

Same-Sex “Marriage” and Schools:

Critical Review of the GLSEN Same-Sex “Marriage” Curriculum



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Introduction

In 2003, the Gay, Lesbian, Straight Educators Network (GLSEN) released a curriculum designed to present same-sex marriage as a topic area in high schools. The curriculum has been discussed in the popular media and is available on GLSEN's website (www.glsen.org).

We have decided to review this curriculum due to the contemporary nature of the issue and due to the conflicting roles GLSEN has played in the nation's schools.

GLSEN's mission is "working to ensure safe and effective schools for all students." We commend this mission and agree with this objective. We believe schools should be both safe and effective for all students. All schools should be committed to these goals as well.

However, it is not clear how this mission relates to many activities and publications endorsed by GLSEN. For instance, GLSEN was the sponsoring organization behind the infamous March 30, 2000 workshop at Tufts University that described in detail sexual acts often associated with same-sex orientation. GLSEN's website portrays what can only be described as advocacy for gay and lesbian causes that are societal in scope, way beyond the mission of providing safe schools.

Upon reviewing the GLSEN curriculum, we believe the same-sex marriage curriculum serves a political purpose much more than an educational one. If this curriculum was used in schools, no student would be safer and indeed those students who express a traditional view of marriage would likely find themselves feeling pressure to change their perspective or to feel their values and beliefs had been attacked. Certainly, schools would be no more effective since the curriculum requires an inordinate amount of teaching time for an issue that can be handled in a much fairer and efficient manner.

For reasons we will delineate, we recommend schools pass on the GLSEN curricular suggestions. We conclude with recommendations that may help schools handle this controversial subject in a sensitive and educationally sound manner.

Executive Summary

In 2003, prior to the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court ruling that same-sex marriages were a right for gays and lesbians, the Gay, Lesbian, Straight Educators Network (GLSEN) published a curriculum for high school called: *At Issue: Marriage. Exploring the Debate Over Marriage Rights for Same-sex Couples*. This curriculum has been widely touted as a means of assisting educators to provide “an in-depth and multifaceted investigation of marriage.”ⁱ

GLSEN executive director Kevin Jennings, appearing on the O’Reilly show, promoted the fairness of the curriculum in presenting the issue to schools. In a recent CNSNews report GLSEN’s Communications Director, Joshua Lamont was quoted as saying: "As an organization, we do not have an official stance one way or the other on the marriage issue itself," he said. "That's because we're branded as an education organization. The reality is that it's something that's been talked about a lot, and our concern has been for educators having the resources to facilitate some sort of discussion in their classrooms about this topic."ⁱⁱⁱ

Given the importance of the issue, we sought to evaluate the GLSEN claims of balance and breadth in this review.

Our Objectives:

- To evaluate the stated goal of presenting an “in-depth and multifaceted investigation of marriage” to students
- To evaluate the same-sex marriage curriculum concerning accuracy of information presented
- To evaluate the fairness of the curriculum in explaining both sides of the same-sex marriage debate
- To evaluate the practicality of implementing the curriculum in the high school setting

What We Found:

- The curriculum was quite focused on presenting a favorable view of same-sex marriage. No opposing views were offered, nor were any such views included in the handouts or suggested teacher resources for classroom use.
- The curriculum frequently suggested the use of coercive methods to persuade students toward a favorable view of same-sex marriage.
- The curriculum authors often took liberties with the facts concerning same-sex unions. While much of the content was presented as fact, there were very few references given to support the material presented.
- Some very controversial issues and matters of debate within the psychological and medical communities were presented as settled facts.
- The curriculum was lengthy and would be quite impractical to implement at any level in a high school program.

The curriculum would more aptly be titled: *How to Advocate for Gay Marriage in the Schools: A Teacher's Guide*. The curriculum clearly points the students to one conclusion: A truly fair and educated person will support same-sex marriage. While in a democratic society, one is entitled to advocate for and against policy changes, one should not use one's position as a teacher to indoctrinate students. This curriculum clearly presents one side with no fair presentation of alternative views and asks teachers to take between 2 - 3 weeks of class time to do it. We believe this is no way to handle the sensitive matter of same-sex marriage or any other controversial social issue.

We conclude with suggestions for educators to consider. These recommendations are designed to assist students to think thoroughly and critically in dealing with any controversial current event. These protocols can be easily integrated into classrooms because the development of critical thinking skills is already part of what good schools are doing to educate students.

Discussion of Findings

The GLSEN curriculum is biased

Although purporting to provide students with an “in-depth and multifaceted investigation of marriage,” the curriculum falls quite short of that reasonable educational objective. This is much more a work of advocacy.

There is only one instance in the curriculum where both sides of an issue are presented to students. In Lesson 5, the Roman Catholic unfavorable position toward same-sex marriage is presented along with the favorable position of a coalition of churches supporting gay marriage.

In all other lessons, the only view presented or supported with handouts or resource suggestions is the pro-gay marriage view. On the page called “Further Investigation,” there are no videos, websites or organizations that would present rationale against allowing same-sex couples to marry. There are no books that exclusively present views contrary to the position of the curriculum.

This bias is not only contrary to the stated intention of the GLSEN curriculum but also may not set well with parents of public school children. In a survey conducted from the first author’s website, we asked respondents whether students should be exposed to arguments for and against same-sex marriage.ⁱⁱⁱ Of the 2082 answering, 65.8% agreed that if schools offer any teaching concerning same-sex marriage, both sides should be presented. Just over 7% were undecided and 27.1% disagreed. Interestingly, gay, lesbian and bisexual identified respondents (approximately 11% of the sample) strongly agreed that if one view is presented on this controversial issue, then both views should be.

The GLSEN curriculum supports only one side of this issue and therefore does not meet the criterion of fairness.

The GLSEN curriculum is coercive

The curriculum frequently suggests coercive approaches to those teaching the material concerning same-sex marriage. Ideally, the role of the teacher is to encourage critical thinking and problem solving as well as communicate information necessary for competence in work and life. Most states have guidelines designating the information to be presented to students. Teachers are not employed by the community to indoctrinate children to an ideology or set of political beliefs. Values, beliefs and moral judgments are inevitably communicated through a teacher’s behavioral choices and attitudes in presenting various subject matter. However, deliberately teaching a political or ideological view to students in public schools is considered coercive. In contrast to presenting all sides of the issue for consideration, every lesson in this curriculum attempts to employ group or teacher pressure on students to support same-sex marriage.

Examples of coercion:

- In the introductory section, “Discussing Marriage of Same-sex Couples with Students” the curriculum suggests to teachers:

“When discussing this issue, help students to move past preoccupations with the “rightness” or “wrongness” of same-sex coupling or homosexuality in general. Place the debate over marriage within the context of human rights, thereby expanding the dialogue beyond the realm of morality.” (p. 6)

It is astonishing for the GLSEN curriculum to declare a student's moral beliefs as irrelevant to any issue. For students who organize their lives around a moral code, this objective is coercive. Teachers would be saying in effect, ‘your beliefs are wrong and your way of thinking is wrong.’ Such blatant pressure to confirm to a worldview is antithetical to good educational practice.

- Also in the section noted above (Discussing Marriage...), the authors state:

“Students should understand both the historical parallels to marriage prohibitions against same-sex couples as well as the similarities among racism, homophobia and all other oppressions.” (p. 7)

This emphasis is repeated throughout the curriculum. The authors force the dubious analogy between sexual orientation and race repeatedly in this document. The coercive element here is that this analogy is quite controversial in itself. In poll after poll, minorities voice opposition to gay marriage.^{iv} Black ministers have been especially vocal in questioning this analogy. Those students, especially minority students who do not accept the analogy between sexual attractions and racial groupings are likely to feel pressured to accept a set of beliefs with which they do not agree.

The other coercive element of this statement and this line of reasoning is to imply that those opposed to gay marriage are also racist or oppressive. In a group setting led by a teacher, many students can be intimidated by the teacher’s viewpoint. We feel that the presentation of this analogy as a fact or accepted wisdom could be quite coercive to many students.

- In Lesson One, a subtle form of manipulation relates to the questions asked by the curriculum. For instance, the writers call for teachers to ask students to define marriage and its purpose but the questions suggested for discussion would of necessity direct the answers.

Students are to poll 3 or 4 people to answer the following two questions: “What is marriage?” and “Why do people marry?” These questions seem harmless enough but they are incomplete. The emphasis is on the person marrying, with no question designed to have students think about the societal role of marriage. Students might also be asked to explore: “Why did marriage develop?” or “How does society benefit from marriage?”

Such questions would likely elicit some discussion of the genders, childrearing and kinship bonds. Such discussion presumably would not support one of the lesson's objectives, which is: "To examine attitudes toward marriage of same-sex couples against current beliefs about the purpose of marriage." (p.9).

- Also in Lesson One, the curriculum authors ask teachers to lead student discussion to the issue of same-sex marriage. In a discussion of the modern understandings of marriage, the authors state:

"If no student brings it up, list the fact that marriage is legally defined as the union between a man and a woman, that marriage of same-sex couples is not legally recognized in any of the 50 states. Ask students to consider whether this law is consistent with the attitudes/beliefs about marriage that they have listed. If marriage is primarily a reflection of love, spiritual devotion, economic commitment, etc., is it justifiable to exclude individuals from the institution based upon sex/sexual orientation? Just as we have changed marriage law to incorporate modern ideas about birth control, gender equality, and divorce, is it time again to amend the institution to protect the rights of sexual/gender minorities?" (p. 10).

Some might see these questions as thought provoking or even designed to encourage critical thinking. However, in absence of any counterbalancing questions coming from the teacher, such a stance seems quite manipulative. Students who have strong beliefs about the morality of man-woman marriage are likely to feel intimidated into silence by such blatantly ideological questions. As we have noted, minority students are especially likely to feel that the classroom is an unsafe place to express themselves.

Assumptions are made by the GLSEN authors that are scientifically and legally controversial. One such assumption is that sexual orientation is a minority status category. The analogy to racial minorities permeates this curriculum and yet there is no mention of the lack of scientific or societal consensus surrounding this viewpoint.

We want to state clearly that building a curriculum around this analogy makes it an exercise in indoctrination and coercion from start to finish. The authors begin by telling teachers and students that this analogy is valid without any empirical or logical support. Almost all other arguments in this document for same-sex marriage rest on this issue. As we noted above, the GLSEN authors want students to disregard any other moral or political conviction they have in favor of the acceptance of the civil rights linkage.

- Lesson Two features a video by the Lambda Legal organization dealing with survivor's benefits for those who lost loved ones in the 9/11 terrorist attack. Bill Randolph's partner, Wesley Mercer, died in the tragedy and Mr. Randolph sought government benefits available to survivors.

Clearly, this tragic situation tugs on the emotions of students to support the position advocated in the video. However, there were no counter arguments or media presented.

- Also, in Lesson Two, teachers are told: “Ask them (students) to consider whether or not they feel that current prohibitions of marriage of same-sex couples are discriminatory, and what, if anything, government should do in response.” (p. 15)
- In Lesson Three, the GLSEN curriculum states: “In this lesson, students explore marriage bans for same-sex couples within the context of earlier prohibitions and use these historical parallels to determine the fairness of current restrictions.” (p. 20)
- In Lesson Three, the GLSEN curriculum, teachers are urged to ask the students: “Is there a justification for the definition of marriage as the union between one man and one woman?” (p. 23)

Teachers are continually advised to ask students if students think the current prohibition on same-sex marriage is discriminatory or fair. Also, students are not presented with any of the rationale for opposing the establishment of same-sex marriage as an equivalent to opposite sex marriage. Students are never asked if there may be compelling state or societal interests to maintain marriage as a man-woman institution. While this speaks to the bias of this curriculum, such a presentation is also likely to be experienced as quite coercive by students.

- In Lesson Three, students are then asked to vote on whether or not they think same-sex married couples should have the rights of marriage in states that prohibit such unions. (p. 23)

Students are not told that states do indeed have those rights, especially if the state declares same-sex marriage to be against the “strong public policy” of the state (e.g., Ohio).

The coercive element of this vote is that such exercises often make one side or the other feel coerced to change sides. This seems especially relevant given the already coercive stance of the GLSEN teacher’s guide. We fail to see how this exercise supports the GLSEN objective of creating “safe places” for students to discuss their views.

- In Lesson Six, teachers are again asked to apply cases and situations unrelated to marriage to the same-sex marriage situation. Students are asked to review *Plessy vs. Ferguson* and *Brown vs. Board of Education* and make an application to same-sex marriage and civil unions. The clear expectation is that students will assume an analogous situation. If anything this lesson encourages poor legal interpretation and faulty application of precedent.
- Also, in Lesson Six, teachers are to present the same-sex marriage laws of other countries and the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights and force students to use these documents to determine appropriate American policy.

The lesson puts students in a position to make policy based on laws from other countries and a declaration that has no legal force in this country. There can be no other

purpose but to attempt to influence students to believe that same-sex marriage is a basic civil right. Apparently the GLSEN authors must feel it appropriate to suggest to students that other countries have the “right” position on same-sex marriage.

The GLSEN curriculum contains inaccurate and misleading information

Examples of inaccurate/misleading information:

1. The GLSEN curriculum states: “Studies of same-sex partnerships indicate that these relationships function similarly to those of opposite sex couples in terms of commitment, endurance, and mutual care and support.” (p.5) This statement is false if one considers studies that explore groups of gay and straight people who say they are in committed relationships. At the least it is misleading because it portrays the research as showing no differences in global trends for gay and straight committed couples.

- Fidelity is a hallmark of marital adjustment for heterosexual couples. However, sexual faithfulness does not seem to characterize gay relationships, especially among gay males. For instance, Julien, Chartrand and Bergin in a *Journal of Family Psychology* study wrote: “the practice of sexual nonmonogamy among some gay couples is one variable that differentiates gay and heterosexual couples.”^v
- The differences in fidelity are striking. The *Journal of Family Psychology* report found that 62% of gay couples acknowledged “extramarital” affairs. By contrast the vast majority of marriages are completely monogamous: 11% of married individuals have violated their marital vows at some time.^{vi}
- On average, lesbian unions last 5 years, gay male unions 7 years and first heterosexual marriages 11 years. Less than 1/5 of 1% of lesbian unions last 40 years or more. Slightly more than 2/5 of 1% of gay male unions lasted more than 40 years. Of all combined homosexual unions, fewer than 8% endured 15 years (4 years longer than the average length for a first marriage). Five times as many heterosexual marriages last longer than this.^{vii}
- Concerning faithfulness in marriage, in the Netherlands where marriage for same-sex couples is legal, the greatest risk for a gay male to contract a sexual transmitted disease is within a committed relationship.^{viii}

Accurate statement: Same-sex relationships in general do not function similarly to straight relations in terms of commitment and endurance. Certainly some same-sex unions are long lasting and some opposite sex relationships are quite brief. However, the trend is for these relationship styles to be quite different.

2. The GLSEN Curriculum states: "Indeed if one looks to the many countries that have given formal status to unions of same-sex couples today, there is no evidence of negative societal consequences." (p.6)

- Research on same-sex couples in Australia led one author to comment: “This research, centred around uniquely socially sanctioned homosexual and lesbian relationships has, ironically, made it possible to suggest that the lifetime or even long-term heterosexual, monogamous emotionally committed model is not necessarily a base for measuring the success or failure of couple relationships.”^{ix}
- Stanley Kurtz suggests from his research concerning marriage in Scandinavian countries and the Netherlands that gay marriage may be both an effect and a cause of a declining view of marriage and a de-emphasis upon the two-parent household.^x While his research requires replication, it represents a serious attempt to look at the sociological impact of same-sex marriage – the topic of this curriculum.
- Some European commentators describe a decline in traditional values as a precursor to the enactment registered same-sex partnerships. For instance, sociologist Henning Bech commented about Denmark: “The introduction of ‘registered partnerships’ in Denmark, then, shows a society where traditionalist principles and values have lost their power...”^{xi}
- In Norway, in 2002, only 8% of cohabiting same-sex couples entered registered partnerships. Recently, cohabitation has also become the most common type of union for heterosexual couples under age 30.^{xii}
- Concerning marriage attitudes of some European gay writers, see Table One for a quote from British gay activist Peter Tatchell.
- The comparison between same-sex marriage and registered partnerships in Europe made by the GLSEN curriculum is vague. In Europe, most partnership laws do not allow the adoption of biologically unrelated children whereas the GLSEN curriculum seems to advocate marriage in the U.S. without restriction. The GLSEN curriculum does not make clear this “apples-oranges” comparison.

TABLE ONE

“While same-sex love and commitment is laudable, wanting to be part of a dubious straight institution is not. Marriage was devised to ensure the sexual control of women by men, and to regulate the conception and rearing of children. Tailor-made for heteros, it's irrelevant to gay people.

Gayness frees us from the rules and rites of heterosexuality. Having enjoyed the greater lifestyle choices and sexual freedom that go with being gay, we'd be crazy to don the straight-jacket of wedlock.

Less than one in ten Danish same-sex couples (about 3,500) have registered their partnership since the law was changed in 1989. Over 90 percent of Denmark's gay lovers reject the idea of mimicking straight nuptials, and are therefore denied the rights that go with registration.”

Peter Tatchell -
<http://www.petertatchell.net/>

Accurate statement: There is some evidence of adverse impact of same-sex partnerships upon traditional social and familial norms in other countries. While the evidence is observational and correlational, there is reason to be concerned about an importation of concepts of marriage and family that are radically different than the social norms here. Students should be informed that serious academic disagreement exists about the impact of gay marriage on a variety of dimensions. To some students and parents, an erosion in traditional family forms would be a significant consequence of any societal change, while to those who developed this curriculum it may not be of importance. At the least, empirical inquiry is warranted to fully understand the consequences of redefining marriage in the United States.

3. The GLSEN Curriculum states: "There is no existing research to support the claim that same-sex parents rear children with greater emotional or identity conflicts than heterosexual parents." (p. 6)

- The fact is the studies concerning such parents fail to meet social science research methodology standards. Concerning studies of same-sex parenting, research expert, Stephen Nock testified: "not a single one was conducted according to generally accepted standards of scientific research."^{xiii}
- One of these studies demonstrates that there may be differences in the sexual identity of girls reared by lesbians. Daughters of lesbian headed households are more likely to experiment with homosexual behavior and may be somewhat more likely to experience same-sex attraction than those girls reared in comparable straight mother homes.^{xiv}

Accurate statement: We do not know the impact of same-sex parents upon children due to the poor research methodology used in studies of the issue. The only longitudinal study of lesbian headed households finds a greater likelihood for girls to experiment with homosexual behavior and identity.

4. The GLSEN curriculum states: "Unions of same - sex couples have existed around the world for thousands of years." (p. 5)

- This creates a false picture of same-sex unions in that it suggests that all cultures have allowed or supported same-sex couples that are comparable to heterosexual pair bonds. No society in the history of the world has recognized same-sex bonds as comparable to a marriage of male and female.^{xv}
- In antiquity and in other cultures, same-sex "unions" have been primarily between older men and younger boys and were not considered family relationships of equals. According to gay sociologist, Henning Bech, the idea of same-sex bonds comparable to heterosexual unions is a modern concept.^{xvi}

- Most sexuality scholars point to the coining of the terms “homosexual” and “heterosexual” in the mid-1800s as being the starting point for the consideration of homosexual identity as an inborn trait. Thus, socially recognized same-sex unions are modern phenomena. .

Accurate Statement: While same-sex sexual behavior has been observed for millennia, the concept of an individual obliged by genes or experiences to be a homosexual is a modern concept. A more accurate presentation would portray same-sex coupling as a relatively recent occurrence.

5. The GLSEN Curriculum states: "It may interest them (students) to know that Coretta Scott King and many other community leaders have expressed their support for the right of same-sex couples to marry."

- While this statement is true, it may create the mistaken idea that the majority of African-Americans view gay marriage as an extension of the civil rights movement. Polls show that African-Americans and Latinos are more opposed to gay marriage than are whites. Many black civil rights leaders do not accept an analogy of sexual identity to race^{xvii}

Accurate Statement: Many groups are divided over the issue of same-sex marriage. Polls of African-Americans and Latinos show a large majority of those communities oppose same-sex marriage. Some leaders in those communities support same-sex marriage but there are many who do not and reject the idea that race is analogous to sexual orientation.

6. The GLSEN Curriculum states: "This is not the first instance of governmental interference with people's freedom to marry...Students should understand both the historical parallels to marriage prohibitions against same-sex couples as well as the similarities among racism, homophobia and all other oppressions." (p. 7)

- As was discussed above, the analogy between race and sexual orientation is misleading because of the great differences in the categories. There are a variety of pathways by which people experience same-sex attraction and self-identify as gay, lesbian or bisexual whereas race is not considered variable in this manner.

Accurate Statement: The historical and logical parallel between race and sexual preference is questionable. Furthermore, people have always been able to marry someone of the opposite gender. Same-sex marriage would be a re-definition of the historical precedent.

The GLSEN curriculum is impractical to implement

For reasons we outline here, we consider the GLSEN curriculum untenable as a means of discussing same-sex marriage in public schools.

The curriculum:

- does not help students meet curricular guidelines
- is too long with too much class time spent on one issue
- contains irrelevant lesson material

1. The curriculum doesn't help students meet curricular guidelines

In the age of educational accountability, most required courses have inflexible guidelines as to the topics and material that must be presented. There is no room for this topic in many of the courses suggested by GLSEN.

Concerning the presentation of the issue of gay marriage, many parents would prefer the topic not become part of the school day. In our web survey, 74% of respondents would prefer that this topic not be a part of the instruction, with 22% feeling same-sex marriage should be a part of the curriculum and 4% undecided.

2. The curriculum is too long with too much class time spent on one issue.

In most schools with 40-50 minute periods, it would take 2-3 weeks to get through the content and exercises suggested. This is roughly the amount of time many history teachers spend teaching the Civil War. The sheer amount of material and level of detail is overwhelming and clearly more than schools can handle.

3. The curriculum contains irrelevant lesson material.

One entire lesson (Lesson Four) concerns a discussion of whether or not exposure to homosexuality in school influences kids to try out homosexual behavior. Books designed for elementary school kids concerning the marriage of two men are presented with the assignment given to analyze the potential impact upon students. However, no research is presented on either side of the question. Students are basically adrift to share their opinions with the only anchoring point the curriculum that clearly disregards the potential for negative influence. Given that anyone using this curriculum has already determined that no negative impact is likely from presenting the subject matter, presenting a unit on influence seems irrelevant to the curriculum.

How Should Schools Respond to Same-sex Marriage?

Schools have a range of options to consider when addressing any controversial social issue. However, as we have noted, options are constrained by time and state guidelines for curriculum. Given the amount of information required by law to be presented in today's schools, less and less time is available for electives and current events. However, we believe that the same-sex marriage issue is best handled as a current event whether in an elective course or in a required course that allows for discussion of current social events. We recognize that some teachers and groups of parents may not want to include any discussion of the issue and certainly that is a local decision. For those educators who want to address the issue, we felt it would not be responsible to critique the GLSEN curriculum without offering some positive suggestions.

Methods

Article review - An established means of approaching controversial current events is via the use of critical reviews of articles concerning the event in question. Two suggested formats are given in Appendix A. These formats require the student to choose an article concerning the controversial topic, summarize the article and then present a critical review of the article, presenting both pro and con arguments.

There are many variations on this approach. Students can be asked to choose news accounts and analyze the slant of the article and the arguments presented. They can be asked to choose an opinion/editorial and do the same. The objective here is to reinforce critical thinking skills and the ability to distill and analyze arguments.

This assignment could be incorporated into elective courses on Marriage and Family Studies, Sociology, Religion or Contemporary History. We think that the main objective of this assignment should be the development of the ability to discern and articulate pro and con arguments. In an age where same-sex marriage has become a common topic in the daily news cycle, we think it is important for public schools to foster the ability to discern the arguments involved without forcing an ideology on students. In this way, students on all sides of the issue will feel respected.

While there are other means of handling current controversies such as class debates, persuasive speeches and a written paper assignment, we do not believe that the same-sex marriage issue rises to the level of a required topic of inquiry. Thus, requiring this topic to be the focus of a debate, speech or paper for all students in a social science or history class is unnecessary and may provoke a charge of indoctrination. We suggest teachers allow students latitude to choose this topic for analysis but make sure the analysis is graded on critical thinking, research competence and writing skill as opposed to the ideological position taken. In this way, students who are on any side of an issue can feel safe and supported by teachers and schools.

Concluding Statement

We have documented that the GLSEN curriculum is biased, coercive, inaccurate and misleading on many points and impractical in implementation. For these reasons, we respectfully suggest that school districts not use these materials for classroom instruction. We also feel that the presentation and resources are so biased that they are ineffective as background materials or as a teacher resource.

We hope our suggestions for considering the topic of same-sex marriage will form a foundation for schools wanting to help students address current topics in the news. Anything more than this runs the risk of the schools taking a position on a very controversial social issue about which many people of goodwill disagree. We believe students can feel safe to express their views with the knowledge that their teachers and schools are committed to free expression and the development of critical thinking skills.

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APPENDIX A
Current Event Article Review:
Two Protocols^{xviii}

Name: _____ Period: _____ Date: _____

Article Summary & Review

Bibliographic Information:

Who is involved in this article?

What is the article about?

Where does the article take place?

When did the events in the article take place?

Why do you think the reporter/writer wrote the article?

What is the main issue or controversy in this article?

What arguments are made in the article for each side of the controversy?

Pro:

Con:

Name: _____ Period: _____ Date: _____

Current Events Article Summary & Analysis

(attach article to the form)

Source: _____

Article Headline: _____

Date of Article: _____



Summary of Article

Summarize the events or situation. Use at least 5 sentences. Do not quote from the article; summarize the main events and points of the article in your own words.

Analysis of the Article

In one sentence, state the main event or issue referred to in this article:

List arguments given or implied to support one side of the issue:

List arguments given or implied to support another viewpoint on the issue:

ENDNOTES

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- ⁱⁱⁱ Survey results available at www.drthrockmorton.com.
- ^{iv} Most Latinos back gay marriage bans (March 27, 2004) Atlanta Journal Constitution, available on the Internet at <http://argentina.indymedia.org/news/2004/03/185861.php>; Black pastors rally against same-sex marriage. (March 23, 2004). MSNBC. Available at <http://msnbc.msn.com/id/4588282>.
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Sources for teachers to consider in developing pros and cons can be found at the following websites: Pro-same sex marriage – www.hrc.org (there is an extensive section concerning marriage under their issues section); <http://www.freedomtomarry.org> - a site devoted specifically to this issue. Con on the issue of same sex marriage – <http://www.frc.org/get.cfm?c=PROTECTMARRIAGE>; <http://www.marriagedebate.com>. There are numerous sites on this issue but these are given as starting points and because they would quickly allow a teacher to put together pros and cons as points of comparisons to lists generated by students.

Credits

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FOR MORE INFORMATION:

For more resources concerning same-sex marriage, visit the Same-Sex Marriage Information Center at <http://www.drthrockmorton.com/marriage.asp>. There are numerous news reports, polls, op-eds, web links, etc. about same-sex marriage from a variety of perspectives, both pro-same-sex marriage and pro traditional marriage.