



Rethinking Sexual Identity in Education (Curriculum, Cultures, and (Homo)Sexualities Series)

Susan Birden

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Responding to wide-spread abuse of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and questioning persons (LGBTQs) in education, *Rethinking Sexual Identity in Education* examines the heterosexism inherent in both educational theory and practice, conceptualizing as mis-educative compulsory heterosexuality's stigmatization of 'out' LGBTQs as outsiders. Reflecting upon the Outsiders' Society Virginia Woolf envisioned in *Three Guineas* (1938) for daughters of educated men, this work re-names and re-conceives as Out-Siders those people who 'side' with the 'out' in order to mitigate compulsory heterosexuality's mis-educative effects. Examining how Out-Siders already bring theory and action to bear on sexual identity, Birden names and explicates six praxes used to educate about sexual identity. These Praxes in re Sexual Identity range from ignoring or denigrating non-heterosexuality to 'queering discourse' by de-centering normative gender roles. The author utilizes autobiographical and qualitative-research narratives of LGBTQs' experiences in schooling, higher education, and community education to challenge the theoretical and practical weaknesses of these Praxes in re Sexual Identity. Finding each to be lacking to test the practicality of each praxis. Finding each to be lacking, Birden constructs an Out-Siders' Praxis. The significance of this proposed Out-Siders' Praxis lies in its educative resistance against cynicism and powerlessness that silence oppressed LGBTQ voices and in its theoretical soundness as a guide for developing curricula that Out-Siders can teach and learn in order to transform heterosexist practices and environments. Birden's Out-Siders' Praxis affirms ethical values of liberty, experimentation, and discourse across difference, while advocating that Out-Siders invent and intervene with the attitude of artists.

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