*

1. What are the issues presented in this case study?
2. What message is Laurie sending to her students about 2SLGBTQ+ families?
  - How might it affect the student with two dads and/or a parent who is trans to be excluded from the activity?
  - How might it affect other students in the class who have non-heterosexual parents or family members?
  - How might it affect the student living in a foster home or group home?
  - How can silence about 2SLGBTQ+ issues be harmful?
3. What could you as a teacher, staff member, or parent/guardian do to help resolve these issues? (Have teacher candidates step into different perspectives.)
4. How could Laurie have avoided the situation by proactively creating a classroom where everyone understood that all students and all families are safe and welcome in the classroom?
5. How could Laurie have instead used this as a teachable moment, modeling that all students and all families are safe and welcome in the classroom?

#### *Issues Related to this Case Study*

1. Training, knowledge, support: Know where your supports are, know the policies, know the curriculum. This will help you to do inclusive work for 2SLGBTQ+ students. It is your professional duty as teachers to provide a safe, non-discriminatory environment.
2. Message sent to the student with two dads: Internalized homophobia about his family, shame, and stigma. This message is also sent to other students in the class by proxy.
3. Teaching students age-appropriate messages about diversity; this is very different from teaching young children about how people have sex. It's never about the physical act, yet this is a stereotypical assumption and/or fear (sex panic) about 2SLGBTQ+ inclusion.
4. This is about respecting the backgrounds and families of **all** of our students.

### *Case Study #2: Band Trip*

Susan, 14, has recently come out in her Junior High School. She has received positive reactions from teachers and students, and only a few rude comments from bullies who regularly give other students trouble. Susan is in the school band and is excited about the upcoming band tour. Shortly before the trip, Susan is called into the office and told that other band members felt uncomfortable about sharing a hotel room with her. The principal phoned Susan's parents to explain that Susan would need her own room on the trip. Although Susan's parents initially agreed, they were angry that their daughter was being treated differently than other band members. Even after Susan's mother complained about the school's unfair treatment of her daughter, the school still said that Susan was either to have her own room on the trip or the family would be refunded their deposit. Susan did not go on the band tour that year.

#### *Discussion Questions*

1. What are the issues presented in this case study?
2. What messages are being sent to the other band members? The other students in the school?
3. What would you have done differently if you were Susan's principal?
4. How could Susan's band teacher have created an inclusive band community where students would be unlikely to worry about sharing a room with Susan? How could the band teacher have worked proactively to seek the principal's support?

#### *Issues Related to this Case Study*

1. Principal leaves no room for discussion.
2. For the "concerned" students: Unpack implicit stereotypes about a particular group; this needs to happen or else we perpetuate it.

- What do you think the assumptions the principal has (identity = a certain set of behaviours; hyper-sexualization)?
3. Susan's safety is an issue. Ask: what is best for the student's safety? This is something the school needs to ensure; it's not up to the individual student.
  4. Consider a case-by-case basis: what is best for the student and how is inclusiveness maximized?
    - May place student at extreme risk by outing them to other students. This is not the right of educators; it is the student's right to decide who to come out to and when they want to do so. We must ensure confidentiality. (Discuss students' rights regarding this and what the limitations may be in the province/territory or school district.)
    - When you address homophobic attitudes in school, do you approach it large scale (i.e., with a long-term lens, with large groups or whole school approaches)? or in smaller case-specific instances?
    - What are we condoning when we act this way? We are sending the message that the Charter applies to everyone but them.
  5. Sexual orientation is an intrinsic characteristic of person; therefore, any differential treatment must be clearly justifiable, otherwise it violates the student's Charter rights.

## Resources

*The Every Teacher Project Recommendations Toolkit*

[https://www.uwinnipeg.ca/rise/docs/Every\\_Teacher\\_Toolkit\\_WEB.pdf](https://www.uwinnipeg.ca/rise/docs/Every_Teacher_Toolkit_WEB.pdf)

*How to handle harassment in the hallways in three minutes!*

British Columbia Teachers' Federation

<https://bctf.ca/SocialJustice.aspx?id=6104>

*The Gender Spectrum: What Educators Need to Know.*

Pride Education Network (2018)

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1htiVbyoDZMRBNxFoRufCXz30UfOhgOS8/view>

*How can schools support LGBTQ2 students?*

Factsheet by Dr. Kristopher Wells (EdCan Network)

[https://www.edcan.ca/wp-content/uploads/EdCAN-NET\\_FACTS-ON-ED\\_SUPPORTING-LGBTQ2-STUDENTS\\_ENG\\_v3.pdf](https://www.edcan.ca/wp-content/uploads/EdCAN-NET_FACTS-ON-ED_SUPPORTING-LGBTQ2-STUDENTS_ENG_v3.pdf)

SOGI 123 Lesson Plan

[K-12 - Why "That's So Gay" is not Okay](#)



Egale's Pronoun Resource for Teachers (downloadable flyer)  
<https://egale.ca/awareness/pronoun-resource-for-teachers/>

I'll Use Your Pronoun – #nobigdeal campaign  
<https://www.nbdcampaign.ca/>  
<https://www.nbdcampaign.ca/download-free-graphics/> (downloadable graphics)

*GLSEN's No Name-Calling Week*  
 Organized by K-12 educators and students to end name-calling and bullying in schools.  
<https://www.glsen.org/no-name-calling-week>

*Toronto District School Board – Gender and Sexuality Alliance FAQs*  
<https://www.tdsb.on.ca/High-School/Get-Involved/Student-Leadership/GSAs/Frequently-Asked-Questions>

*The Gender Friendly Classroom*  
<https://www.edcan.ca/articles/gender-friendly-classroom/>

*Alberta Teachers' Association PRISM Toolkits*  
 Elementary Schools:  
<https://www.teachers.ab.ca/For%20Members/Professional%20Development/Diversity-Equity-and-Human-Rights/Resources/Pages/PRISM-Toolkit.aspx>  
 Secondary Schools:  
<https://www.teachers.ab.ca/SiteCollectionDocuments/ATA/Publications/Research/PD-80-15e%20PRISM.pdf>

*Alberta Education SOGI Best Practice Guidelines:*  
<https://education.alberta.ca/media/1626737/91383-attachment-1-guidelines-final.pdf>

*My GSA.ca Equity and Inclusive Education Resource Kit*  
[https://egale.ca/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/MyGSA\\_ON\\_Resource\\_CompleteKit.pdf](https://egale.ca/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/MyGSA_ON_Resource_CompleteKit.pdf)

[OK2BME.ca](http://OK2BME.ca)  
 OK2BME Resources for Schools and Classrooms  
<https://ok2bme.ca/resources/parents-educators/resources-for-schools-and-classrooms/>  
 OK2BME Out in Schools: GSA Support  
<https://ok2bme.ca/services/out-in-schools-gsa-support/>

### Lesson plans

GLSEN  
 Championing LGBTQ issues in K-12 education since 1990  
 Educator Resources (including lesson plans)  
<https://www.glsen.org/resources/educator-resources>

SOGI 123 helps educators make schools inclusive and safe for students of all sexual orientations and gender identities  
 (section for educators including lesson plans, videos)  
<https://www.sogieducation.org/>

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