
Alvin Schrader and Kristopher Wells’ book, *Challenging Silence, Challenging Censorship*, deals with the issue of including materials dealing with homosexual themes in school and public library collections and the provision of services to bisexual, gay, lesbian, trans-identified, two-spirited (BGLTT); queer; and questioning children and teenagers as a way to increase relevance of school and public libraries for this group. It includes sections on existing issues and potential courses of action. I found the book to be most valuable when describing concrete courses of action to better serve this segment of the population, but found that in some parts it had a tendency to overstep what it needed to convey to its likely audience.

Part one discusses the importance of accessible social services to BGLTT youth. It outlines the increased rates of alienation, violence, and social exclusion experienced by BGLTT young people compared to other individuals in that age demographic, especially in schools, and advocates potential courses of action to improve their safety and understanding of their situations by librarian educators. A large portion of this section discusses the lack of library materials and lack of access to existing library materials for this group, most importantly, the lack of adequate subject description to allow interested individuals to find the materials already included in library collections, such as headings like “Homosexuality – Fiction” as a way to aggregate relevant holdings (p. 19).

The second part of the book is comprised of an annotated list of materials to add to library collections and tools to help select appropriate materials. I think this section will be the most useful part of the book for most library staff members. It divides materials by developmental level and use, including elementary/primary picture books, junior and senior high school/young adult readers, educational videos, professional resources, policy development, curriculum development, censorship and educational texts, and Canadian BGLTT education-related web sites. The authors include a prototype “Bisexual, Gay, Lesbian, Tran-identified, and Two-spirited Students’ Charter of Rights and Freedoms” adapted from Dr. Virginia Uribe, which includes standards they want schools to adopt, and a set of library service and collection strategies to improve services to BGLTT communities.

This book is at its best when it gives concrete courses of action libraries can take to improve services. There are important considerations in formulating an effective collection and service policy to ensure continued access to these items and that services are not curtailed due to challenges, and this book does a good job of outlining what these could include. The reference list is also very valuable, especially to staff making collection decisions who may not be familiar with the relevant literature. These sections would be very valuable to staff who wish to provide or improve services to BGLTT youth.
I found the discussion of librarians’ rationalizations for excluding materials appropriate for this group to be particularly shocking, especially the perception that these are problematic materials which should be avoided as they will inevitably be challenged and removed from collections. This is especially relevant since only a few of the items reported as challenged in Canadian libraries each year are challenged because of homosexual content (CLA 1-10). This being said, I find it unlikely that any of the library staff members who are opposed to acquiring materials to serve this group will be likely to read this book, and, as with most such works, I believe it may suffer the fate of preaching to the choir.

If any public or school library staff wish to improve services to BGLTT young people, this book makes a good case as to why these materials and services are necessary and how to make the materials and services more accessible once they are available. The list of appropriate resources would make a good reference work for collection decisions in this area, as there is an ongoing problem with lack of reviews for these items in mainstream publications (p. 16), and the policy recommendations would be good resources to protect access to these items once they are in the collection.

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**Works cited**