

## A Challenge to the Heteronorm

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The "A Challenge to the Heteronorm" survey\* shows that teachers receive very little education or continuing education in the areas of sexual orientation and homophobia. The report also shows that insulting jargon is common among both adults and students at school.

### Primary Results

- Only 8% of teachers think that their education has prepared them to deal with issues related to sexual orientation and homophobia.
- Only 2% of teachers have received continuing education in the areas of sexual orientation and homophobia.
- Half of the teachers occasionally bring up sexual orientation during a teaching situation.
- 25% of the teachers never bring up sexual orientation during a teaching situation.
- 11% of the teachers responded that insulting jargon related to sexual orientation occurs among the adults at school.
- 78% of the teachers responded that insulting jargon related to sexual orientation occurs among the students at school.
- 5% of the teachers know of an adult at school who has been insulted or discriminated against on the grounds of sexual orientation.
- 10% of the teachers know of a student at school who has been insulted or discriminated against on the grounds of sexual orientation.

### Primary Conclusions

- There is a great need for knowledge and continuing education among teachers in the areas of sexual orientation, homophobia and heteronormativity.
- Insulting jargon related to sexual orientation is common among both adults and students at school.
- Those who are responsible for schools, primarily municipalities, must immediately improve the work being done at school in all areas related to discrimination.

- Sexual orientation is considered to be special knowledge that is not included in regular education. The responses suggest that "bringing up sexual orientation in a teaching situation" is interpreted as either talking about sex or talking about homo- or bisexuality, not heterosexuality. The daily talk about (heterosexual) parents and partners goes by unnoticed.
- The difference between answering that insulting jargon occurs and knowing of someone who has been insulted depends on two things: that the people who have been insulted have difficulty expressing it and that those who use insulting jargon are not always aware that their remarks insult others.
- Heteronormative assumptions are a large part of what can be insulting to the children, adults and students at school.

\* The survey was conducted in 2006 and consisted of answers from 1,400 active teachers in grades preschool to high school who were members of The National Union of Teachers in Sweden or The Swedish Teachers' Union.