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Trans Students in post-compulsory education: A scoping review – preliminary findings

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Background to review

• The experiences/needs of students identifying on the trans* spectrum are under-researched and under-reported in the literature (Garvey et al, 2015).

• Need to search for/support the implementation of more inclusive ways of conceptualizing; understanding, listening and supporting students with trans identities in post-compulsory education.

• Gender-identity-based prejudice, discrimination and violence remain one of the least discussed issues even within the literature that addresses LGBT issues within education (Dilley, 2004).

• Post-compulsory education an important social space that if not inclusive and supportive, can have long term detrimental effects on students from the trans* community.
Aims / Objectives
Scoping current knowledge of Transgender (Trans*) students in higher education through the literature – mapping what it tells us about?

1) Differences and complexities of gender and its related concepts within the setting of post-compulsory education

2) Broader discourses under the LGBTQI banner and spaces for dialogue about Trans issues

3) Institutional policies, processes and engagement with Trans issues

4) Theoretical basis for trans* inclusion

5) Identifying spaces for dialogue and critical engagement with trans* issues in post-compulsory education

6) What innovations are needed?

7) The priorities for the research agenda?
Methods

- Systematic literature review conducted concerning knowledge of Transgender (Trans*) students in post-compulsory education.
- International and UK electronic bibliographic databases in the fields of education (e.g. ERIC) were used to search for relevant literature.
- Lateral searching techniques were also employed, such as searching key authors works and reference lists.
- A range of search terms were developed using guidance from the mnemonic PICo (Population, phenomenon of Interest, Context; Joanna Briggs Institute, 2011).
- An extraction table was created to summarize the main findings from each article (incorporating CASP).
- Final papers included were annotated, coded, categorised and broad themes identified

*(This presentation does not include analysis of literature not yet available)*
Table 1. Key terms used in search strategy using PICO^ (JBI, 2011)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Population</th>
<th>Phenomenon of Interest</th>
<th>Context</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Student*</td>
<td>Trans*</td>
<td>Higher education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“Cross dress*”</td>
<td>Curriculum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Intersex*</td>
<td>Placement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>LGBTQ</td>
<td>Universit*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Queer*</td>
<td>Further education</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes:
^PICO: Population, phenomenon of Interest, Context.
Table 2. Summary of eligibility criteria

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Study designs:</th>
<th>No restrictions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Publication status:</td>
<td>published and unpublished</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dates:</td>
<td>No limits. Conception of database to November 2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language:</td>
<td>English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Settings:</td>
<td>Post compulsory education facilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outcomes:</td>
<td>Knowledge of Trans* students in post compulsory education</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Trans* Review Exclusion / Inclusion Criteria**

**Exclude:**
- High School
- Secondary school
- Senior School
- Secondary college

**Include:**
- Community Colleges

**EXCLUDE abstract**
- NoStudent
- NoTrans*
- NoEd
- NotHigherEd
- NoTransStudents
Broader discourses under the LGBTQI banner and spaces for dialogue about Trans issues

• 31 studies were inclusive of LGBTQI *
• Most studies report LGBT and LGBTQI findings
• Very few actually had Trans* students in sample
• Many of these studies do not breakdown the different and individual experiences of Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Trans* students
• All studies emphasise the a range of issues facing LGBTQI students in post-compulsory education which require a separate review

(*8 further abstracts identified where papers not yet obtained)
Papers included in the scoping review so far


Overview of trans studies included

- 8 peer reviewed papers identified + 2 theses + 1 book
- All based on research conducted in USA (2005-15)
- 2 studies based on quantitative design using survey instruments and descriptive statistics, 2 used mixed methods, 7 studies were qualitative
- Researchers have had difficulties in engaging trans students in research because of lack of trust or clear direction
- Language/terminology a really big barrier
- Universities and colleges haven’t got a clue!!!
- Need to decouple research from LGB for many issues is evident.
- Research rarely led by trans population
- Small samples except in using secondary data analysis
- Common and consistent themes
Differences and complexities for Trans students

• Remains difficult to assess experiences and support needs
• Differences between groups (intersectionality) e.g. in mentoring experiences and counselling referrals
• Significant lower attainment particularly associated with engagement and learning (Duggen et al, 2012).
• Perception of safety and belonging needs direct attention (Duggan et al, 2012)
• Objects of curiosity (Pusch, 2005) few tailored resources
• Increased harassment and discrimination including sexual harassment / racism (Effrig et al, 2011)
• Higher rates of suicide ideation but no utilising student counselling services
Theoretical orientations

• Positioning experience and needs of students within a model of transgender identity development (Rankin, 2012; Bilodeau, 2005) (see D’Augelli)

• Gender performativity – how gender structures power relations and discourses around gender and complexities for trans students challenging these (Hart and Leicester, 2011)
Institutional policies, processes, engagement with Trans issues

- Identifying spaces for dialogue and critical engagement with trans* issues in post-compulsory education (Effrig et al, 2011)
- Leadership potential of trans students in HE
- Significance of safe spaces within LGBQ networks and alliances
- Faculty/staff and peer training
- Use of language for inclusiveness (Jeffrey & McKinney, 2005; Maine & Nicola, 2014)
- Design of housing support (Krum et al, 2014)
Innovations and priorities for future research

• Research should not be reductionist but include national and cross disciplinary design (Seelman, 2005)

• Very limited measurement/monitoring or visibility of Trans in survey research – finding the appropriate language/terminology – offering appropriate response options

• Life story, narratives, capturing differences between populations in relation to different experiences and needs
References


• Garvey, J.C., Taylor, J.L., Rankin, S. (2015) An Examination of Campus Climate for LGBTQ Community College Students, Community College *Journal of Research and Practice*, 39:6,