

Intersex awareness as a whole-of-school approach: What part can preservice teacher education bodies play?

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Schools fail to adequately engage with contemporary content about bodily diversity that promotes an inclusive, positive and diverse understanding of intersex in guidelines, policies, professional development and the curriculum. Similarly, where sexuality education and relationships education (SRE) are the remit of Health and Physical Education (HPE) curriculum in countries such as Australia, the learning area shows little obligation or response-ability towards the needs of students with intersex variations. Nor is there the more nuanced attention to non-dominant issues, knowledge or people with respects to sex, gender and sexuality. In a similar way, HPE/PE and sport, as well as professional education relating to these areas (teaching, coaching), may create discriminatory challenges for people with intersex variations, due to their endosex nature and focus. Informed by embodiment and queer theory, this paper reports findings from a case study with a cohort of Australian pre-service HPE teacher education students. They attempted to address how HPE bodies of learning and teaching can advocate for and enact approaches that are inclusive, affirming, visible, and supportive in promoting and upholding the rights and health of students with intersex variations. Field and interim research texts were generated by an iterative and dialogic approach including student presentations, feedback from an intersex advocacy group representative, student focus groups (held post unit completion) and a transdisciplinary research team analysis. The study employed a recently developed Strategic Framework as praxis stimulus and later used as an analytical tool, in line with the community expectations, peer-led intersex rights-and-health-advocacy, and intersex affirming scholarship. We discuss implications as to how schools, ITE and professional development organisations might contribute to more inclusive, humane, safe and educationally available space for people with intersex variations and the role the Strategic Framework can play in this work.