Students Hear from National Charity on How to Stamp Out Prejudice-Based Bullying in Schools

Wednesday, 15 January 2014

Teaching students at the University of Worcester were this week given the chance to learn how best to combat bullying in the classroom by a guest speaker from one of the UK’s leading LGB (lesbian, gay and bisexual) equality charities, Stonewall.

Alex Newton, Education Officer with the organisation, spoke to undergraduate and PGCE students on tackling homophobic bullying and celebrating differences within schools.

The charity has launched a flagship campaign aimed at stamping out homophobic language among schoolchildren, creating materials for both teachers and pupils that will challenge the misuse of certain words in Primary and Secondary schools.

Mr Newton explains: “Around 95 per cent of secondary teachers and 75 per cent of primary teachers will hear or witness some form of homophobia in their classrooms, which is why Stonewall launched this campaign.

“For us, speaking to initial teacher training providers such as the University of Worcester is a good way of working towards eradicating homophobia in schools.”

The Institute of Education at Worcester has worked alongside Stonewall’s education team for five years, integrating strategies and advice for tackling homophobic bullying as part of the BA Hons Primary ITE and Secondary PGCE programmes. This year the provision was extended to also include its entire Primary PGCE cohort, so all trainees can benefit from the materials produced by the charity.

Branwen Bingle, Senior Lecturer in Primary Education, says: “Our association with Stonewall has grown over the last five years, and we are proud to offer such a level of engagement with a charity so determined to stamp out bullying.

“Our aim is to equip all our students with all the tools that they need to be a successful teacher, and giving them the knowledge and the confidence to tackle bullying of any kind in the classroom or on the playground is particularly important.

“Primary teaching students in particular sometimes think that the issue of homophobia is not one that they need to be concerned with, but they do recognise importance of promoting an inclusive ethos which celebrates diversity in the classroom.”

She adds: “The exceptionally positive feedback we have had from our Primary students shows that they understand how the messages from today’s session can go a long way to eradicating problems caused by prejudice in their future practice.”

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