

**Sexual Orientation & Public Schools:
A Balanced Approach**

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For more information and other resources, consult www.respectandthefacts.com. As new research and developments warrant, new teacher resources will be posted to this website.

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FOUNDATIONAL PRINCIPLES

When it comes to the topic of sexual orientation, what should be taught in public schools? Unlike major subject areas, there are no guidelines for schools to follow and local standards and opinions are often divided leading to disputes. A recent widely publicized situation in Montgomery County, Maryland is a microcosm of the wider public discussion.

In Montgomery County, Maryland, a dispute between two parent’s groups and the school board led to a federal court challenge of aspects of a proposed curriculum referencing sexual orientation. The plaintiffs alleged the curriculum favored one scientific, moral and religious viewpoint concerning homosexuality and systematically ignored or disparaged differing views. The school system argued that the curriculum presented scientifically documented information in the service of encouraging diversity.

The parent’s group prevailed. In *Citizens for Responsible Curriculum et al v. Montgomery County School Board*, Federal judge Alexander Williams sided with the plaintiffs and granted a temporary restraining order, halting the implementation of the health education curriculum. Judge Williams wrote:

“The Court is extremely troubled by the willingness of Montgomery County Public Schools to venture -- or perhaps more correctly bound -- into the crossroads of controversy where religion, morality, and homosexuality converge...In this case, Montgomery County Public Schools open up the classroom to the subject of homosexuality, and specifically, the moral rightness of the homosexual lifestyle. However, the Revised Curriculum presents only one view on the subject — that homosexuality is a natural and morally correct lifestyle — to the exclusion of other perspectives.”¹

“The wisdom of approving a curriculum which prohibits students from discussing one viewpoint of a controversial subject goes to the very essence of that First Amendment faith. The merit of Citizens for a Responsible Curriculum’s and PFOX’s viewpoint — be it right, wrong, discriminatory, or just — is of no consequence.”

Some approaches to instruction regarding sexual orientation intentionally seek to build a case for one perspective regarding sexual orientation. For instance, the booklet, *Just the Facts About Sexual Orientation and Youth: A Primer for Principals, Educators and School Personnel* was written as a rebuttal to what the booklet termed “reparative therapy” and “transformation ministries.” This booklet was authored by a task force representing committees within several professional associations, including the National Education Association, the American Psychological Association, the American Counseling Association and the National Association of Social Workers. It is directed

¹ *Citizens for Responsible Curriculum et al v. Montgomery County Public Schools*. United States District Court, Maryland District, Southern Division, Case 8:05-cv-01194-AW, Filed 05/05/2005. Available at <http://www.mcpscurriculum.com/May5doc-2.pdf>.

toward educators and aims to provide guidance concerning what to present to school children concerning sexual orientation.

However, *Just the Facts*, like many resources used in public schools, presents only one viewpoint concerning sexual orientation. This is clear when one considers the reason the booklet was created: to oppose the viewpoint that homosexuality is subject to change via spiritual and/or counseling intervention for those desiring such intervention. Thus, *Just the Facts* presents one side or perspective but presents this view as though it were accepted fact. This is the type of presentation the Federal court objected to in *CRC v. MCPS*.

The lesson plans offered here are in response to a need to provide curricular materials that are factual and balanced. Consistent with *CRC v. MCPS*, the principles underlying these lesson plans are:

1. In teaching about sexuality, schools must be sensitive to the various viewpoints regarding sexuality.
2. If sexual orientation is addressed, schools must not favor one perspective regarding sexual orientation over others.
3. All people are worthy of respect and students are entitled to a full presentation of viewpoints.
4. Schools must not take sides in cultural and religious debates regarding sexuality, sexual orientation and homosexuality.
5. Opinion and theory should be presented as such and not fact, even if the theories are stated by professional associations.

These lesson plans follow the principles set forth here. They are intended to provide guidance to teachers who want to present factual information free of ideology on any side of the issue. For teacher resources, updates to these plans and additional lesson plans, see the website www.respectandthefacts.com.

LESSON PLAN ONE– Sexual Orientation – General Information

This outline is intended to be used as a guide. The lesson plan provides a suggested outline for presenting general information regarding sexual orientation. As with any resource, it is important that you review the plan and assess its appropriateness for your particular group.

Target Grade Level

High School

Objectives

The student will be able to:

1. Identify some common conceptions and misconceptions about sexual orientation.
2. Explore current viewpoints regarding sexual orientation.

Activity: Sexual Orientation – What Do You Think? – 30-35 min.

Ground Rules – 2 minutes

Sharing opinions can make students feel vulnerable. Before you begin the activity, set the following ground rules to ensure that students and others are not ridiculed, embarrassed or degraded for their opinion. This may be redundant if your class already has ground rules such as these:

- Listen to each other
- No put downs or name calling
- Questions are welcomed
- Respect each other

Procedure – 25 minutes

- Distribute the “Sexual Orientation: What Do You Think?” handout to students.
- Ask students to write ‘true,’ ‘false’ or ‘unsure’ in the space beside each statement.
- When students have completed the task, read the answer sheet aloud and discuss the questions and response of students.

Summary – 5-10 minutes

- Acknowledge that there are many viewpoints about sexual orientation and that this lesson is an introduction to some of the basics. Some students will want to express their opinions or moral views regarding homosexuality or some variation on that topic. Allowing discussion without taking sides or interjecting your own viewpoint as a teacher is vital on this subject so that all students feel valued and respected.

Handout 1**Sexual Orientation: What Do You Think?**

Put either true or false or unsure in the line by the statement.

1. _____ Mental health professional associations consider homosexuality to be a mental health disorder.
2. _____ You can tell a person's sexual orientation by the way he or she acts or talks.
3. _____ A person is a homosexual if he or she has ever been sexually attracted to, or ever had sexual contact with someone of the same gender.
4. _____ Scientists know with certainty how sexual orientation develops.
5. _____ People choose to be attracted to the same or opposite sex.
6. _____ No one has ever changed sexual orientation.
7. _____ All people who attempt to change sexual orientation experience depression and suicide attempts.
8. _____ Disagreements over homosexuality are always based in fear and homophobia or religious prejudice.
9. _____ 10% of the general population is gay, lesbian or bisexual.

Sexual Orientation: What Do You Think? – Answer Sheet

All statements on the handout are false. Although some students may have strong opinions about these questions, here is the information that argues against these statements being true:

1. Most mental health professional organizations have adopted policies that do not treat homosexuality as a mental disorder. Distress concerning one's sexual feelings, however, can be a legitimate reason to consult a counselor.¹
2. While some people may go to extremes to let others know about their sexuality, most of the time you cannot tell anything about sexual feelings from how a person looks or acts. In fact, many students who are called "gay" or other names at school may not experience same sex attractions. This kind of stereotyping can be harmful.²
3. Same sex attraction or contact does not determine sexual orientation. Each individual must determine what his or her feelings or actions mean about sexual identity.³
4. No, this is not settled. Some scientists believe sexual attractions are primarily determined by genetics and/or prenatal factors and others believe that people develop their sexual attractions throughout their life through a combination of life experiences and personal traits. No gay gene has been discovered nor have environmental circumstances been identified that always lead to homosexual feelings. Evidence exists to support both points of view, but there is not enough evidence to be conclusive about either viewpoint.⁴
5. Although some do, most people say they do not consciously decide their sexual attractions. However, engaging in sexual behavior and adopting sexual identity are decisions that often occur after a period of personal reflection. For example, identifying as gay is one option for persons experiencing same sex attractions.⁵
6. Many people report such changes, some as a part of a counseling experience, some with the support of their religious beliefs and some spontaneously without any conscious attempt to change. Since sexual orientation cannot be tested in the laboratory or measured with a survey, there is no reliable method to say for sure other than the word of the persons involved.⁶
7. Some people have reported feeling harmed by their efforts to change sexuality and some people have reported feeling helped by them.⁷
8. Disagreement with the ideas and behavior of others does not necessarily involve bigotry or hatred. Disagreement does not prevent a person from feeling and showing respect.⁸
9. The most authoritative survey (National Health and Social Life Survey) puts the percentage of those who declare themselves to be gay, lesbian or bisexual at just over 2% of the general population in the United States. A recent census survey in Canada found 1.7% of the general population identified as gay, lesbian or bisexual. Determining an actual number is complicated by problems defining these terms and by the fact that some people are reluctant to admit their sexual feelings to those doing surveys.⁹

LESSON PLAN TWO – Sexual Orientation – General Information

This outline is intended to be used as a guide. The lesson plan provides a suggested outline along with extensive footnotes to support the presentation of general information regarding sexual orientation. As with any resource, it is important that you review the plan and assess its appropriateness for your particular group.

Target Grade Level

High School

Objectives

- To examine foundational concepts concerning sexual orientation as an academic area of study
- To be aware of historical and cultural foundations regarding human sexual orientation
- To define basic terms relevant to a study of human sexual orientation

Activity: Sexual Orientation - Overview – 35-40 min.

Procedure: This lesson is designed as a lecture.

Introduction: Note that there are many opinions concerning sexuality in our society and school. Our discussion today will respect all viewpoints that are expressed respectfully. As with all other topics, disrespect toward any perspective will not be a part of our class on this topic. Also, as with any issues of social and political relevance, the school does not take sides on matters of conscience and personal conviction.

I. Historical Foundations

- A. From the beginning of recorded history, the vast majority of people have engaged in sexual behaviors primarily with people of the opposite sex. Such relationships are the only type that serves the essential biological function of human reproduction. However, there is also evidence that in some cultures a minority of people have engaged in sexual relations with people of the same sex¹⁰
- B. At the same time, sexual behaviors have been the subject of societal and religious norms from antiquity¹¹
- C. Because of its relationship to procreation and biological drives, an interest in sexuality seems natural but also stimulates strong opinions and social regulation¹²

- D. The terms homosexuality and heterosexuality were coined in the 1860s by Karl Maria Kertbeny as a means of promoting the repeal of laws against homosexual behavior.¹³

II. Current Questions

- A. What is sexual orientation?

Sexual orientation is a term of very recent origin. The term replaced the term “sexual preference” which was largely abandoned in the 1970s. Sexual preference fell out of favor with people who believe sexual attractions are inborn and unchangeable because the word preference implies choice of feelings and/or identity.¹⁴

Sexual orientation is a difficult term to define. Here are two definitions. As you listen to each one, ask yourself what human trait or part of personality is emphasized by each one.

1. Sexual orientation is frequently used to describe a person’s enduring romantic, emotional or sexual attraction to another person.¹⁵

2. Sexual orientation describes a personal identification and subjective emotional sense of oneself on a continuum of homosexuality, bisexuality and heterosexuality.¹⁶

Definition one emphasizes feelings and desires. In addition to sexual attractions, the definition involved romantic feelings and feelings of a desire for emotional closeness. This definition also views sexual orientation as a trait that arises and endures as an aspect of who a person is by nature.

Definition two emphasizes perceptions and thoughts. How one thinks of oneself is more the focus of this definition. This definition emphasizes sexual orientation as a current state of mind that may fluctuate over time.

There is another broad aspect of being human that is also involved and that is behavior. Some people think of their sexual orientation as a description of what they do sexually with another person. Some mental health professionals and researchers discourage this, however due to their belief that people choose their behavior but not their feelings.¹⁷ However, other researchers include behavior as a key element of the measurement of sexual orientation.¹⁸

In summary, there is no current consensus about how to measure and define sexual orientation.¹⁹ There are theories and experts who subscribe to the theories but measurement of sexual orientation is a work in progress.

As used by different professionals, sexual orientation is an umbrella term that is often used to describe one or more of three separate concepts²⁰:

- a. Sexual attractions--the subjective, psychological state of being sexually attracted to the opposite sex, the same sex, or both.
- b. Sexual behavior--engaging in actual sexual acts with someone of the same sex, the opposite sex, or both; and
- c. Sexual self-identification or sexual identity--identifying one's self either publicly or privately as a person who is heterosexual, homosexual, or bisexual. For some people, this identification is persistent and for others it can change over time.

Sexual orientation is hard to define because there are at least these three experiences involved in describing sexual orientation. Some people are completely consistent across all three dimensions. For instance, some people who are heterosexual experience physical and emotional attractions to the opposite sex, desire to or engage in sexual relations with the opposite sex and see themselves as heterosexual. However, some people have physical attractions to the opposite sex but have no desire to engage in opposite sex relations and may have strong emotional attractions to the same sex. Self-identification in such persons might be heterosexual, homosexual or bisexual.²¹

There is no physical test or objective way to determine one's sexual orientation.

B. Is sexual orientation a "choice?"

One must answer this question separately for each of the three aspects of "sexual orientation."

1. Sexual attractions or emotional longings are generally not considered to be a "choice." Many people experience sexual attractions as occurring without conscious intention.
- 2) Sexual behaviors, unless forced (as in sexual assault or rape), are chosen. A person's sexual behavior may not always be the same as his or her sexual attractions. Many people choose not to act on all the sexual attractions they may feel. Their reasons for this may include:
 - a) concerns about the consequences of certain sexual behaviors (for example, to one's health)
 - b) social norms
 - c) moral beliefs
 - d) religious teachings
- 3.) Sexual self-identification is also decided upon reflection. People's self-identification of their "sexual orientation" may not always be the same as their sexual attractions or behaviors.²² For example:

- a) Some people who identify themselves as heterosexual have at times experienced homosexual attractions and/or engaged in homosexual behavior.
- b) Some people who identify themselves as homosexual have at times experienced heterosexual attractions and/or engaged in heterosexual behavior
- c) People often rely upon their personal beliefs and values to help them decide what their feelings mean about their sexual orientation.

C. Are sexual attractions derived from nature or nurture?

- 1. Some experts favor the view that sexual attractions are inherited or perhaps developed very early in life or before birth as a result of hormonal changes during pregnancy. Those holding this view often propose that sexual orientation is determined by a gene or set of genes or via some pre-natal mechanisms.²³
- 2. Some experts favor the view that sexual attractions are acquired or learned through experience, perhaps imperceptibly, while growing up. Those holding this view often look for certain environmental factors that can predict various sexual orientations, such as family relationships or early sexual experiences.²⁴
- 3. Some experts favor a view that combines genetic or biological factors and environmental factors to explain the acquisition of sexual attractions. Those holding this view often propose that biology may play an indirect role in shaping sexual feelings but that genes or prenatal factors cannot directly wire a person to adopt a particular sexual orientation.²⁵
- 4. While evidence exists for each perspective, none have sufficient research support to be considered proven by science or social science.²⁶

D. Can a person's sexual attractions change?

- 1. Some experts believe sexual attractions are a part of who you are that is persistent and never changing and that this is true for all people²⁷
- 2. Some experts believe sexual attractions are best understood as a current state of mind and may change over time, either through intentional effort or spontaneously²⁸
- 3. Some experts believe that sexual attractions for some might be fixed and unchanging and for others might be more changeable or flexible²⁹
- 4. Since there is no test to determine one's sexual orientation, research in this area relies on the reports of people who say they have changed sexual feelings as well as the reports of those who say they tried to change and could not do so. Some research supports those who say they have changed and some research supports those who feel they were harmed by trying to change their sexual feelings. There appears to be no reason to disbelieve people who describe feeling helped or harmed by efforts to change sexual feelings. Until there is more research about why some people feel harmed and why some feel helped, it seems reasonable to be open to a variety of perspectives on this issue.³⁰

III. Terms to Describe Sexual Orientations

- A. Heterosexual – Persons whose current sexual attractions are primarily to others of the opposite sex. Straight is a common term to describe someone who identifies as heterosexual.
- B. Homosexual – Persons whose current sexual attractions are primarily to others of the same sex. Gay (men) and lesbian (women) are common terms to describe those who identify as homosexual.
- C. Bisexual – Persons whose current sexual attractions are for members of both sexes.
- D. Asexual – Persons who currently do not experience strong sexual feelings toward either the same or opposite sex.
- E. Not all people use a label to describe their sexual feelings.
- F. Some people feel that they have shifted sexual feelings from gay to straight or straight to gay. Ex-gay is a common term used to describe someone who feels they have changed from being gay to being straight.

See extensive footnotes for references and quotes from source materials.

Optional Activity: Research Paper

Teachers may wish to assign a research paper or make such a paper an optional learning activity. A research paper could be an aspect of advanced classes in psychology, sociology, current events or even biology. Teachers can use the resource list as aids to students in finding sources for these papers. Teachers should be cautious not to allow any personal views to color evaluation of student papers. Furthermore, students should be encouraged to use resources that take a variety of perspectives to avoid writing a paper that becomes an advocacy paper for one side or another regarding this topic. If students construct a thesis statement that advocates for one position over another, then teachers should take care to instruct students to read and respond to the opposing arguments by including primary sources consistent with the opposing argument.

TEACHER RESOURCES

Bem, D.J. (1996). Exotic becomes erotic: A developmental theory of sexual orientation. *Psychological Review*, 103, 320-335.

Broido, E.M. (2000). Constructing identity: The nature and meaning of lesbian, gay and bisexual identities. In *the Handbook of Counseling and Psychotherapy with Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual Clients*, Eds, Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.

Byne, W. & Parsons, R. (1993). Human sexual orientation: The biologic theories reappraised. *Archives Gen. Psychiatry* 228, 229-243.

Diamond, L. (2003). Was it a phase? Young women's relinquishment of lesbian/bisexual identities over a 5-year period. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 84, 352-364.

Friedman, R. (1988). *Male homosexuality*. New Haven: Yale University Press.

Garnets, L.D. (2002). Sexual orientations in perspective. *Cultural Diversity and Ethnic Minority Psychology*, 8(2), 115-129.

Laumann, E.O., Gagnon, J.H., Michael, R.T., & Michaels, S. (1994). *The social organization of sexuality: Sexual practices in the United States*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Mondimore, F. M. (1996). *A natural history of homosexuality*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press.

Schidlo, A., & Schroeder, M. (2002). Changing sexual orientation: A consumers' report. *Professional Psychology: Research and Practice*, 33, 249-259.

Spitzer, R.L. (2003). Can some gay men and lesbians change their sexual orientation? 200 participants reporting a change from homosexual to heterosexual orientation. *Archives of Sexual Behavior*, 32, 403-417.

Stein, E. (1999). *Mismeasure of desire: The science, theory and ethics of sexual orientation*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Throckmorton, W. (1998). Efforts to modify sexual orientation: A review of the outcome literature and ethical issues. *Journal of Mental Health Counseling*, 20, 283-304.

Wilson, G. & Rahman, Q. (2005). *Born gay?: The psychobiology of sex orientation*. London: Peter Owens Publishers.

Yarhouse, M. A., & Throckmorton, W. (2002). Ethical issues in attempts to ban reorientation therapies. *Psychotherapy: Theory/Research/Practice/Training*, 39, 66-75.

ENDNOTES

¹ The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual, Fourth Edition (DSM-IV) published by the American Psychiatric Association does not include homosexuality as a mental disorder. Distress regarding one's sexual orientation however is considered a reason that a person might seek counseling. The DSM-IV includes the diagnosis: "302.9 Sexual Disorder Not Otherwise Specified." This diagnostic category includes this description: "Persistent and marked distress about sexual orientation" that may require counseling intervention.

² Many people, especially during childhood and adolescence are called gay or other names relating to sexual orientation when in fact they do not consider themselves homosexual. My experience in schools suggests that appearance is not a reliable means to know what feelings another person feels. See also, Thompson, C. The homophobia stops here. Available at www.inqueery.org.

³ There is no test or method to determine objectively one's sexual orientation. Since sexual orientation is more a matter of self-declaration, experiences of same sex attraction or behavior may signal one thing to some people and something different to others. For instance, in a survey by Remafedi, et al, 26% of 7th graders were confused about the sexual orientation label to apply to themselves. However, only 2-4% of adults declared themselves to be gay, lesbian or bisexual in a major survey of sexuality. Many people have same sex attractions who do not later consider themselves to be gay and likewise, there are people who begin to experience same sex attractions later in life that never did in adolescence." See Laumann, E.O., Gagnon, J.H., Michael, R.T., & Michaels, S. (1994). *The social organization of sexuality: Sexual practices in the United States*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press and Remafedi, G., Resnick, M., Blum, R., & Harris, L. (1992). Demography of sexual orientation in adolescents. *Pediatrics*, 89, 714-721.

⁴ "However, to date there are no replicated scientific studies supporting any specific biological etiology for homosexuality. Similarly, no specific psychosocial or family dynamic cause for homosexuality has been identified, including histories of childhood sexual abuse." From the American Psychiatric Association, Fact Sheet About Sexual Orientation, <http://www.healthyminds.org/glbissues.cfm>.

Some studies purporting to show a genetic link are so new that there has been no attempt to replicate them. Some studies, notably the gay gene studies of Dean Hamer have been repeated but have not found the genetic link that he reported and so these results are in some doubt. Similarly, studies which claim to find patterns of environmental circumstances have either not been repeated or have conflicting results. While some patterns have been suggested by research, none of them apply to all people who report same sex attraction. For a critique of the biological research see, Stein, E. (1999). *Mismeasure of desire: The science, theory and ethics of sexual orientation*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. For a critique of the environmental research, see Friedman, R. (1988). *Male homosexuality*. New Haven: Yale University Press.

⁵ "Third, the old paradigm assumed that there is congruence among sexual identity, behavior and desire. Some individuals do report complete consistency: A woman might identify as a lesbian, be attracted exclusively to women and be sex partners with women only. However, research has shown that sexual activity, fantasy, and identity are not always congruent (Baumeister, 2000; Diamant, Schuster, McGuigan & Lever, 1999). Exceptions are common. For example, a woman who identifies as a bisexual might never develop a strong attraction to a man. A man who identifies as gay might have been married and had a strong attachment to a woman. For some women, explicit sexuality is not particularly important; emotional bonding is what counts. A heterosexual man may use homoerotic fantasies when having sex with a female partner. A woman may experience strong attractions to both men and women but identify as a heterosexual rather than bisexual. Or a man may have strong sexual desires without self-identifying as a member of a specific sexual orientation." Garnets, L.D. (2002). Sexual orientations in perspective. *Cultural Diversity and Ethnic Minority Psychology*, 8(2), 115-129.

⁶ Diamond found that 48% of the sample of 80 women changed their sexual identity label during between first assessment and last assessment (5 years). Twenty-seven percent of the sample changed their label to heterosexual or undefined. Diamond reports that "these women did not differ from those who maintained lesbian/bisexual identities regarding the age at which they underwent sexual identity milestones, the factors that precipitated their sexual questioning, or their recollection of childhood "indicators" of same-sex sexuality." Diamond, L. (2003). Was it a phase? Young women's relinquishment of lesbian/bisexual identities over a 5-year period. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 84, 352-364.

See Throckmorton, W. (2002). Initial empirical and clinical findings concerning the change process for ex-gays. *Professional Psychology: Research and Practice*, 33, 242-248 for a review of studies which have examined reports of change in sexual orientation.

⁷ See Schidlo, A., & Schroeder, M. (2002). Changing sexual orientation: A consumers' report. *Professional Psychology: Research and Practice*, 33, 249-259 for a study that primarily reports findings of harm. See Spitzer, R.L. (2003). Can some gay men and lesbians change their sexual orientation? 200 participants reporting a change from homosexual to heterosexual orientation. *Archives of Sexual Behavior*, 32, 403-417 for a study that primarily reports findings of people experiencing benefit from sexual orientation change.

⁸ Point out that people can disagree agreeably. No speech would be free if one could not express disagreement. However, disagreement does not require or inevitably lead to name calling or disrespect.

⁹ "We asked respondents whether they consider themselves heterosexual, homosexual, bisexual, or something else. This question elicited the lowest rates of homosexuality. About 1.4 percent of the women said they thought of themselves as homosexual or bisexual and about 2.8 percent of the men identified themselves in this way. . . . No matter how we define homosexuality, we come up with small percentages of people who are currently gay or lesbian." Laumann., E.O., Gagnon, J.H., Michael, R.T., & Michaels, S. (1994). *The social organization of sexuality: Sexual practices in the United States*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, Chapter 8.

The Canadian Community Health Survey recently found 1% of Canadians who declared a gay orientation and another .7% saying they were bisexual (1.7% gay, lesbian or bisexual). See http://www.ctv.ca/servlet/ArticleNews/print/CTVNews/1087304033640_44/?hub=To&subhub=PrintStory

¹⁰ "The ancient Greek and Latin languages have no word that can be translated as *homosexual*, largely because these societies did not have the same sexual categories we do." Mondimore, F. M. (1996). *A natural history of homosexuality*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press. p. 3.

¹¹ Mondimore, F. M. (1996). *A natural history of homosexuality*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press. See chapters 1-2 for a discussion of the different ways same sex behavior has been regarded by several different cultures and religious traditions.

¹² Ibid. Mondimore.

¹³ "Sexual orientation is a relatively new concept. In fact, although same sex behavior has always existed, the idea of a homosexual identity or a homosexual person is only about 100 years old." From the American Psychiatric Association, Fact Sheet About Sexual Orientation, <http://www.healthyminds.org/glbissues.cfm>.

"The word *homosexuality* did not exist prior to 1869, when it appeared in a pamphlet that took the form of an open letter to the German minister of justice (the German word is *homosexualitat*). A new penal code for the North German Federation was being drafted, and a debate had arisen over whether to retain the section of the Prussian criminal code which made sexual contact with persons of the same gender a crime. The pamphlet's author, Karl Maria Kertbeny (1824-82), was one of several writers and jurists who were

beginning to develop the concept of sexual orientation. This idea – that some individuals’ sexual attraction for persons of the same sex was an inherent and unchanging aspect of their personality – was radically new. Thousands of years of recorded history and the rise and fall of sophisticated and complex societies occurred *before homosexuality* existed as a word or even as an idea.” Mondimore, F. M. (1996). *A natural history of homosexuality*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press. p. 3.

¹⁴ “In the 1970s, the term “sexual preference” was commonly used in the way that “sexual orientation” is commonly used today. Use of “sexual preference” was to a large extent abandoned because it was taken to imply that whether one was attracted to the men or women was a choice. “Sexual *orientation*” was deemed preferable to “sexual *preference*” because “orientation” implies that a person’s sexual desires are the result of deep features of a person’s character, perhaps an innate, unchangeable feature.” Stein, E. (1999). *Mismeasure of desire: The science, theory and ethics of sexual orientation*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. p. 41.

¹⁵ “Sexual orientation” is a term frequently used to describe a person’s romantic, emotional or sexual attraction to another person. From the American Psychiatric Association, Fact Sheet About Sexual Orientation, <http://www.healthyminds.org/glbissues.cfm>.

¹⁶ Byne, W. & Parsons, R. (1993). Human sexual orientation: The biologic theories reappraised. *Archives Gen. Psychiatry* 228, 229-243.

¹⁷ “Sexual orientation is different from sexual behavior because it refers to feelings and self-concept. Persons may or may not express their sexual orientation in their behaviors.” Answers to Your Questions About Sexual Orientation and Homosexuality. American Psychological Association. <http://www.apa.org/pubinfo/answers.html#whatcauses>

¹⁸ For these descriptive purposes, we have identified three dimensions of homosexuality: same gender sexual behavior (and its associated practices), same gender desire and sexual attraction, and self-identity as a homosexual.” Laumann, E.O., Gagnon, J.H., Michael, R.T., & Michaels, S. (1994). *The social organization of sexuality: Sexual practices in the United States*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. p. 290-291.

¹⁹ “There is no singular “current perspective” on the notion of lesbian, bisexual, or gay identity. Those exploring biological and environmental determinants of sexual orientation largely do not interact with those exploring the social forces shaping the ways in which people construct their identities (but see De Cecco & Elia, 1993; Stein, 1990b). Although the social constructionist perspective seems to be the dominant viewpoint of those working within the humanities and social sciences, representatives of these disciplines frequently critique the absurdities following from a strict constructionist perspective (e.g., if everything is a social construct, what, if any, basis is there for shared realities or questions?; Stein, 1990a).” Broido, E.M. (2000). Constructing identity: The nature and meaning of lesbian, gay and bisexual identities. In *the Handbook of Counseling and Psychotherapy with Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual Clients*, Eds, Washington, DC: American Psychological Association. p. 23.

²⁰ “To quantify or count something requires unambiguous definition of the phenomenon in question. And we lack this in speaking of homosexuality. When people ask how many gays there are, they assume everybody knows exactly what is meant. Historians and anthropologists have shown that homosexuality as a category describing same-gender desire, self-definition or identification is a relatively recent phenomenon (only about 100 years old) peculiar to the West. But even within contemporary Western societies, one must ask whether this question refers to same-gender behavior, desire, self-definition or identification or some combination of these elements. In asking this question, most people treat homosexuality as such a distinctive category that it is as if all these elements must go together. On reflection, it is obvious that this is not true. One can easily think of cases where any one of these elements would be present without the others and that combinations of these attributes, taken two or three at a time, are also possible...For these

descriptive purposes, we have identified three dimensions of homosexuality: same gender sexual behavior (and its associated practices), same gender desire and sexual attraction, and self-identity as a homosexual.” Laumann, E.O., Gagnon, J.H., Michael, R.T., & Michaels, S. (1994). *The social organization of sexuality: Sexual practices in the United States*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. p. 290-291.

²¹ “Third, the old paradigm assumed that there is congruence among sexual identity, behavior and desire. Some individuals do report complete consistency: A woman might identify as a lesbian, be attracted exclusively to women and be sex partners with women only. However, research has shown that sexual activity, fantasy, and identity are not always congruent (Baumeister, 2000; Diamant, Schuster, McGuigan & Lever, 1999). Exceptions are common. For example, a woman who identifies as a bisexual might never develop a strong attraction to a man. A man who identifies as gay might have been married and had a strong attachment to a woman. For some women, explicit sexuality is not particularly important; emotional bonding is what counts. A heterosexual man may use homoerotic fantasies when having sex with a female partner. A woman may experience strong attractions to both men and women but identify as a heterosexual rather than bisexual. Or a man may have strong sexual desires without self-identifying as a member of a specific sexual orientation.” Garnets, L.D. (2002). Sexual orientations in perspective. *Cultural Diversity and Ethnic Minority Psychology*, 8(2), 115-129.

²² “The concept of sexual orientation refers to more than sexual behavior. It includes feelings as well as identity. Some individuals may identify themselves as gay lesbian or bisexual without engaging in any sexual activity.” From the American Psychiatric Association, Fact Sheet About Sexual Orientation, <http://www.healthyminds.org/glbissues.cfm>.

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²³ “There are numerous theories about the origins of a person's sexual orientation; most scientists today agree that sexual orientation is most likely the result of a complex interaction of environmental, cognitive and biological factors. In most people, sexual orientation is shaped at an early age. There is also considerable recent evidence to suggest that biology, including genetic or inborn hormonal factors, play a significant role in a person's sexuality. In summary, it is important to recognize that there are probably many reasons for a person's sexual orientation and the reasons may be different for different people.” Answers to Your Questions About Sexual Orientation and Homosexuality. American Psychological Association. <http://www.apa.org/pubinfo/answers.html#whatcauses>.

"Because the startle response is known to be involuntary rather than learned, this strongly indicates that sexual orientation is largely determined before birth." Rahman, Q. (2004). News Release concerning his study: Rahman, Q., et.al. *Behavioral Neuroscience*, 117(5), 1096-1102.

"Researchers say they have found the first strong evidence of a physical difference between lesbians and straight women -- a finding that the inner ears of gay women work more like those of men. The discovery adds new support to the theory that sexual orientation may be predisposed at birth." McFadden, D. et al, (1998, March). *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*.

²⁴ “A developmental theory of erotic/romantic attraction is presented that provides the same basic account for opposite-sex and same-sex desire in both men and women. It proposes that biological variables, such as genes, prenatal hormones, and brain neuroanatomy, do not code for sexual orientation per se but for

childhood temperaments that influence a child's preferences for sex-typical or sex-atypical activities and peers. These preferences lead children to feel different from opposite- or same-sex peers--to perceive them as dissimilar, unfamiliar, and exotic. This, in turn, produces heightened nonspecific autonomic arousal that subsequently gets eroticized to that same class of dissimilar peers: Exotic becomes erotic. Specific mechanisms for effecting this transformation are proposed. The theory claims to accommodate both the empirical evidence of the biological essentialists and the cultural relativism of the social constructionists.” Bem, D.J. (1996). Exotic becomes erotic: A developmental theory of sexual orientation. *Psychological Review*, 103, 320-335.

²⁵ Bem's theory, stated above, is also consistent with the view that both biological factors and environmental factors contribute to sexual attractions. His view of the influence of biological factors is that these factors indirectly influence sexual attractions in interaction with environment. This perspective is in contrast to the direct determination model of many biologically oriented scientists that believe there may be a gene or genes that directly determine one's sexual attractions.

²⁶ “However, to date there are no replicated scientific studies supporting any specific biological etiology for homosexuality. Similarly, no specific psychosocial or family dynamic cause for homosexuality has been identified, including histories of childhood sexual abuse.” From the American Psychiatric Association, Fact Sheet About Sexual Orientation, <http://www.healthyminds.org/glbissues.cfm>.

²⁷ Answers to Your Questions About Sexual Orientation and Homosexuality. American Psychological Association. “. . .human beings can not choose to be either gay or straight. Sexual orientation emerges for most people in early adolescence without any prior sexual experience. Although we can choose whether to act on our feelings, psychologists do not consider sexual orientation to be a conscious choice that can be voluntarily changed.” <http://www.apa.org/pubinfo/answers.html#whatcauses>.

²⁸ “Fourth, the old paradigm asserted that sexual orientation is an enduring disposition that forms at an early age and is then fixed and unchanging. New empirical findings present a very different picture. Sexual development appears to be potentially fluid and changeable over time. Its pattern varies across social contexts and cultures. Identification as bisexual, gay, lesbian or heterosexual and actual behavior can vary over time. It need not be the same at age 15, 25, 45, or 70. There is considerable evidence, for example, that attractions toward both women and men change over time and characterize the experience of some men and women who may, or may not call themselves bisexual.” Garnets, L.D. (2002). Sexual orientations in perspective. *Cultural Diversity and Ethnic Minority Psychology*, 8(2), 115-129.

“There are probably very few people who have not felt, at some time or another, some sexual attraction to both men and women. . . . A person's sexual orientation is not necessarily a fixed, life-long attribute. Sexual orientation can change: for example a woman may be predominantly attracted to men for many years, and perhaps have a happy marriage and children during that time, and then become increasingly aware of same-sex attraction in her thirties, forties, or later. This does not mean that she was concealing or repressing her homosexuality during that early period. To argue that she was really homosexual all the time would be to change the definition of sexual orientation into something murky and inaccessible.” LeVay, S., & Nonas, E. (1995). *City of Friends: A Portrait of the Gay and Lesbian Community in America*. p. 5.

“ . . .people often change their sexual behavior during their lifetimes, making it impossible to state that a particular set of behaviors defines a person as gay. . . . Often implicit in a [single fixed] figure . . . is the assumption that homosexuality is a characteristic like green eyes that is part of a person's identity and never changes.” Laumann., E.O., Gagnon, J.H., Michael, R.T., & Michaels, S. (1994). *The social organization of sexuality: Sexual practices in the United States*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

²⁹ Diamond found that 48% of the sample of 80 women changed their sexual identity label during between first assessment and last assessment (5 years). Twenty-seven percent of the sample changed their label to

heterosexual or undefined. Diamond reports that "these women did not differ from those who maintained lesbian/bisexual identities regarding the age at which they underwent sexual identity milestones, the factors that precipitated their sexual questioning, or their recollection of childhood "indicators" of same-sex sexuality." Diamond, L. (2003). Was it a phase? Young women's relinquishment of lesbian/bisexual identities over a 5-year period. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 84, 352-364.

³⁰ Schidlo, A., & Schroeder, M. (2002). Changing sexual orientation: A consumers' report. *Professional Psychology: Research and Practice*, 33, 249-259.

Spitzer, R.L. (2003). Can some gay men and lesbians change their sexual orientation? 200 participants reporting a change from homosexual to heterosexual orientation. *Archives of Sexual Behavior*, 32, 403-417.

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Tozer, E. E. & McClanahan, M. K. (1999). Treating the purple menace: Ethical considerations of conversion therapy and affirmative alternatives. *Counseling Psychologist*, 27, 722-742.

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