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ABSTRACT

This document contains eight papers from a conference on fugitive forms of social knowledge that was sponsored by the Adult Education Research Conference (AERC) Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, and Allies Caucus. The welcome address, "Working Memory at AERC: A Queer Welcome...and a Retrospective" (Bob Hill), explores the emergence and development of research with and by lesbian, bisexual, transgender, and Queer learners in the context of the AERC. The authors and titles of the seven conference papers are as follows: "Sobears: Finding Space, Seeking Community" (John Egan); "Gay and Lesbian Issues in Chinese Social Context" (Robert Lee); "How Lesbians Learn to Negotiate the Heterosexism of Corporate America" (Julie Gedro); "Building a Queer Cultural Change Network in Alberta through Community and University Initiatives" (Andre P. Grace, Kristopher Wells); "So You Know about the Queers: What Campus Environment Studies Say about Queer Knowledge Production" (N.Y. Gulley); "Changing from the Inside Out: Transformative Learning and the Development of GLBT (gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgendered) Sexual Identities among Adults" (Kathleen P. King); and "In Solidarity: Using Community Health Education to Build Queer Peace in Kosovo and Japan" (Robert C. Mizzi). The Hill, Lee, Gedro, Gulley, and King papers contain substantial bibliographies. (MN)

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ED 478 442

THE 44th ANNUAL ADULT EDUCATION RESEARCH CONFERENCE

San Francisco State University
June 5, 2003

LESBIAN, GAY, BISEXUAL, TRANSGENDER, QUEER & ALLIES (LGBTQ&A) CAUCUS PRE-CONFERENCE

QUEER HISTORIES: EXPLORING FUGITIVE FORMS OF SOCIAL KNOWLEDGE

Bob Hill & André Grace
Organizers

Bob Hill
Proceedings Editor

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The LGBTQ&A Caucus would like to thank the University of Georgia, Department of Adult Education and Dr. Ron Cervero, Chair, Department Chair for support in the production of the Proceedings of this Preconference, and assistance in announcement mailings.

Queer

2003 Adult Education Research Conference (AERC) -- SAN FRANCISCO

Queer PRECONFERENCE CALL FOR PAPERS

PRECONFERENCE TITLE: **Queer HISTORIES: EXPLORING FUGITIVE FORMS OF SOCIAL KNOWLEDGE**

SPONSOR: **THE AERC LESBIAN, GAY, BISEXUAL, TRANSGENDER, QUEER & ALLIES (LGBTQ&A) CAUCUS**

Look Out! Here it comes!—AERC 2003 marks the 10th anniversary of the LGBTQ&A Caucus, and **AERC's first Queer PreConference**. The theme of the PreConference invites participants to examine relationships at the intersections of truth/power/(fugitive)knowledge. Preference will be given to proposals that are positioned in a post-foundational context. As such, submissions may: focus on historical methods of deconstruction; provide counterpoints to "traditional" histories; interrogate Queer fugitive knowledge (the indigenous social meaning that Queer communities construct in resistance to normalizing discourses); or explore subversive views that aim not to deconstruct history, but to demolish critical historical logic—e.g., insurgent theoretical discourses that offer transgressive perspectives on researching, writing history, and viewing the subject and experience.

Queer questions can be posed from a number of positions, e.g.,

- How do Queers resist becoming the essentialized Other?
- How do Queer communities constitute our-/them-selves as subjects of knowledge?
- How do Queer communities constitute our-/them-selves as subjects acting on others?
- How do Queer communities constitute our-/them-selves as moral agents?
- How are Queer subjectivities historically produced (Vs being represented as producers of history)?
- How have Queer formations been constructed, used, circulated, resisted, appropriated, and/or discarded?
- How have Queer communities exposed and replaced categories such as the family, citizenship, democracy, and other products constructed from foundational hetero/homo binaries?
- How have Queer communities re/defined and re/organized our-/them-selves around desires, pleasures, behaviors, notions of the body and social relations built on difference?
- How have Queer communities engaged in sense-making beyond the hetero/homo duality to re/constitute social difference in new and meaningful ways?

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Queer Preconference FORMAT:

Morning—Paper/Alternative Presentations from 8:30 am – 1:00 pm

Afternoon—Lunch and then "Cruisin' the Castro" A guided walking tour of San Francisco's most famous 'gay neighborhood.'

> *To see [San Francisco's Castro] from an historical perspective is to gain insight and respect for what lies beneath the most famous haven in the nation, and there is no better way to do that than by embarking on a walking tour (Szymanski & Walker, 'Walking this way' in Out in the Castro, W. Leyland (Ed.), 2002, p. 337)*

PAPER PRESENTATIONS / ALTERNATIVE FORMATS (E.G. FILM, POETRY):

- Thirty minutes (30 min.) each, including Q & A, on the day of the Queer PreConference.
- For *proposals*, submit: Name of author(s)/presenter(s); Affiliation(s); Mailing address(es); Email address(es); Phone number(s); Title of Presentation; AV requests; and an *Abstract* (no more than 250 words) of the paper or alternative format presentation.
- Spacing, margins, font and other formatting for all written submissions should follow AERC guidelines.
- The deadline for *submission of proposals* for the Queer PreConference is: *January 1, 2003*.
- All proposals will be reviewed by a committee of the LGBTQ&A Caucus.
- *Accepted authors* will be notified by: *March 1, 2003*.
- Criteria of judgment will include relevance of the proposal to the Queer PreConference theme of truth/power/(fugitive) knowledge; quality of submission; and significance of the topic to *expanding* our conceptualizations of adult education.
- Please send proposals by email, in PC format (MicroSoft WORD or WordPerfect), to either:
  - *Bob Hill (University of Georgia) at rjhill@coe.uga.edu or*
  - *André Grace (University of Alberta) at andre.grace@ualberta.ca*
- *Accepted authors* must submit (by email to either address above) a *written paper*, from 3 to 6 pages in length and following AERC guidelines, by: *April 30, 2003*. Queer PreConference proceedings will be distributed the day of the meeting.
- Please note that shortly after AERC 2003, the presented Queer PreConference papers will be edited into a *single* co-authored article that will be sent to a referred journal for vetting and publication. Therefore, authors should use APA (5th Edition). Presenters are invited to assist in the co-editing of this work.

THE 2003 AERC LESBIAN, GAY, BISEXUAL, TRANSGENDER, QUEER & ALLIES (LGBTQ&A) CAUCUS PRE-CONFERENCE

QUEER HISTORIES: EXPLORING FUGITIVE FORMS OF SOCIAL KNOWLEDGE

The year 2003 marks the 10th anniversary of the AERC LGBTQ&A Caucus. This first Queer Pre-Conference examines relationships at the intersections of truth/power/(fugitive)knowledge. Papers/discussions will center on: What counts as knowledge, and what knowledge counts? How have Queer communities exposed/replaced categories such as family/citizenship/democracy? How do Queer communities engage in sense-making beyond the hetero/homo duality to re/constitute social difference in new and meaningful ways? What do International Queer communities have to offer each other/others?

Papers in the morning will be followed by a late lunch and a 3 ½ hour walking tour of 'the Castro,' San Francisco's most famous 'gay neighborhood.' For a virtual "Walking Tour" see http://sfphototour.tripod.com/castro_street.html

Don't forget to check out the LGBTQ&Allies Web page at:
http://www.arches.uga.edu/~bobhill/AERCQUEERSPACE/

DATE: **June 5, 2003**

LOCATION: **San Francisco State University**
Room T - 160 in the Cesar Chavez Student Center

FEE: **$20 –For the Paper session only**
$40 – F or the Guided Historical Walking Tour (price includes lunch in the Castro with the historian)

Fees Collected at the PreConference
Attendees can participate in either or both of these events!

PROGRAM:

8:00 – 8:15 am
Welcome and Introductions

8:15 – 8:30 am
Working Memory at AERC: A Queer Welcome...and a Retrospective
Bob Hill
(University of Georgia, Department of Adult Education, River's Crossing, Athens, GA 30602-4811. Email: rjhill@coe.uga.edu)

8:30 – 9:15 am
So You Know About the Queers: What Campus Environment Studies Say About Queer Knowledge Production
NY Gulley
(North Carolina State University, 2601 Sterling Park Drive, Raleigh, NC 27603. Email: nygulley@hotmail.com)

9:15 – 10:00 am
Sobears: Finding Space, Seeking Community
John Egan
(National Centre for HIV Social Research/University of New South Wales, Webster Building, 2nd level, Sydney NSW 2052, Australia. Email: jegan@mac.com or j.egan@unsw.edu.au)

BREAK to 10:15 am

10:15 – 11:00 am
Changing From The Inside Out—Transformational Learning And The Development Of GLBT Sexual Identities Among Adults
Kathleen P. King
(Fordham University, 113 West 60th Street, Room 1102, New York, NY 10023. Email: Kpking@fordham.edu)

11:00 – 11:45 am
Building a Queer Cultural Change Network In Alberta Through Community And University Initiatives
André P. Grace and **Kristopher Wells**
(Department of Educational Policy Studies, 7-104 Education North University of Alberta, Edmonton, AB T6G 2G5, Canada. Email: andre.grace@ualberta.ca; and kris.wells@shaw.ca)

11:45 – 12:30 pm
Gay And Lesbian Issues in Chinese Social Context
Chih-Chun Lee
(University of Georgia and 7F-5, No.3, LN 138, Mingsheng E. Rd. Sec. 5, Taipei, 105 Taiwan. Email: bobjt42@yahoo.com.tw)

12:30 – 1:15 pm
In Solidarity: Global Perspectives on Using Community Health Education to Build Queer Peace
Robert Mizzi
(P.O. Box 669, 3 Cecil St. South, Ridgetown, ON N0P 2C0 Canada. Email: robert_mizzi@hotmail.com)

LEAVE 1:30 pm for a late lunch in the Castro, followed by a 3 ½ hour guided walking tour with a noted San Francisco historian.

The Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer & Allies Caucus:

Building An

REGISTRATION FORM

THE 2003 AERC LESBIAN, GAY, BISEXUAL, TRANSGENDER, QUEER & ALLIES (LGBTQ&A) CAUCUS

PRE-CONFERENCE

June 5, 2003
San Francisco State University
Room T - 160 in the Cesar Chavez Student Center

Starts Promptly at 8 am
Co-organizers: Bob Hill (University of Georgia) & André Grace (University of Alberta)

QUEER HISTORIES: EXPLORING FUGITIVE FORMS OF SOCIAL KNOWLEDGE

FEE: **$20 –For the Paper session only**
$40 – F or the 3 ½ hour Guided Historical Walking Tour (price includes lunch in the Castro with the historian)

Fees Collected at the PreConference.
Attendees can participate in either or both of these events!

NAME:

MAILING ADDRESS:

EMAIL ADDRESS:

PLEASE CHECK ONE:

- O I WILL **ONLY** ATTEND THE MORNING PRESENTATIONS ($20 Registration Fee for the paper session)
- O I WILL **ONLY** ATTEND THE AFTERNOON HISTORICAL TOUR OF THE CASTRO (Guided Walking Tour Fee $40 which includes lunch)
- O I WILL ATTEND **BOTH** THE MORNING PRESENTATIONS AND THE AFTERNOON 3 ½ hr. HISTORICAL TOUR OF THE CASTRO ($20 Registration Fee AND $40 Guided Walking Tour Fee including lunch)

PLEASE EMAIL THIS FORM TO rjhill@coe.uga.edu
or return it via FAX (706-542-4024) / ATTN: Bob Hill

Registration Fee covers the cost of room rental for those attending the morning session. The Walking Tour Fee covers the hire of an historian and lunch. All monies will be collected at the time of the PreConference. We recommend that attendees wear comfortable shoes for the 3 ½ hr. walking tour.

Working Memory at AERC: A Queer Welcome...and a Retrospective

Bob Hill

University of Georgia
Department of Adult Education
Athens, GA 30602-4811
rjhill@coe.uga.edu

Abstract. *This paper explores the emergence and development of research with/by lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and Queer learners in the context of the Adult Education Research Conference. It is an analysis that illustrates three significant moments in AERC history during the past decade: the establishment of a caucus for sexual minorities and allies (1993), the first Pre-Conference (2003) marking a decade of LGBTQ cultural work within AERC, and the growing number of papers, starting in 1994, that include LGBTQ discourses—often in our own voices.*

Introduction

The Adult Education Research Conference (AERC) is an "annual North American conference that provides a forum for adult education researchers to share their experiences and the results of their studies with students, other researchers, and practitioners from around the world" (*About AERC*, n. d.). A review of printed AERC *Proceedings*, and an examination of ephemera, such as brochures and letters from past organizers, suggests that until 1993, adult education researchers, reporting at AERC, either had no experiences of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or Queer (LGBTQ) communities, or elected not to share their experiences since no one mentioned LGBTQ adult learning or adult education. This is remarkable in light of the fact that, arguably, AERC represents a progressive wing of research in the field. It is a location more likely to integrate sexual orientation and gender identity than perhaps other venues (e.g., teaching conferences on adults).

Three significant moments define Queer voice and vision in the history of AERC: the formation in 1993 of the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer & Allies Caucus (LGBTQ&AC), the first Queer Preconference, sponsored by LGBTQ&AC at the 46th AERC (San Francisco, 2003), and the growing number of presentations at AERC meetings since the first effort offered from a 'gay perspective' (Hill) in 1994. This present paper is about *working memory*— it is an investigation of the processes and politics of actively re/membering the place of sexual minorities in adult education research by exploring these three moments.

Education often reproduces injustice, reinforces stereotypes, and promotes violence. It can be a tool for social regulation and the reproduction of the (biased) *status quo*. In a society rife with homophobia, heterosexual privilege, and the hegemony of "straight" culture, education is often complicit with processes that marginalize sexual minorities. Historically, adult education has been no exception (Hill, 1995). On the other hand, education can transform individuals and build more just societies for sexual outlaws—something that members of the AERC community have taken up as part of their social justice agenda in the past decade.

The First Queer Preconference

Queer histories: Exploring fugitive forms of social knowledge, an historic 'first' Queer Preconference for AERC, marks the 10th anniversary of the LGBTQ&A Caucus. It examines relationships at the intersections of truth/power/(fugitive)knowledge from an *international perspective*. Papers in this *Preconference Proceedings* center on what counts as knowledge, and what knowledge counts...how Queer communities have exposed/replaced categories such as family/citizenship/democracy...how Queer communities engage in sense-making beyond the hetero/homo duality to re/constitute social difference in new and meaningful ways...and, what international Queer communities have to offer each other/others. There are noteworthy papers that explore queer knowledge from Japan, Kosovo, Australia, Canada, Taiwan, and the United States. The diversity of topics ranges from lesbians in corporate settings, to sobriety in the 'sobear' community (the 'bear scene' is comprised of furry, full-bodied gay men). The space between these two aforementioned papers is filled with research results in areas as varied as the distribution of power in Chinese society for gay men and lesbians, campus safety for sexual minorities, a development model for 'coming out' in adulthood, community development for LGBTQ youth (aged twenty-five and under), and citizen- and human-rights that emerge from the intersection of peace and health education in LGBTQ communities.

The Caucus: Challenging Structures of Containment and Resisting Non-being

The account of the formation of the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer & Allies Caucus provided here is perhaps best described as 'fictive'—neither myth nor fiction—it is derived from an large measure oral history that will undoubtedly reemerge in the continual retelling of our events[1]. It is also based on empirical and observational data but avoids causality statements. The attempt has been made to incorporate four levels of analysis: explanation, description, interpretation, and critique.

The notion of fictive history has its origins in literary criticism and the social sciences, and is well developed in Queer cultural studies of history. It looks at how identities and differences construct, and are constructed through, Queer narratives of the past (Bravman, 1997). Queer fictive history, nested in Queer theory, is a term that explores gender- and sexual-diversity through post-structural theories of identity, especially in light of the work of Michel Foucault. As Bravman states, we need a Queer approach to historiography as "a shift away from understanding lesbian and gay historical representations as literal or descriptive accounts of the past, towards reading those representations as performative sites where meanings are invented" (p. 97). Fictive does not signal a concept of history as artificial or contrived but rather as "acknowledging the open-endedness of the historiographical undertaking where interrogations of sources on the past are recognized as being open to multiple imaginings and continual retellings" (Jackson, 2000). Abandoning the positivist notion of truth, Bove (1990) suggests that "all 'truths' are relative to the frame of reference which contains them—and 'truths' are in

[1] Individuals are welcomed to contact the author with additional information, personal memories, comments on the thoughts and motivations behind their actions, and the details of emergence of LGBTQ discourses at AERCs. This "history" on the Caucus' tenth anniversary should be a dynamic and living history.

fact a function of these frames." The 'truth' of *this* history of AERC is a function of the Queer frame of reference which contains it. Bravman reminds us, "this approach refuses both a notion of total history and a singular interpretation of any particular event, period or historical narrative" (p. 125). Meaning is invented in re/presentations of AERC's history, not as progressive refinements, but as discontinuities in the development of ideas. The three Queer moments constitute such discontinuities.

Foucault (1972) employs a historical method that explores the incidences of interruptions, disruptions and discontinuities—in what might be presented otherwise, i.e, as the seamless web of the past. He writes that disruptions "suspend the continuous accumulation of knowledge, interrupt its slow development, and force it to enter a new time" (p. 4). In 1993, at the business luncheon of the 34th AERC (Penn State University), participants were invited by Bob Hill, a graduate student at Penn State, to form a "Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Friends Caucus." The caucus' "founding organizers" who gathered in 1993 were Bob, Libby Tisdell, and one supporter. Perhaps the numbers were few for the first meeting because they gathered at 7 am on a Sunday morning for breakfast and the first acts of organizing!

Verbal and *written* affirmation was received in 1993 from the outset; the AERC&AC archive also contains sporadic notes written from supporters over the past ten years that include encouraging comments. For example, in 1998, a graduate student writing from New Zealand stated, "I am a lesbian....I found the pamphlet [about the LGBTQ&AC] very interesting...I would love to be informed about what is happening 'out there' in this area." The notions of "gay" and "lesbian" within the field functioned to both catalyze hopes and aspirations of some AERC members, as well as to provoke a mild backlash (sometimes dubbed "eyelash" in campy gay discourse). Regarding the former, groups such as the Caucus assist in identity formation, and allow individuals to probe the questions, "Who am I?" and "Who do I wish to be?" in the context of the adult education arena. The Caucus has allowed people to generate possible "selves," to try-on new or emerging identities, and to confederate with other like-minded individuals and supporters. The Caucus coming together has had an impact on "straight" and "gay" people alike as it contested heterocentric privilege. Breaking down a formerly exclusionary space had its triumphs and tribulations.

After the presentation of a landmark paper, *Heterosexist discourse in adult education: A gay/lesbian critique* (Hill, 1994) at the 35th AERC (University of Tennessee), seven people attended the Caucus' second meeting. Several of the seven circulated by the room entrance before they ventured in. During discussions, they reported fear of being "discovered" by other Conference attendees, including, according to one, faculty on their doctoral committee.

At the 1995 AERC (36th, University of Alberta), two papers appeared on the Conference program in a gay voice, and a third discussed lesbian and gay issues incidentally. About twenty people attended the LGBTQ&A Caucus. The period 1995-96 is described in an email newsletter sent to all members by Hill. In it he proposes that the Caucus use Adrienne Rich's politics of visibility as a guiding value. Rich (1986) offered,

> It takes some strength of soul, and not just individual strength, but collective understanding—to resist...nonbeing, into which you are thrust, and to stand up demanding to be seen and heard, to make yourself visible. To claim that

your experience is just as real, and normative as another can mean making yourself vulnerable. But at least you are not doing the oppressor's work, building your own closet (p, 199).

Newsletter. Many members wanted to stay in touch with LGBTQ developments in adult education. One way of accomplishing this was through a (unsuccessful) Newsletter that was sent to "members" on several occasions, but which lacked resources, including contributors and financial support. It was difficult to establish participatory practices in the Caucus. The newsletters (and memos) that were posted by mail (and email) to participants were frequently accompanied by "drafts" of fliers and announcements of future Caucus meetings for members' comments. One letter announced that the Caucus matured significantly, providing the evidence, "Well, we've come of age! A few weeks ago I called the organizers of the next AERC to request formal time and place for the 'lesbian, gay, bi- and friends Caucus' to gather. Much to my delight, and the organizer's credit, we were already listed on the 1995 schedule! The group grew to have a mailing list of more than 80 names of people by 1999.

In one newsletter Hill I wrote, "By 1998, after 5 years, the Caucus...has expanded to more than 60 individuals from three continents. Long silent, the door is slowly opening to multiple gay discourses in the field of adult education. However, our story should not stop here! Our increased presence at AERC should remain strong. Those doing queer research/cultural studies that intersect with adult education are encouraged to continue presenting papers at future conferences."

Website. The launching of the Caucus' Website, *AERC's Queer Space*, in 2001, hosted by the University of Georgia, and found at http://www.arches.uga.edu/~bobhill/AERCQUEERSPACE/, was (and continues to be) more successful than the Newsletter. One of the primary features on the Website is an extensive bibliography of published works on LGBTQ topics for adult educators.

Symposium. Group activities have varied over time. In 1998 the LGBTQ&A Caucus sponsored a major symposium (39th AERC, University of the Incarnate Word, San Antonio, TX), titled *Taboo Terrain: Reflections on conducting adult education research in lesbian/gay/queer arenas*. Presenters included Kathleen Edwards, André Grace, Brenda and Wanda Henson, Bob Hill, and Ed Taylor. The post-symposium evaluation was completed by 40% of the fifty people who attended. They reported the following: 95% strongly agreed that the presenters were prepared and well-organized; 95% strongly agreed that the presenters effectively kept discussions focused on relevant topics; 84% strongly agreed that the presenters were considerate and responsive to participants' needs; 84% strongly agreed that the session format was appropriate for the topic, as was the time-frame; 84% strongly agreed or agreed that the handouts were valuable; and 95% strongly agreed or agreed that the information provided would be useful in their adult education practice. Narrative feed-back included, "I was moved, touched and inspired by

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the vulnerability, professional presentations and sense of love all the presenters gave to us." "I liked the honesty, humor and passion!" "This is long over-due; should be addressed yearly." "Enlightening. This issue is in the consciousness, why should there be fear about it? I admire the courage of the panel....Adult education reaches a high plane when this gay issue is openly accepted and discussed. We are all members of the human race!" "Outstanding, challenging, and informative. Thank you!"

Cinema. The Caucus has employed cinema as a pedagogical tool on a number of occasions, screening progressive, Queer-positive, avant-garde cinema (e.g., *Nitrate Kisses*, directed by Barbara Hammer the postmodern film maker, was featured as an invited Post-Conference Session titled, *Lights out! Queer cinema and adult learning* at the 40th AERC, 1999, North Illinois University in Dekalb, IL. *Paris is Burning*, an award-winning film that fanned U.S. Congressional attacks on the National Council of the Arts was a part of the 38th AERC in 1997 at Oklahoma State University, Stillwater). The rationale for utilizing films is based on the belief that cinema is a powerful pedagogical endeavor that can produce alternative meanings for viewers' lives. Trinh T. Minh-ha (1999) reminds us that "an image is powerful not necessarily because of anything specific it offers the viewer, but because of everything it apparently also takes away." Queer cinema is a case in point. Film is now "Out." It is a cultural-political tool; a moral vision of human justice and decency, and can rob heterohegemony of its central positionality. In the past few decades film culture has been characterized by reconfigurations in the relations between sexual orientation and representation. Identity, otherness and difference have been contested by independent Queer film makers (and to a much lesser extent by mainstream Hollywood). Hegemonic trans-historical film canons are increasingly decentered and destabilized, as LGBTQ discourses move from the margins to the center. For the community of sexual outlaws, this shifting terrain helps to fulfill one of John Dewey's notions of progressive education: to gain command of oneself so as to make positive social use of one's powers and abilities (Dewey, 1994).

Speakers. Sponsoring speakers at Caucus meetings has been the single most uniform event. Brenda and Wanda Henson, famed for resistance to hostile attacks at Camp Sister Spirit, the Feminist Folk Education and Retreat Center in Ovett, MS, spoke at the 37th AERC in 1996 (University of South Florida, Tampa).

In addition to the film, *Paris is Burning*, the Caucus sponsored a discussion at the 38th AERC, 1997, at the University of Oklahoma, Stillwater, titled, *Creating a narrative space for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgendered and Transsexual discourses in adult education.*

Pat Gonser, a lesbian nurse, discussed educational issues and her "Out" status at the 39th AERC, 1998, San Antonio (University of the Incarnate Word). Her presentation was titled, *Journey into freedom: A coming-out narrative of a closeted dyke in the academy.*

In 1999 (40th AERC, North Illinois University, Dekalb) the Caucus hosted a panel presentation, *Adult education for citizenship: The role of Queer cultural studies and*

fugitive knowledge, organized by André Grace, with invited panelists, Mechthild Hart (who could not attend due to an accident), Bob Hill, Juanita Johnson-Bailey, and Libby Tisdell.

The legislative hero, Svend Robinson (pictured on the preceding page) Canada's openly-gay Member of Parliament, addressed members at the 41st AERC, 2000 (University of British Columbia, Vancouver, Canada) on policy-making for social justice—see insert for a photo of Svend.

During the 42nd AERC at Michigan State University, East Lansing in (2001), members of a local grassroots lesbian organization shared their experiences operating a lesbian press and building a land-based community for women.

Caucus Mission

Today the LGBTQ&A Caucus remains an active and vital part of AERC. It is open to anyone who attends the annual Conference gatherings. Its purpose continues to be:

- To promote the improvement of research and evaluation in adult education on topics of importance to lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer communities
- To foster professional collaboration among persons who promote research, conduct research or utilize research findings on topics related to LGBT and Queer issues in the field of adult education
- To offer support, collegiality, and a safe space for dialogue to LBGTQ faculty and students at the AERC and beyond
- Through a Mentoring Project, offer feedback to students interested in presenting or publishing papers in the field of adult education on topics related to LGBTQ research, practice or theory
- To support an Internet site for scholars and cultural workers in the field of adult education's intersection with LGBTQ interests

Backlash (Eyelash!)

While much support for the Caucus was generated by many AERC members, some opposition also arose during its history. In 1993, backlash was reported by Caucus members to include shunning and menacing glares from others. It also took expression at a 1993 feminist affinity-group meeting when someone suggested a chapter for the (hotly debated) next edition of the *Handbook of Adult and Continuing Education*. The proposition was to include a paper in the new book on "radical heterosexuality!" At this meeting, one woman who specialized in African American studies was heard saying, "Why are people discussing lesbians in a feminist group, there's nothing feminine about lesbians!" Lesbian scholarship was largely invisible to the field. Unrecognized was the long-standing place of women-loving-women in communities of the black diaspora (see Wekker, 1993).

After the Caucus organizing meeting was announced at the business luncheon in 1993, Hill was approached by a number of people who provided such comments as, "The time just isn't right yet for this sort of thing," and "Slow down, you're moving too hard,

too fast—like Clinton[2] and the military," and, "We need time to accept your ideas!" One person offered, "You really ought to think about what you hope to achieve, given that you're a graduate student and don't even have a job, let alone tenure!" Arguments of social usefulness, such as the time isn't right, or people are not ready, have common elements of neutralization, denial, and avoidance expressed in previous civil rights struggles. In a similar vein, colleagues of James Sears, founder of the special interest group for research on lesbian and gay studies within the American Educational Research Association, referring to gay research, were overheard saying, "Why does he insist on pursuing *that*!" On the other side of the debate, however, people defended the idea of an LBGTQ Caucus, and encouraged members to not lose heart.

A few incidents that exemplify policing the borders by resistant folks, while not illustrating the majority of experiences, must be recorded in order to capture the complex nature of what has occurred. Briefly, at one conference the host committee refused to allow the partner of an invited presenter to attend the Caucus meeting because she had not paid the AERC registration fee; fortunately, the Steering Committee intervened. At another conference, during the opening plenary session while reading from the program, an AERC host organizer introduced the affinity groups. When he came to the LGBTQ&AC he by-passed it. Before the assembly disbanded, Hill rose to call attention to the oversight, which was corrected with apology. At another AERC, the host committee listed the group as "the Social Action Caucus"—seemingly avoiding, where ever possible, tabooed words such as "gay" or "lesbian" (another example that illustrates how these words function is more powerful than what they may mean). At one Conference, a Caucus session was placed concurrent with the presentation of a major figure in adult education who would attract large numbers of Conference attendees. Hill was confidentially informed by a member of the host institution that this was, in fact, done by design to prevent the Caucus from "standing out too much" (exact quote). At another AERC, the Caucus was the only meeting *not* held in the complex of buildings where all other AERC venues occurred. Rather, it was placed a 15 minute walk across campus from the Conference site. Finally, one year, Caucus brochures were posted to a host committee for insertion into the registration packets. Upon (early) arrival at the registration desk, the absence of this brochure was noted. Literally no one involved in organizing the AERC claimed to know anything about them. After suggesting that the Caucus would re-photocopy the flier, and would request assistance in inserting them into the registration packets, one member of the host team stood up and walked directly to a cabinet where the brochures were "discovered." Surprise!

Queer Words: A Conspectus of Papers at AERC

Conference *Proceedings* from 1993-2002 were critically reviewed for this paper, through an Internet search[3] of the AERC Website (found at *http://www.edst.educ.ubc.ca/aerc/proceed.htm*). Owing to on-line availability, only

[2] In January, 1993, President Clinton stated, "The issue is whether men and women who can and have served with real distinction should be excluded from military service solely on the basis of their status, and I believe they should not" (Truscott, 1993). He then proposed July 15, 1993 as the deadline to draft an order allowing gay men and women to serve in the military. Public and Congressional opposition was so great that this directive was rescinded before it could be implemented.

[3] Thanks are due JuSung Jun, University of Georgia, for providing, in large part, the key word search data that are reported here.

Abstracts were accessed for the years 1993-1996; entire papers were examined for the years 1997-2002. Nine key words were included in the search. The findings were: *Sexual orientation* (The total number of papers containing this word, in the 10 year period, was N=36), *Gay* (N=25), *Lesbian* (N=23), *Queer* (N=10), *Homophobia* (N=8), *Heterosexism* (N=6), *Transgender* (N=6), *Bisexual* (N=2), and *Transsexual* (N=2). Two categories were observed: papers that included LGBTQ discourse/es as one of many identity-based topics, and papers that specifically focused on LGBTQ adult learning or education. The distinction is not reported in this analysis.

Author citations for the nine key words break out in the following way:

- *Sexual orientation* (Tisdell & Taylor, 1995; Hansman, 1997; Lawrence, 1997; Tisdell & Perry, 1997; Baptiste, 1998; Chapman, 1998; Chapman & Sork, 1998; Ziegahn; 1998; Edwards, et al., [Symposium], 1998; Hansman, 1999; Howell, 1999; Tisdell, 1999; Butterwick & Selman, 2000; Caffarella, et al., [Symposium], 2000; Edwards & Usher, 2000; Egan, 2000; Gouthro & Grace, 2000; Hill, 2000; Johnson-Bailey & Cervero, 2000; Pyrch, 2000; Rosenwasser, 2000; Stalker, 2000; Taylor, Tisdell, & Hanley, 2000; Tenant, 2000; Tisdell, 2000; Barlas, 2001; Grace & Hill, 2001; Hansman, 2001; Kaufmann, 2001; Tisdell, Tolliver, & Villa, 2001; Zukas & Malcolm, 2001; Baumgartner, 2002; Cain, 2002; Gouthro, 2002; Tisdell et al., [Hill in Symposium], 2002; Tolliver & Tisdell, [Symposium], 2002)

- *Gay* (Boshier, 1993; Hill, 1994; Tisdell & Taylor, 1995; Archie-Booker, 1997; Brooks & Edwards, 1997; Sparks, 1997; Tisdell, 1997; Edwards, et al., [Symposium], 1998; Reeves, Merriam, & Courtenay, 1998; Brooks & Edwards, 1999; Miller, 1999; Noble, 1999; Sessions, 1999; Sosibo, 1999; Tisdell, 1999; Egan, 2000; Hill, 2000; Hunt, 2000; Newman, 2000; Rosenwasser, 2000; Baumgartner, 2000; Grace & Hill, 2001; Baumgartner, 2002; Grace, 2002; Tisdell et al., [Hill in Symposium], 20002)

- *Lesbian* (Hill, 1994; Tisdell & Taylor, 1995; Resides, 1996; Archie-Booker, 1997; Brooks & Edwards, 1997; Kaufmann, 1997; Sparks, 1997; Tisdell, 1997; Ziegahn, 1998; Edwards, et al., [Symposium], 1998; Johnson-Bailey & Cervero, 1998; Brooks & Edwards, 1999; Jones-Isley, 1999; Tisdell, 1999; Egan, 2000; Hill, 2000; Rosenwasser, 2000; Tisdell, 2000; West, 2000; Grace & Hill, 2001; Grace, 2002; Low, 2002; Tisdell et al., [Hill in Symposium], 2002)

- *Queer* (Edwards, et al., [Symposium], 1998; Tisdell, 1999; Brooks & Edwards, 1999; Egan, 2000; Rosenwasser, 2000; Hill, 2000; Grace & Hill, 2001; Cain, 2002; Grace, 2002; Tisdell et al., [Hill in Symposium], 2002)

- *Homophobia* (Boshier, 1993; Edwards, et al., 1998 [Symposium]; Guy, et al., 1998; Tisdell, 1999; Egan, 2000; Rosenwasser, 2000; Grace & Hill, 2001; Grace 2002)

- *Heterosexism* (Hill, 1994; Edwards, et al., 1998 [Symposium]; Tisdell, 2000; Grace & Hill, 2001; Clark, 2002; Grace, 2002)

- *Transgender* (Hill, 1994; Edwards, et al., 1998 [Symposium]; Brooks & Edwards, 1999; Hill, 2000; Grace & Hill, 2001; Tisdell et al., [Hill in Symposium], 2002)

- *Bisexual* (Edwards, et al., [Symposium], 1998; Tisdell et al., [Hill in Symposium], 2002)

- *Transsexual* (Edwards, et al., [Symposium], 1998; Hill, 2000)

On the surface at least, the data would suggest that for some reason/s, researchers in the past decade have articulated words like "sexual orientation," "gay," and "lesbian" 10 to 15 more times than words such as "transgender," "bisexual," and "transsexual." Such observations beg the question, "Why?" A possible answer might be found in post-modern notions of Queer cultural studies where it is argued that how words are *defined* is considerably less significant than how they *function*, or are deployed. AERC is a performative space, and it is essential to comprehend how this performance is enacted. For example, understanding what Boshier meant when he first employed the word "gay" in 1993, while consequential, is secondary to knowing the many ways that the term *functioned* in the context of AERC in that, and in subsequent years. Like wise, the first use of the term "Queer" in the 1998 Symposium, *Tabooed Terrain,* has functioned to construct identities and differences, as well as to be constructed by those identities, as can be seen in the subsequent ways the term has been deployed by authors of ensuing papers.

It is interesting to examine the number of papers that appeared, by year, employing at least one of the nine key search words. The growing number of papers in a Queer voice since 1994 is apparent.

The following formation results from this analytical perspective:

- *1993* (N=1; Boshier)
- *1994* (N=1; Hill)—note, in a letter to Hill, David Little, University of Regina, wrote, "I think your presentation, as [Roger] Boshier remarked, was history in the making. To actually hear the gay voice in formal discourse made things I knew about the interanimation of voices...more real than ever. Thank you for that" (letter, May 27, 1994).
- *1995* (N=1; Tisdell & Taylor—note, there were 3 papers this year in a gay voice, but only one was located using the search parameters for this study, pointing to the incomplete nature of this analysis)
- *1996* (N=1; Resides)
- *1997* (N=8; Archie-Booker; Brooks & Edwards; Hansman; Kaufmann; Lawrence; Sparks; Tisdell; and Tisdell & Perry)
- *1998* (N=8; Baptiste; Chapman; Chapman & Sork; Edwards, et al., [Symposium]; Guy, et al.; Johnson-Bailey & Cervero; Reeves, Merriam, & Courtenay; and Ziegahn)
- *1999* (N=9; Brooks & Edwards; Hansman; Howell; Jones-Isley; Miller; Noble; Sessions; Sosibo; and Tisdell)
- *2000* (N=16; Butterwick & Selman; Caffarella, et al., [Symposium]; Edwards & Usher;

Egan; Gouthro & Grace; Hill; Hunt; Johnson-Bailey & Cervero; Newman; Pyrch; Rosenwasser; Stalker; Tenant; Tisdell; Taylor, Tisdell, & Hanley; and West)

- *2001* (N=10; Barlas; Baumgartner; Cain; Clark; Grace; Grace & Hill; Hansman; Kaufmann; Tisdell, Tolliver, & Villa; and Zukas & Malcolm)
- *2002* (N=7; Baumgartner; Cain; Gouthro; Grace; Low; Tisdell, et al., [Hill in Symposium]; Tolliver & Tisdell, [Symposium]).

As can be seen, a key search word was found once (N=1) each year for the three year period 1993-1996. There was a gradual increase during 1997 (N=8) to 2000 (N=16) and a decrease in 2001/2002 (N=10/7). While it is too early to determine a downward trend, attention should be paid during the next few years to see if the downturn in 2001/2002 is a trend toward fewer papers in the *Proceedings*. The decrease could be interpreted as a result of less favorable vetting of LGBTQ papers by the Steering Committee (which this author can attest was not the case since I was on the selection team); fewer research studies in this arena; or fewer submission of LGBTQ research papers to this particular conference.

A (Very) Brief Conclusion—Because the Road Leads Onward!

An analysis such as this, "Queering or History, Gayzing AERC," while perhaps not methodologically rigorous, has heuristic value in helping to explore past accomplishments and to look forward to future agendas. It is evident that there has been an accumulation of knowledge surrounding LGBTQ topics over the past decade, since the terms "gay" and "homophobia" were first articulated by Boshier (1993), and Hill's (1994) first full treatment of LGBTQ issues in adult education. In the future, may all comrades who attend to LGBTQ matters be inundated with multiple imaginings and continual retelling of our lives, our impacts, and our transformations.

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Sobears: Finding Space, Seeking Community[4]

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Abstract: *Using the Internet, many 'bears' are carving out space and place in ways that transcend the traditional gay bar. Sobears in particular seem to be using the 'Net as space where their concerns about alcohol are largely assuaged. They are using both support services and their own critical self-reflections to make sense of their lives, as sober, bearish (mostly) gay men. Though extra-institutional and largely informal, their experiences as adults seeking to make meaning of their experiences, speak directly to how adult learning occurs for those whose lives don't fit what is construed as 'normal.'*

Introduction

In the era of "twinkdom", where lean, smooth and young are the archetypes proffered as gay male reality, the bear scene—furry, full-bodied men—refutes this trend and offers many men affirming space (Suresha, 2002; Wright, 1997). While there is no universally agreed upon notion of who is a bear (in North America the archetype leans towards facial haired and hairy-chested men, whereas in Europe bears are what North Americans call "chubs"—very overweight, even obese men), the emergence of bears and bear culture represents a refutational stance—material and discursive—to notions of gayness that permeate both mainstream and gay/queer public spheres. Thus for many men, bear culture is a place to escape body fascism and its concomitant "attitude."

"Coming into" a gay male identity and community, while increasingly occurring among adolescents, remains largely a processed engaged by adults. At times with individual or collective support, in many instances through the pursuit of social interactions, for many gay men integrating their sense of gayness involves locating particular gay milieus, based on social, sexual, cultural and generational interests or affiliations—and concomitant experiences of inclusion or exclusion. This certainly applies to many bears' experiences. These experiences are rarely linear or tidy. Coming into a more nuanced and richer understanding of one's self is subjective, often involving inter-subjectivities with respect to sexual orientation, gender notions, ethnocultural affiliations and even socio-political beliefs. In the 21st century in Western, liberal democratic contexts, the gay public sphere has moved beyond the bars, baths and beats.

Yet, the bear scene in many North American communities—geographically determined, but also cyber-communities—often centre around bars and pubs. Like queers in general, bear space is often a bar or club; it is seeking out spaces known as "safe" that these men seek connection and validation. But for sobears—bears who a

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variety of reasons do not drink alcohol—this presumably safe space can become treacherous.

Methods

This study examines the experiences of 22 sobears from across the U.S. and Canada. Participants were recruited via online newsgroups and bear-specific listservs. Inclusion criteria were participation in gay bear cyberspace, and being abstinent (or pursuing abstinence) from alcohol, regardless of rationale. Each participant completed a five item qualitative questionnaire, as well as a brief profile sheet for demographic purposes. The themes explored included:

- Reasons for not drinking (and the circumstances under which a decision was made to pursue abstinence)
- Characteristics of the local bear community/culture
- Impact being a sobear has on efforts to socialize with other bears (for friendship, dating, sex)
- Moments or instances where being a sobear led to a feeling of "apartness" from bear culture/community
- Views on the relationship between bears and alcohol.

Respondents completed their questionnaires electronically and submitted them via email. Qualitative data were analyzed using MAX/QDA qualitative analysis software (Kuckartz, 2002); demographics were analyzed using SPSS ("SPSS," 2000).

Findings

Most of the men (19 of 22, or 86%) considered themselves gay; one self-identified as queer, one preferred not to answer the question, and another did not respond. Mean age was 38 years on last birthday (range 32 – 54 years). Fifty-six percent were in a relationship (including one polyamourous man with a partner and a boyfriend). Most of the men lived in the US (82%), including California, Florida, Georgia, Massachusetts, Missouri, New York, Ohio, Oklahoma, Texas and Washington state. The remaining 18% were in Canada, from British Columbia and Ontario. Median length of sobriety was 12 years (range 6 months - 45 years); one person (aged 45) had never drank an alcoholic beverage in his lifetime.

Alcoholic And Not

Forty-six percent (46%) of the overall sample said yes when asked "I am alcoholic". An equal number answered no (4% preferred not to answer; 4% did not respond). But in their qualitative responses, exactly half of the sample used the word "alcoholic" to describe themselves, often through brief personal narratives. Jack, in his mid 30s quit drinking "after being hospitalized for the umpteenth time for damage inflicted by my-then huzbear, I decided that my life needed a change." Pat, also in his 30s "was one of those "after school special" types-bright, angry, filled his McDonalds cup with vodka before honors chemistry…aside from the horrific hangovers the fact that my life was always a crisis and struggle should also have been a clue. Over the last 5 years or so, I

blacked out nearly every time I drank. I drank instead of buying groceries, I drank instead of paying the rent. " Others, like Bill, simply stated "I'm an alcoholic."

Another 14 percent of the overall sample cited a parent's alcoholism (frequently their father's) as their reason for sobriety. Misha, in his 20s, doesn't drink "because I came from an alcoholic household. My father, grandfather and uncle were all alcoholics. I saw what it did to the family. I saw how it affected each and every one of us and I was not going to do the same thing." Yet another ten percent cited medical reasons for abstinence. Walter, in his 40s because he is "overweight, (has) Type II diabetes, hypertension and severe degenerative joint disease. These health issues combined with the medications I must take preclude me from drinking." Still another one fifth (18%) cited other reasons, including a lack of enjoyment of alcoholic beverages (including intoxication to varying degrees), religious-based abstinence from alcohol consumption, and a political commitment to avoid mass-marketed products, including alcoholic beverages. One respondent was "drinking heavily for many years," but stopped after finding a partner who did not drink; he did not consider himself to be alcoholic.

Both professional supports and peer-based (most often "Twelve Step" programs) were frequently accessed by participants. Though half the sample considered themselves alcoholic, relatively few of the respondents had ever accessed professional substance abuse-specific services in their lifetimes. Only 14% of respondents had ever attended in-patient (residential) treatment program for substance abuse/misuse; another 9% participated in out-patient treatment. A mere nine percent had ever attended a short-term detoxification program. However, over two-thirds of respondents (68%) had at some point sought individual counseling or therapy. Fifty-nine percent had ever attended a meeting of Alcoholics Anonymous. Two-fifths had attended either group therapy (facilitated by a counselor or therapist) or another peer-led support group (including Adult Children of Alcoholics, Overeaters Anonymous or some unnamed group). Nearly one quarter had ever attended Narcotics Anonymous. Clearly both peer-based and counseling services were more commonly accessed than traditional substance abuse/misuse programs.

Experiencing & Seeking Bear Space & Community

Since traditional face-to-face bear space is often located in gay bars, how sobears navigate their way to and through bear space can be problematic—though not for all. Norman finds that being sober "doesn't impact my efforts to socialize at all." Neither does Phil: "It has no affect for me. I still will go to bars. I have no problem with other people drinking. I have only known one person to have a problem with me not drinking." For men like Norman and Phil, traveling in the bear scene, which is often a bar or nightclub, is largely unproblematic. Joseph finds that "it is becoming much easier to go to clubs/bars without the urge to drink. Initially, it was very difficult to spend time around alcohol related places and events, but now I do fine with a bottle of water in my hand. At first I was compelled to explain myself when turning down the offer of a drink, now I just simply say 'I don't drink.'" Conversely Hal thinks being sober in such spaces "gives me an advantage, has taught me to be uninhibited, and helped me to develop seduction skills (as opposed to merely relying on alcohol)." Across the 22 participants in this study, a broad spectrum on perspectives—and experiences—regarding socializing with other bears was found.

But for some sobears, that bear space is often in a drinking establishment presents personal and social difficulties. Larry views his local bear community's meetings in bars "negatively....I really do NOT like going to bars/heavy alcohol events." Jason finds "it does make some difference socially and professionally. I [work in the local LGBT community], and do not like to work with people when they have been drinking." Several men noted that in bear space some men drink to the point of intoxication, while others do not: the former group is where any problems come up. Peter does "find it hard to relate to someone who's drunk and I probably wouldn't choose to socialize with them at that moment, but I don't mind at all the man who drinks in moderation and stays in control."

For Barry, being a sober bear has proven to be a veritable barrier to finding community:

> *The fact that I do not drink tends to make others suspicious of me in social settings like bars and bear runs. I have been treated as an oddity and even with disdain...that I was "too good" to drink beer with the guys, or that. I know that when I have been out at a bar and someone offers me a drink as come on and I order water or Diet Coke, the other person usually disappears before I finish the beverage. I know that "let me buy you a beer" is a crutch phrase often used to help someone meet someone they are interested in. When the answer is "No Thanks," or "Thanks, but I'll have water," it seems to throw these guys off and they do not know what to do.*

Barry's experience is one of exclusion: he sees other bears as viewing his sobriety in negative terms, quite possibly related to social norms around cruising in gay bars. There is a real disconnect for bears like Barry, were they to rely on bars for finding other bears.

Bears whose reasons for sobriety are related to alcoholism or problem drinking (their own or others) were less likely to use bars as a venue for meeting other bears. Rory complained "ugh....everything seems to revolve around 'going to the bar'" as did Tim: "The bear community here in is large (and the bears are as well :)....I do not get totally involved with it much. Seems to center around the bar." Pat described why he's not been very involved in his local bear club:

> *The bear scene here is totally bar focused. I haven't attended many bar days (they are often on a Saturday afternoon), because I'm loathe to spend daytimes in beer parlors...that's my old life. And the guys who thrive on it are often the ones who keep the local bear club going, so I guess it suits a lot of fellas. But not me. . I tend to meet guys via the internet and at the tubs (gay sauna).*

While Pat's experiences don't typify all the men in the sample, his comments do reflect the experience of a number of the men—being a sobear and exploring the traditional spaces of bear socialization can be challenging.

Barry (like Pat) has found that "Meeting people on the internet seems to work better for me since I do not drink. Guys who look at one of my profiles and see that I do not drink can approach me directly...no guessing is involved. They are not thrown off by the fact that I am in a bar but not drinking alcohol." Most of the participants cited the Internet as an important space for socializing, both for finding sexual partners and social acquaintances. Local and international chat rooms and venues like Internet Relay Chat (IRC), instant messaging and the Bears Mailing List (BML) were among the cyberspaces they used. Cal lives "in the Bay Area, there is a lot of opportunity for bear activities. I am also active online, so I connect with a good number of bear buddies that way, too."

Walter goes to his local bear club, including its meet-and-greets at the local leather bar, "otherwise, I can always find bear folk online at either gay.com or AOL." Stephen " seeks bear company elsewhere [than bars or clubs]...usually online. I travel many miles to be with other bears that have the same feelings as I do about alcohol." But whether in face-to-face space or cyberspace, most participants sought bear community and culture, and valued it.

A Sense of Being *Apart From*

For many sobears, being sober is viewed as directly related to (at times) feeling distanced from other bears. Eleven of 22 men acknowledged that being sober led them to feel "apart from" the bear community. Those who have experienced apartness as sobears wrote at-length about particular moments/events or described their experiences in more generalized terms. Walter feels "like an 'outsider' sometimes- I try to laugh it off but deep down I wonder what they are running from/trying to numb?" Sometimes at bear runs James feels like "everyone is drinking and/or drunk and they attempt to get you to drink because they think that will cause you to loosen up a little, I get a little distanced, or feel angry." And for Mark, it seems like "a lot of the bear events revolve around the bar and drinking so that you are distanced by the fact that you don't partake."

Luke feels "detached from the rest of the bear community because of my abstinence mostly in a bar setting or at bear runs... I believe the bear community has just as many conformity issues by and large as any other subset of the gay community. Bears are supposed to dress butch, be 'masculine' and drink their beer." These were common sentiments, often in similar circumstance: bear runs, conferences or meet-and-greets. For some men, who are geographically isolated from other bears, these events are the primary space for seeking community. They manage to make it their own, but not without challenges. One recovering alcoholic finds these contradictions—between his conviction to remain sober and a part of the bear community—daunting. "To this day, when I see someone obviously having a wonderful time and feeling that 'perfect buzz', I envy them a little and miss the feeling," though he is able to recall his own difficulties with alcohol and put such feelings in context. Yet it is clear that alcohol consumption seems to be a critical component of the face-to-fare bear scene in North America—uncomfortable for some, treacherous for others.

Conclusions

With the advent of the Internet, many bears are carving out space and place in ways that transcend the traditional gay bar. Sobears in particular seem to be using the 'Net as space

where their concerns about alcohol (their own sobriety and how others who are drinking act) are largely assuaged. Men who were sober because of their own alcoholism were more inclined to find face-to-face bear space in bars to be problematic, individually and generally. These men's accounts clearly demonstrate that even in quarters of the queer community ostensibly carved out in response to hegemonic notions of "gay", norms can emerge that are also exclusionary—or that seem to be.

These sobears are using a both support services and their own critical self-reflections to make sense of their lives, as sober, bearish (mostly) gay men. Though extra-institutional and largely informal, their experiences as adults seeking to make meaning of their experiences, speak directly to how adult learning occurs for those whose lives don't fit what is construed as "normal", in mainstream society-at-large, within the urban gay male milieu, and even among "regular" bears.

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Gay and Lesbian Issues in Chinese Social Context

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Abstract: *This study explores the relationship between gender issue of gay men and lesbians and the distribution of power in Chinese society. By interviewing a sample of gay people, I will attempt to reveal how gay men and lesbians are perceived by cultural heritage and social norms. Family and self-identification, social norms and individuality, traditional sexual inequity between men and women and gay movements in different political states are the themes that emerged from the data.*

Introduction

Few Asian gay and lesbian studies have been reported in western society because it seems that Asian culture still remains mysterious to most researchers. There is little evidence that the researchers made any attempt to probe the cultural traditions and social contexts that give meanings to this field of study. This action research project seeks to readdress the inadequacy by considering how gay and lesbians are socially viewed by Chinese cultural heritage and social norms. Broadly speaking, I am interested in the ways in which cultural and social contexts determine acceptable roles for different classes and genders of people in Chinese society. Through interviews, observations, and focus groups I have investigated a wide range of Chinese gay and lesbians of adults. My work, and the work which I drew upon, has been conducted in Taiwan, Honk Kong and Mainland China.

Cultural Heritage and social norms

Basically, Chinese communities include Mainland China, Hong Kong, Singapore, and Taiwan and these societies hold certain common values. Most of these values, which can be traced back to Confucius period, are closely related to family, filial obedience, loyalty, responsibility, and a strong social hierarchy. In Confucian thoughts, the individual is part of an ethic continuity and is defined within those relationships. Thus, as one seeks to develop one must follow an exemplary fashion and fit in with an predetermined public role, such as man, woman, husband, wife, parents, son, daughter, and worker (Pratt, Kelly, & Wong, 1998).

Although Confucianism is not the only source of philosophical values, it is certainly the one that influences greatly on cultural heritage of Chinese societies. Embedded within Confucian values are five principal relationships, which are - Ruler and subject (government and citizen), father and son, husband and wife, older and younger brother, and friend and friend - through which each person defines a sense of identity, behavior, and responsibility. Within these relationships we can find a concrete patriarchal system of power built in the traditional Chinese society in which women were submissive in the men's world. Gender has always been a sensitive issue in Chinese culture since the dominant group has strictly defined sex-linked traits (collection of psychological characteristics and behaviors characterizing men and women) and gender roles (activities differentially appropriate for men or women) in a society. In this tradition, the gay population becomes a subgroup in Chinese society nowadays and they have no position in the traditional hierarchical mainstream social system. Moreover,

lesbians become the minority within minority because they are the subgroup of women (as a minority). This study explores certain key factors in Chinese culture determining the status of gay and lesbians in social context. The purpose of this research is to study this gendered power relations through an action research project with a group of gay people in Taiwan, Hong Kong, and Mainland China.

Methodology

An action research project was conducted with a group of ten gay men and ten lesbians in Tong-Kwan Presbyterian Gay Church in Taiwan, which is the first Chinese gay church in Asia. A qualitative design was chosen because I sought to identify and understand a dynamic process. A nonrandom, purposeful sample of this focus group was selected to be interviewed. Tong-Kwan was chosen because I wanted to do this qualitative research in a voluntary, marginalized social group. In Taiwan, churches are still the most conservative and most active against gay and lesbian movements. Thus, this focus group has a strong sense of gender consciousness of being oppressed and in challenging mainstream values.

These twenty participants range in age from 20 to 40. Twelve persons were in their 20's; seven were in their 30's and one individual was age 40. The length of time the person considered herself/himself a gay or lesbian ranged from 8 to 28 years. Level of education spanned from college graduate to doctorate. Occupations include teacher, computer engineer, minister, manager, student, consultant, and doctor. A semi-structured interview format was used. My questions targeted the conflicts between their identities of sexual orientation and the Chinese cultural and social contexts they perceived. Additionally, I had an in-depth interview with Mr. Hua-Shan Chou, who is the assistant professor in the Department of Sociology at the Hong Kong University, by phone in order to collect more information about gay issues in Hong Kong and China.

Member checks have been conducted both during group meetings and through e-mail communications. Limitations include the purposive sample. The interviews were transcribed, and collectively analyzed by the researcher. The following themes emerged from the data analysis and are presented in the findings.

Findings

Family and self-identification

Five traditional principal relationships embedded within Confucian value in Chinese society include: *Ruler and subject, father and son, husband and wife, older and younger brothers, and friend and friend.* Each person assumes a set of identity, behavior, and responsibility based on the interaction among these relationships. Three of the five concern family, which is the building block of society and is organized on authoritarian principles and the most important of all virtues—filial obedience, or dutiful respect for parents. (Harrison, 1992). Thus, one's role and responsibility is traditionally linked to one or more of the principal relationships. The Chinese child learns from an early age that s/he must be dutiful and obedient to the parents. Filial obedience is one of the most essential characteristics of the Chinese family. Within Confucian thought, the individual is a developing part of a continuing family lineage (Pratt, Kelly, & Wong, 1998). One of my interviewers recalled:

> *My mother is a traditional Chinese woman, who has devoted her whole life to the family and she believes that it is her responsibility to honor the family name. Thus, she pushed her children so hard because she wanted them to be successful in terms of her expectations. She always made us feel guilty and she wanted us to love her because of her sacrifices for the family. I escaped from her pressuring love when I went abroad to study.*

From this statement we can see both the close relationship among family members and the pressure from parents' expectations to their children in a Chinese family. Chinese is a high context society in which human relations are like a social web. Within this culture every family member is responsible for the family and no one is supposed to live only for himself/herself. The most difficult situation the gay people will encounter while they are trying to come out is the resistance and disagreement from their families. How can a person do such a thing that could hurt the family's reputation and against parents' expectations? That is definitely not any family member should do. One of my interviewees told me:

> *I do love my parents but I cannot because their love means so much pressure. I chose to be away from home because I was afraid that I would have disappointed them once they found out I am a gay. You will never know how much I want to share my life with my parents but I just can't face them because of my sexual identity.*

In the traditional Chinese culture, the core value of family is that all men and women reaching adulthood should get married and have children in order to carry the family name. Gay and lesbians are under pressure from this cultural norm since their behaviors are challenging the main duty of being part of a family. Gay people are struggling with the conflict between the societal values and the lifestyle they want. This is a fundamental but striking issue due to the cultural context.

Social norms and individual's free will

Chinese is a high context society in which each individual is asked to follow the same rules of proper role behavior and no one is expected to become different in a group. In Chinese society relationships are interdependent and so neither has a role without the other. A government cannot be a government without citizens, and so forth. If both participants in the relationship respect their responsibility and do what they are expected to do, peace and harmony would be assured. (Harrison, 1992). Failure to follow the norms could jeopardize the relationship and the harmony of society. As mentioned above that filial obedience is one of the most important characteristics of the Chinese family. The child has started to learn obeying the authorities since s/he was little. In this hierarchical society, authority, which flows downward, does not depend on the behavior of those with power. Responsibility, authority, and morality are all part of the same hierarchy of relationships. For example, children have to listen to their parents, students have to listen to the teacher, and employees have to listen to the boss.

In a Chinese culture, the self to be educated is not an ego-driven, private self, but a collective and relational self. (Pratt, 1991). Thus, the focus of education in a Chinese

society is on the development of the "public" self; that is, the roles one is expected to take on within one or more of the principal relationships. Each person is expected by the society to be disciplined in the fulfillment of his or her roles, and obligation as prescribed by their public self. One married lesbian in Beijing stated:

> *The only purpose for me to get married is to divorce. Within this culture and society, marriage is a necessary life process for everyone and I just cannot avoid it.*

This can be considered as a form of silencing. Hegemony leads to silence and eliminates the different voices. In the circumstances, gay and lesbians' positions are more severe because of their differing values from the mainstream society. The dominant group and culture can easily place the guilt and judge them because their lifestyles are not conforming to a predetermined behavior pattern. Within Chinese culture the individual's ego disappears into the society.

Traditional sexual inequity between men and women

Women have been treated as subordinates to the dominant patriarchal system of power for a long time, whether in Chinese or Western history. Thus, lesbians become the minority of minority because of their double-subordinate position. A lesbian described her experience while she tried to come out in her family:

> *When I told my parents that I am a lesbian, my father hit me so badly that I had to stay home for a week to recover. I couldn't protect myself physically because I am a girl. And my parents threatened me that they didn't want me to come home again unless I could change. I wondered if they would have done the same thing to my brother if he were a gay.*

Another lesbian interviewee told me her thoughts about the position of lesbians in Chinese society according to her analysis:

> *We are not allowed to voice ourselves in society where we are subjugated. We are limited, isolated and silenced. In this society the patriarchal system of power dominates everyone's perceptions of his/her predetermined role, and the heterosexual represents the mainstream social values. Moreover, the dominant group tries to secure and perpetuate their values and positions through the education from heterosexual parents, the school and mainstream media, and the unbalanced distribution of social resources. Homophobia makes people react irrationally and it makes my life full of fear everyday.*

In traditional Chinese culture, the dominant group treated females as inferior to males. Although it is changing right now, the society still give men more power, resources and freedom to decide their futures. Compared to women, men are more accepted to be single for any reasons; however, a single woman seems to have to "explain" why she remains single to the society because women are identified to rely on their husbands or family. Within this social structure, the situation is more difficult for lesbians to voice their

opinions since they lack social supports severely. Usually they need to rely on the feminism groups, for example, to speak for them in Taiwan.

Gay movements in different political states with the same traditional culture

Chinese had been a monarchical nation for almost five thousands years. Although western countries made China open its gate by their strong weapons and ships in 19th century and also influenced the shift of regimes in China through the introduce of modern democratic theories developed in western societies, the remnant of the thought of monarchy is still influencing people's perceptions of the government, which could represent another form of political hierarchy in Chinese society. The government support and control can be a decisive factor for some social changes.

Since the dramatic change of Chinese history in last century, Taiwan and Hong Kong have become democratic, while China still remains communistic (or socialistic). From the talks of my interviewees, we can see the different positions gay and lesbians have in different regimes. Current gay and lesbian history is not marked by the blatantly discriminatory laws of the past in Taiwan and Hong Kong. The gay culture and movements have been developing prosperously in the past few years, while it is still a sensitive issue in China and remained under table. In 2001 June, the first official Lesbian and Gay Rights Movement in Taiwan's history, including a gay carnival and an international forum, was held by the Taipei City Hall, Taiwan. It was an unprecedented undertaking in Chinese history as well. This activity was held in October 2002 again since the mayor of Taipei city, the capital of Taiwan, desires to make Taipei a diverse and international city, although he is still facing a lot of objection and resistance from the conservative majorities. On the other hand, according to my observation, gay people in Hong Kong focus on their own personal well being more than public issues. Being one of the most modernized cities in the world, Hong Kong has various gay lives but gay people don't seem to participate in the public issues much probably because of its unstable history of regime shifts in the past century. Hong Kong was one of the Britain's colonies and it has been taken over by China since 1997. Most Chinese in Hong Kong are struggling with their national identity between becoming part of white society – as it was once ruled by the British - and their ancient Chinese "roots". The ambiguous political status makes them care less about public issues and instead pursue personal goals.

The situation is more different in China because of its lack of democracy and controversial human rights issue. The authorities of Beijing are still unfriendly to gay people. Any gay or lesbian could lose the job if his/her sexuality has been found out in their workplaces. Moreover, they could be put in jail if they are loitering in a park and there is no law which can protect them from the discriminatory treatments. One gay man described his ambivalent feelings about his country:

> *When I saw the national flag streaming at Tien-An-Men Square, I cried. I do love my country, but why is She so harsh on me? I have to leave here because I need to be loved and also find someone I love.*

Discussion

This study reveals the relationship between the gay issues and the distribution of power in Chinese societies. Through this action research we can find that the traditional Chinese culture still attempts to remain a heterosexual hegemony, which decides the people's predetermined sexual roles in society. Power is a regular reality in our lived experience. Most people rarely consider power as more than a coercive in which one person forces another to do something against his or her will (Wilson, 1999). Understanding how power works is essential if people are to prevent the colonization and mechanization of the life world by power and money and develop a society based on free, undistorted communication (Habermas, 1987, p183). Gender still remains a sensitive issue in Chinese social context because the rigid traditions foster the dominant patriarchal system of power.

Due to the fast modernization of Taiwan in the past two decades, many different kinds of subcultures have been formed and accepted gradually by people in this Chinese society. As the culture becomes diverse in society, the traditional culture is being challenged inevitably and losing its status of dominating people's behaviors. Chinese culture is transforming and it shows different appearances in different times. It becomes more and more diverse because many new cultural factors have infused the new energies to it. The questions that we should pay attention to are what factors lead to the change of Chinese culture? Can we develop a complete and logical frame of theories to explain that? And how can we make the public feel and experience the transformation of the culture?

Chinese societies are changing on the gender issues now. People can talk about gay and lesbian issues in public, and more and more gay people come out in their workplaces, media, and claim their assertions in some conferences. Some researches and educational activities have started to focus on gay and lesbian issues as their project topics. Traditional authorities are gradually losing their grip. More and more websites offer gay and lesbian related information and some organizations aimed at the development of gay rights, heath education, and entertainments have been established. But it is still too optimistic to believe that the Chinese societies will fully accept gay people soon. Intolerance and the fear of gay people are still prevailing. I cannot predict how dramatically this social change will be, but researchers should pay attention to what kind of social, political and cultural contexts the Chinese gay movements should be based on? What are the goals? What kind of influences will happen through this social change? These are challenges enough for pressing ahead.

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How Lesbians Learn to Negotiate the Heterosexism of Corporate America

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Abstract: *Because lesbians face the double bind of gender and sexual orientation discrimination, they are a unique category of professionals. Although they must learn to negotiate the power of their organizational settings in order to survive, there are no mechanisms to provide such information to them. Therefore, each lesbian who works in corporate America must learn through trial and error, underground networking, or other informal means how to negotiate the workplace. The purpose of this study, therefore, was to understand how lesbians learn to negotiate the heterosexism of corporate America. The research questions were: 1) What have lesbians who work in corporate America learned about negotiating the heterosexism of the organizational setting, and 2) How have they learned to negotiate the heterosexism of the organizational setting.*

Background of the Study

The concept of heterosexism provides the scaffolding to understand the experience of a lesbian whose identity places her at the intersection of gender and sexual orientation in the corporate setting. Heterosexuality is the compulsory norm for society; corporate America, being a subset of American society, is also characterized by compulsory heterosexuality (Caudron, 1995; Digh, 1999; Friskopp & Silverstein, 1995).

Methods

A qualitative research design was selected for this study in order to uncover that meaning embedded in people's experiences (Merriam, 1998). A purposeful sample of ten lesbians who work in corporate America was used in this study. Ten were selected because by the seventh interview noticeable themes, words, and phrases were being repeated. Three more interviews were done in order to assure that data saturation (Merriam, 1998) was reached. The criteria used to select the women for this study were: 1) self-identifies as a lesbian; 2) is over the age of thirty; 3) has worked in the same corporate setting for a minimum of two years; 4) has budget responsibility; and 5) has more than two people who report directly to her.

A semi-structured interview format (Merriam, 1998) accompanied by an opening statement and an interview guide was used in this study. The interview guide consisted of two parts: 1) general, demographic questions related to career and type of organization, and 2) questions related to experiences and learning in the corporate setting. Data were analyzed using the constant comparative method of analysis. The constant comparative method involves comparing one segment of data with another to determine similarities and differences (Merriam, 1988). The goal of this analysis was to make sense out of the data by determining categories and themes, reducing and refining those categories and themes until there are linked in a way which explains the data's meaning (Merriam, 1988).

What Lesbians Have Learned

Table 1 presents the three main themes that answer the first research question. Lesbians in corporate America have learned to pre-screen, to come out, and to educate others to the issues related to being lesbian.

Table 1

What lesbians in corporate America have learned about negotiating heterosexism

What is learned	When this occurs	Factors for Occurrence
The Pre-Screen: Gathering data in order to analyze receptivity of audience toward one's lesbianism.	Anytime one enters a new relationship (individual: colleague, superior, new group of subordinates; or group: new organization)	Visual: Symbols, speech or dress that would indicate intolerance for alternative orientations. Behavioral: Person's demonstrated openness toward new ideas. Political views (Conservative/Liberal). Hobbies/interests: metaphysics, New Age, alternative pursuits.
The Coming Out: Situational process in which a lesbian acknowledges her lesbianism.	Occurs after she has pre-screened the audience and there is a compelling or otherwise appropriate motivation to identify oneself explicitly as a lesbian.	Power balance: Facilitated by the other person/group disclosing sensitive or otherwise vulnerable material. Establishment at Organization:Facilitated by one's expertise in field and the establishment of relationships.
The Education of Others: Willingness and Ability to Serve as Change Agent for Heterosexuals' Sensitivity to Issues Related to Lesbianism	After the pre-screen, and after one has come out individually	A recognition of the significance and responsibility of one for educating others for not just one's own career survival or success, but for lesbians in a collective sense.

How Lesbians Have Learned

The learning that the women experienced took place in their interactions during the course of their workdays and not through formal programs of learning because such programs do not exist. Table 2 illustrates the three key types of events through which the women learned about successfully negotiating their organizational settings and the corresponding mode of learning.

Table 2

How lesbians have learned to negotiate the corporate setting

Type of Event	Description	Major Type of Learning
Dealing with Human Resource Departments	One's lesbianism comes up during the discussion or negotiation of moves,	Informal

	transfers, or reporting relationships.	
During Committee and Group Work	By affiliation with special groups, Boards, and such, the subject of one's lesbianism becomes germane.	Incidental
At Social/Corporate Events	Holiday parties, happy hours, etc. often include spouse. Women many times take their lovers. During casual conversation, mention lovers. No hiding of orientation.	Incidental

Conclusions

The three conclusions of this study were that: 1) It is difficult for lesbians to negotiate the heterosexism of the corporate environment; 2) Lesbians in corporate America have learned how to negotiate strategically the heterosexism of the corporate environment through informal and incidental learning; and 3) Lesbians who are succeeding in corporate America take responsibility for educating their associates about issues related to lesbianism.

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Building a Queer Cultural Change Network in Alberta through Community and University Initiatives

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Abstract: *In this essay we discuss our work with LGBTQ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer) persons and straight allies in education and culture to highlight sex-and-gender differences through political and pedagogical work for inclusion and social justice.*

Introduction

We begin this essay with a focus on *Agape*, which is a teacher-educator group in the Faculty of Education, University of Alberta that considers issues in relation to sex-and-gender differences in education and culture. We discuss how this educational initiative is integral to our inclusive public pedagogical project to make Queerness—being, believing, desiring, becoming, belonging, and acting LGBTQ—visible and known in education and the community. Next we focus on *Youth Understanding Youth (YUY)*, which is a self-supporting social/support group for LGBTQ, questioning, and allied youth (aged twenty-five and under) in the greater Edmonton area. We discuss how this community initiative is also integral to our inclusive public pedagogical project since it provides a way to make Queerness visible and known in our heterosexualizing culture. We conclude our essay with a perspective that speaks to the importance of this public pedagogical and cultural work in Canadian culture and society. We assert that such work is still vital because significant LGBTQ-positive changes in Canadian laws and legislation have yet to translate fully into sociocultural changes that reflect the complete accommodation of LGBTQ persons and citizens.

Agape: An Educational Initiative to Recognize, Respect, and Honor LGBTQ Persons in Education

So what can teacher-educators do in everyday teaching and in other educational endeavors to increase LGBTQ visibility and understanding? This question is difficult to answer because it is linked to struggles for increased LGBTQ human and civil rights that are social, moral, and political in nature. In the sociocultural fray of Canadian education, Charter-guaranteed individual rights and constitutional rights such as freedom of religion are *all* core rights defying hierarchical categorization in Canadian democracy. Judges who arbitrate conflicts around these rights find themselves engaged in a complex decision-making process. Acknowledging the difficulties of work focused on LGBTQ human and civil rights, let us overview one way in which we engage in such work in pre-service teacher education and in-service teacher development.

Agape is located in the Faculty of Education, University of Alberta, which is home to over 3000 undergraduate and graduate students from all regions of Canada plus an array of other countries. This focus group exists to provide a forum for students,

faculty, staff, and community members to take up issues of sex-and-gender differences in relation to access and accommodation in educational and other sociocultural contexts. André describes Agape's purposes and functions:

> **André:** During the 2000-01 academic year, I initiated (with the support of the Faculty of Education at the University of Alberta) a new focus group called Agape, which considers issues in relation to sex-and-gender differences and schooling. Agape, as Martin Luther King, Jr. understood it, stands for "disinterested love. ... Agape does not begin by discriminating between worthy and unworthy people, or any qualities people possess. It begins by loving others for their sakes. ... It springs from the need of the other person" (cited in Tierney, 1993, p. 23). From this inclusive perspective, our group is designed to focus on the personal and professional needs that LGBTQ undergraduate and graduate students, faculty, and staff have. Straight allies are also welcome. In addition, we have advertised our presence in the greater Edmonton area, inviting teachers working in K-12 schools and other interested community members to participate with us.
>
> Agape members have worked to build an on-campus LGBTQ resource base that is useful to pre-service and practicing teachers and community members. In our biweekly meetings we
>
> - *share and discuss narratives of schooling;*
> - *use forms of LGBTQ popular culture including LGBTQ-themed music, films, and magazines as resources to help us build teaching practices that counter heterosexism and homophobia;*
> - *take up issues in relation to job searches and schools as workplaces;*
> - *engage in role plays and other forms of drama as pedagogy to explore LGBTQ issues and concerns in relation to schooling;*
> - *examine policies and practices in schools, districts, and provincial teachers' associations/federations across Canada;*
> - *examine materials from various Safe and Caring Schools Initiatives/Coalitions in Canada and the United States;*
> - *deliberate with invited presenters including LGBTQ researchers and activists as well as community groups like PFLAG (Parents, Families, and Friends of Lesbians and Gays); and*
> - *provide a space to network and socialize in a safe, supportive setting.*
>
> As well, each November *Agape* members host a one-day conference using the theme *Sex-and-Gender Differences in Education and Culture.* The conference provides an opportunity for educational interest groups from local, provincial, and national jurisdictions to come together to dialogue and share resources. It also provides an opportunity for them to assess changes, progress, and possibilities regarding inclusivity for LGBTQ students and teachers in Canadian education.
>
> Let me overview a typical academic year's activities. We began 2001-02 by reviewing a variety of resources on antigay violence in schools as a way to focus concerns on the safety and security of LGBTQ youth. On October 11th we celebrated National Coming Out Day in Canada with events that included hosting an LGBTQ Curriculum/Resource Fair in the main-floor cafeteria of our Education North Building. Over the course of several meetings, we viewed and discussed

new LGBTQ educational videos, several produced by the National Film Board of Canada, that explore such issues as LGBTQ teen suicide, LGBTQ parents/straight schools, and homophobic language[6]. At the request of graduate students engaged in research with LGBTQ youth less than eighteen years of age, we organized a session with invited educational researchers to discuss the issue of the ethical implications of research involving LGBTQ youth[7]. Early in the New Year, we provided input into the development of our teachers' association's *Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity Website*. Next, using the document *A Resource for an Inclusive Community: A Teacher's Guide for and about Persons with Same Sex Attractions* (ACSTA, 2001), Agape members investigated Roman Catholic initiatives to address the needs of LGBTQ youth in educational settings in Calgary. We also explored school/LGBTQ community relations, inviting a member from the Gay and Lesbian Community Center of Edmonton to speak with us about community-based forms of LGBTQ education that, among other things, challenge the lack of LGBTQ content in formalized schooling.

Agape has been growing slowly but surely since its inception over two years ago. While an increasing number of faculty, staff, graduate students, and teachers from the community attend our meetings regularly, sadly it is rare for an undergraduate education student to attend. Sometimes an undergrad will email me or drop by my office for an impromptu chat. When I ask them about attending Agape, they raise concerns about being seen entering or leaving the meeting room. I have changed venues to a more obscure location, but still undergrads stay

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[6] Two new educational videos produced by the Canadian National Film Board (NFB) have been well received by Agape members and students in workshops. The NFB (2001) provides this description of the video *In Other Words* (27 min.), which is suggested for students in grade 7 and up. "Homophobic language is a common verbal put-down among young people, but many adults feel uncomfortable responding to it. *In Other Words* is a tool for teachers, counsellors and youth groups who want to explore homophobic language heard in schools and other youth hangouts" (p. 32). Of *Sticks and Stones* (17 min.) the NFB (2001) says, "With today's diversity of families, more kids are being raised by same-sex parents—something which can cause problems for children. *Sticks and Stones* features children aged 8 to 12 talking about their experiences with name-calling and bullying in the schoolyard, along with short animated sequences about the history of derogatory slang" (p. 59).

[7] As invited researchers spoke with Agape members about ethical implications of research involving LGBTQ youth, topics deliberated included protecting LGBTQ youth from harm, and anonymity and confidentiality issues when working with LGBTQ youth. There was considerable discussion of the issue of obtaining informed parental consent when involving LGBTQ youth less than 18 years of age in research initiatives. Our university's ethics policy requires informed parental consent when any young person less than eighteen years of age is involved as a research participant. Questions Agape members raised included: When an LGBTQ youth less than 18 years of age is living in a safe house because parents/guardians had kicked him or her out of the house for disclosing his or her Queerness, what adult signs for such a youth who might wish to participate in a research project? When an LGBTQ youth less than 18 years of age is closeted at home, is such a young person best excluded from a research initiative since to attempt to meet the ethical requirement of informed parental consent can place that youth at risk in the home place? Everyone struggled to find answers to these questions, and discussed the possibility of change. One researcher provided a precedent for change whereby the Faculty approved changes in ethical protocol so graduate students could attend to specific cultural requirements when conducting research in Aboriginal communities. However, the questions raised by Agape members indicate a need to rethink ethical requirements when it comes to research that could put LGBTQ youth at risk.

away. They tell me they worry about being *outed* or, if straight, being labeled LGBTQ, and how such profiling would affect getting a job and being safe and secure.

***Youth Understanding Youth:* A Cultural Initiative to Recognize, Respect, and Honor LGBTQ Persons**

So what can teacher-educators and other citizens do in the community to increase LGBTQ visibility and advance the LGBTQ struggle to obtain the rights and privileges of full citizenship? It is important to take up this question, especially because changes in Canadian law and legislation enhancing LGBTQ human and civil rights have been slow to translate into broader cultural changes. What is written down in judgments and statutes is still not lived out to the extent that LGBTQ persons can engage fully in life, learning, and work. Here we describe a community initiative in which Kris works as a facilitator with other LGBTQ persons and straight allies to help counteract the lived reality of exclusion and violence that remains all too pervasive in so many LGBTQ lives.

Youth Understanding Youth (YUY) is Edmonton's community-based social/support group for LGBTQ and questioning youth as well as straight allies under the age of twenty-five. YUY's mandate is to develop a self-supporting volunteer group that strives to create a safe environment in which youth can explore and express their needs in an atmosphere where they can expect to be supported and respected for their contributions and unique individual differences (YUY, 2003). The youth group serves as an example of a non-formal learning community that seeks to empower LGBTQ youth by accounting for the educational absences and constructed silences that surround their sex-and-gender differences in many formal educational environments.

YUY operates by developing a curriculum based on the lived and learned experiences of its membership. Every two months youth group members hold a planning meeting to discuss and coordinate activities and events for the upcoming weeks. This educational project is designed around five focus areas that follow one another sequentially from week to week. *Discussion Nights* provide members with opportunities to explore contemporary issues that impact their daily lives and experiences. For example, discussions have focused on safer sex practices and drug and alcohol use/abuse. There have also been LGBTQ history nights where members share readings and discuss pivotal events like Stonewall and the hidden Holocaust. *Activity Nights* enable youth group members to participate in safe events that occur in a supervised and non-threatening environment. These activities often include events like beach volleyball, bowling, and picnics. *Sharing our Stories* night creates a space for youth group members to take center stage and share their stories about coming out and coming to terms as LGBTQ youth in Alberta. For many youth this is the first time that they have had the opportunity to share their personal narratives in spaces where they can receive unconditional support and encouragement. *Movie Night* focuses on viewing and discussing contemporary LGBTQ themed movies such as *Headwig and the Angry Inch* or the recent documentary *Prom Fight,* which highlighted the story of Canadian teen Marc Hall and his fight to take his boyfriend to his high school prom. Movie night provides an important social and cultural space where youth group members have the opportunity to view and discuss films that they cannot safely watch at home or school. *Fringe Night* is considered a special night at the youth group where members are invited to share their

special talents with the group. In the past YUY members have read poetry, and shared artwork, music, and dance that they have created. Each of these five rotating focus areas serves as an important component in building an LGBTQ public pedagogy for social justice. This pedagogy strives to disturb the dominant heteronormative educational and cultural discourse that serves to keep LGBTQ persons and issues in the social, political, and educational closet (Grace & Wells, 2001).

In his current research Kris has conducted a study of LGBTQ youth involvement in informal education under the auspices of YUY. He shares some of their stories:

Kris: Jamie, a twenty-one-year old lesbian, told me how her involvement with YUY helped her to develop a renewed sense of hope and possibility for the future:

> ***Jamie:*** *Words can't even describe it! I came in [to YUY] not being in a good place. I came out of nowhere really. I suppose that a lot of the people that come to the group come out of nowhere. That's how it is. [One day] you are in hiding, and then you're not. All of the sudden there was this possibility. Being gay wasn't just a word; it was a possibility. There were friends, and dances, and debates to be had, and books to be read. It changed everything. It was the difference between I can't get out of bed in the morning, to I'm so excited I can't go to sleep. A huge difference!*

Kris: Jordana, a nineteen-year-old lesbian of color, who was cast out of her home when she came out, reflects on the importance of YUY in helping her to rebuild her life:

> ***Jordana:*** *YUY is awesome because I have made a lot of good friends. I always look forward to coming to the group. It's something really good to do. Just knowing that there are other kids who are walking the same path as you gives you so much self-esteem and support to want to be strong. When you know that you are not the only one, some how it makes you stronger.*
>
> *The facilitators at YUY have retreats for us and sometimes they share their life stories. It's good to see positive role models because, as a lesbian or gay youth, our role models usually end up being on TV or on shows like* Queer as Folk *or in pornographic movies. I think it is awesome to have good role models here. [The facilitators] all have good jobs, which is not what I've been told by other people who say that if you are gay you will not have a good life and you'll be alone, but these people aren't. All of them have houses and they have their lives together. It's awesome to see older adults. We don't meet these people in gay bars. The gay bars are not usually the places in which [youth] learn life lessons. I really like it here.*

Kris: Kevin, a 17-year-old male, describes how YUY has served as an important social and cultural space in his community:

> *I was surprised and relieved that there were other gay people like me out there. I knew there were others, but to actually see them is a lot different than to just know. I went regularly for quite a while, and I built a friendship group that worked well for me. I finally had a place to hang out with people that were like myself. They were people that I could relate to, people I could have fun with. [YUY is a place] where you don't have to worry about looking at someone the wrong way, or saying the wrong thing. You could just let it all hang out. You could just be yourself.*

As these narratives reflect, youth's learning is not limited to formal educational settings. Important learning also occurs in the safety and security of LGBTQ community groups. When formal educational environments fail to meet the needs of LGBTQ youth, some of them "are fortunate enough to find the strength and fortitude to continue educating themselves and each other in spaces they craft and tenaciously hold onto, often against great odds" (Weis & Fine, 2001, p. 498). Learning communities such as YUY "serve to sculpt real and imaginary corners for peace, solace, communion, social critique, personal and collective work. These are spaces of deep, sustained community-based educative work" (Weis & Fine, 2001, p. 498). In these educative spaces LGBTQ youth confront, deconstruct, resist, and redefine identity-limiting stereotypes and discourses that often provide "harsh humiliating public representations of their race, ethnicity, gender, class, and sexuality" (Weis & Fine, 2001, p. 498). It is in these informal learning communities that LGBTQ youth can begin to counter social, cultural, and educational barriers in an effort to re-imagine new possibilities for personal and social change.

Concluding Perspective

Unless teacher-educators become cultural workers who intervene to build what Tierney (1993) calls communities of difference, notions like cultural democracy will remain confined to the critical discourse of the academic page. As gay men and as educators of educators, we feel compelled to act. Each of us takes it as our duty and obligation to be a presence, a voice, a writer, an actor, an advocate, a deliberator, and an agent in the political and pedagogical task of building inclusionary and transformative educational environments. Our educational and cultural work comprises an act of opposition. As a process it is friction-ridden, aiming to contest stereotyping of nonconformist being/acting as it troubles engrained perceptions of the normal and acceptable (hooks, 1994). Simultaneously, it is an act of bracing LGBTQ differences and positionalities, and a process of accommodating and honoring them. Engaging in this work is living out an ethics of care and engaging a public pedagogy of respect. It is taking inclusive laws and legislation into everyday life, learning, and work in Canada.

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So You Know About the Queers: What Campus Environment Studies Say About Queer Knowledge Production

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Abstract: *Campus climate assessments yield larger insight into understanding issues facing GLBT college students. This study uses collectively analysis and interpretation of original assessment tools to extend our knowledge of issues facing sexual minorities in higher education.*

Introduction

For many gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgendered (GLBT) individuals, college is the time when they first begin to accept and embrace their sexuality. The process of coming to terms with and becoming open with a one's own sexual identity as non-heterosexual is referred to as, "coming out." While the coming out process is difficult in itself, this time can be more dramatic when students feel that being perceived as homosexual puts them at risk for physical or psychological abuse. While college is marked by homosexual students' acceptance of themselves, the college campus has not traditionally been a welcoming environment for such discovery. (D'Augelli & Rose, 1990; Evans, 2002; Rhoads, 1995) In light of information that students many times begin coming out or discovering and sharing their sexuality during the college years, (Evans & D'Augelli, 1996) institutions of higher education have recently begun to focus on campus issues for GLBT students. Research on the campus climate for these students is a recent development, as is, literature on how best to work with such students (D'Emilio, 1990; Evans & Wall, 1991; Wall & Evans 2000; Schreier, 1995; Walters & Hayes, 1998). These studies look at issues related to housing, programming, teaching, and the establishment of GLBT resource centers.

Assessments of campus climate for GLBT persons are gaining popularity throughout the country. According to the National Consortium of Directors of LGBT Resources in Higher Education, 54 such assessments had been conducted as of October 2002. **[Editors Note: On May 1, 2003—after receipt of this paper—a major study, *Campus Climate for Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgender People: A National Perspective,* was published by the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force (http://www.ngltf.org/). Authored by Sue Rankin at Penn State University, it can be found at http://www.ngltf.org/library/index.cfm and http://www.ngltf.org/downloads/CampusClimateComments.pdf).**

Background

Many of the assessments use concepts from queer identity development, the coming out process, discrimination in order to inform their studies. The following is a background on the literature that informs many campus climate assessments.

The term "queer" is often considered a negative term in our current society. It is often used to refer to gays and lesbians. However, this is not the only way to understand the term. Grace, Hill, Johnson, & Lewis (2003) discuss the difficulty in defining queer. They actually assert that it cannot be defined as a single category of sexual orientation

but is a more inclusive term including all, of what they refer to as, sexual outlaws. They go on to say that queer can never be defined in full and is, in fact, a shifting way of knowing the world and being in it.

Queer identity development is the process of recognizing and accepting one's sexual orientation as non-heterosexual. While a variety of theories exist around the topic, most include the common components of experiences, senses, and sensibilities (Dilley, 2002). This to say that these theories focus on what happened to an individual, how they understood what happened, and the meaning they associated with that experience. While a significant amount of literature exists on the topic of sexual identity development and even some literature on queer identity development, until very recently (2002) there has been little effort to examine how college specifically impacts this development.. Dilley (2002) attempts to begin this discussion of college and queer identity development by investigating the impact of the college experience on the queer identity development of gay men. He summarizes his work this way,

College environments most certainly impacted both the process and the product of these men: postsecondary institutions created environments (both positive and negative), provided structures for socialization and organization, gathered together like-minded peers, and offered the idea of not only the prerogative to determine through the college experiences whom one was but also, in time, the right to do so openly and publicly (p. 215).

The discovery of one's sexual orientation is at the root of what is referred to as "coming out." This term is short for a larger discussion of an individuals "coming out of the closet" meaning to become open about his or her sexual orientation, thus no longer hiding in the metaphorical closet. Rhoads (1997) noted that the process of coming out and the degree of visibility related to it varies among individuals. As earlier noted, many GLBT students "begin coming out during the college years" (Evans & D'Augelli, 1996). The notion that GLBT students begin questioning and coming to terms with their sexual orientations during this time creates particular challenges for higher education administrators. These challenges are compounded because GLBT students "often find campus environments to be unwelcoming and even hostile" (Evans, 2002, p. 522).

The fear of negative reaction to a student being homosexual is founded in a history of discrimination against GLBT persons. Schreier (1995), noting the writings of R.L. Quackenbush, had this to say, "when heterosexist beliefs are challenged by the presence of individuals who are gay, lesbian, or bisexual a reactive attitude is formed as an attempt to maintain the belief" (p. 20). This assumption is further supported by D'Augelli (as cited in Renn, 2000) who believed that students are at higher risk of experiencing anti-gay attitudes and behaviors the more 'out' they are. However, he also believes that being out or open with one's sexuality is a way of gaining support from students, faculty and staff (Renn, 2000). In this way, being out is a double-edged sword; it opens an individual up for discrimination while offering the freedom to express one's true feelings. It is arguable, however, that once one is out the negative reactions to that sexual orientation can be less damaging due to an increased sense of self.

Discrimination against GLBT persons is prevalent throughout most college campuses (Hill, 1995; Rhoads, 1997; Eichstedt, 1996). This type of discrimination is a direct effect of certain factors, such as, race, ethnicity, social class, and sexual orientation being blocked from the dominant masculine culture (Gerschick & Miller, 1994).

Dominant or hegemonic ideals do not allow for participation in the power culture by those who are different than those already in that culture. Marmor (as cited in Herek, 1984) " identified [stereotypes and ignorance] as the most important sources of hostility toward homosexual persons" (p. 8). These two components create false fears and negative ideas regarding GLBT individuals. Herek (1984) noted that discrimination against GLBT persons is perpetuated by social structure. Specifically, the current policies found in business and government do not allow for equal participation by those who are GLBT. Cornel West had this to say on the topic of discrimination against GLBT persons, "it seems to me that to talk about the history of heterosexism and the history of homophobia is to talk about ways in which various institutions and persons have promoted unjustified suffering and unmerited pain" (as cited in Brandt, 1999, p. 290).

Assessment Results and Queer Knowledge Production

Knowing that a number of institutions throughout the country have conducted assessments of the campus climate for GLBT students, a question arises. What knowledge of GLBT issues can be gained by collectively reviewing these assessments? In order to understand the types of information can be gleaned from combining the results of these studies, a preliminary analysis has been conducted using three campus climate assessments from various institutions. The institutional assessments are from the following: North Carolina State University (2003), The University of Georgia (2002), University of California at Santa Cruz (1990).

The analysis resulted in several themes discussed in each assessment. These themes were derived from the findings of the individual assessments. In general, GLBT students do not seem satisfied with the amount of support they find on their campus. Possibly linked to that feeling of being unsupported was the finding that safety is of great concern to GLBT college students. Students reported feeling unsafe in a variety of campus settings, from residence halls to classrooms, to social gatherings. One of the most significant findings of these individual studies was that all found verbal harassment to be experienced at a high level. GLBT students at each institution reported being spoken to in a negative manner regarding their sexual orientation or overhearing negative comments about the general GLBT population. Another significant finding of all assessments used in the analysis was that GLBT students experience much prejudice on campus. Another theme, which emerged from the collective analysis, dealt with the GLBT students dissatisfaction with faculty responses to GLBT issues. Students noted that they were disappointed that faculty did not address GLBT issues in their teaching nor did they discourage negative comments regarding GLBT persons during class.

Other similarities between these assessments, which inform the greater body of knowledge surrounding GLBT issues in colleges and universities were found in the recommendations of each study. On such recommendation was that the university community needs to be more aware of GLBT issues. The majority of recommendations are related to increasing that awareness. University communities should increase the amount of educational programming that addresses GLBT issues. These programs need to address the educational needs of both the heterosexual and non-heterosexual community. In terms of heterosexual education, programming should focus on understanding GLBT issues and culture and emphasize the value of GLBT persons. For

the GLBT population, educational programming should be used as an opportunity to show support for the community through the use of role models.

University communities also need to review current policies in order to determine whether or not these policies support the positive experience and value of GLBT persons. Specifically, policies regarding discrimination should be revised to be more nurturing of these individuals. Other policies to consider include those addressing domestic partner benefits and hate crimes. Policies that exclude GLBT persons should be updated to be more inclusive, while policies that already include GLBT persons should be reviewed to make sure that these individuals are included equally.

Conclusion

Analyzing the results of various campus climate assessments can give a larger insight into the understanding of the issues facing GLBT college students throughout the country. Even more information may be gained from combining the original data in order to collectively analyze findings. From this preliminary attempt at gaining knowledge through collective interpretation the findings are simple. The students say it best. They stated that, "people are just uneducated" and called for "more public education programs to promote acceptance and awareness about sexual orientation."

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Changing from the Inside Out; Transformative Learning and the Development of GLBT Sexual Identities among Adults

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Abstract: *This paper explores how two frameworks, transformative learning and a model of sexual orientation and identity journeys, may be integrated to understand the experiences of gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgendered (GLBT) adults who come out in their adult years (25+). Building on research that examines the interrelationships between women's sexual identity and transformative learning this paper explores both models and proposes a synthesis for further discussion.*

Introduction

With heterosexuality as the dominant model of sexual orientation and identity, GLBT individuals face many potential opportunities to engage in transformative learning's critical examination and deconstruction of beliefs, values, and assumptions and explore new ways of understanding themselves and their worlds (Brooks & Edwards, 1997, 1999; Edwards & Brooks, 1999; Hill, 1995, 1996). How do GLBT individuals understand their lack of acceptance in this society? How do they see themselves when they are invisible in societal constructions in many settings? As adults how do they deliberate between an undisclosed and publicly stated GLBT sexual identity? All these questions and more lead to consideration of how GLBT adults experience the change and development in their understanding as they either form or overtly state their sexual identities. Wishik and Pierce (1991) proposed a model that traces and examines the "dominant" and "subordinate" pathways of mainstream and GLBT sexual orientations and identities. Although there has been much written on sexual identity development in general in the past, a synthesis of these models offers GLBT adults a structure to reflect on their experiences using adult learning and heuristic method.

While it is recognized that our heteronormative society ascribes sexual identity to individuals based on gender, this discussion validates the experiences of GLBT adults who work through understanding and creating their sexual identity within this context and despite its expectations (British Council, 2003). Additionally, sexual identity is recognized as having a fluid nature that results in some adults moving from one identity to another, or more, over time (Wishik & Pierce, 1991).

Theoretical Background

The theory of transformative learning originally focused on the cognitive process adults experience as they examine values, beliefs, and assumptions that they may not have before and the possible significant shift in adults' understanding of their meaning perspective (Mezirow, 1978, 1990), otherwise known as their frame of reference (Cranton, 1994; Mezirow, 2000). Such learning usually has its roots in what the field has called a "disorienting dilemma" and traverses a dynamic pathway of stages. These stages

include personal questioning, deliberation, re-examination, new perspectives, provisional adoption, and final reintegration of a new frame of reference for understanding their world. As Mezirow's original formulation has been challenged over the years, the greater adult learning field has recognized the need for transformative learning theory to account for affective changes, nonlinear development, spiritual dimensions, social action, and multiple interpretations.

The GLBT community readily recognized that this framework of transformative learning has parallels in the experience of same-sex identity development. Within the adult learning and development field Brookes and Edwards (1997) and then Donnelly (2001) especially examined the transformative learning experience of lesbian women coming out. Their research has revealed that transformative learning lacks important dimensions to fully explain this complex coming out process in the adult years. Bishop and Edwards focused on intersubjective meaning making and how the transformative learning process for GLBT women occurs within a society of oppression. Donnelly demonstrated a process of development of new moral, religious, and spiritual identities as examples of perspective transformation among lesbian women. Her work resulted in several models that trace the specific experiences of lesbian women in these instances based on their particular, yet sometimes similar, contexts and personalities.
However the field still lacks a working model or frame for dialogue and growing understanding of these adult learning experiences. Indeed the emphasis of understanding personal and societal values, beliefs, and assumptions from the experience of the adult are fundamental to these results. In order to better understand GLBT sexual identity in the midst of a dominantly heterosexual society, we can explore a heuristic method to develop a means for GLBT adults to examine their life experiences.

Although other classic models of sexual identity development among GLBT adults have been recognized in the past (Cass, 1984; Troiden, 1989), the Wishik and Pierce (1991) model, Sexual Orientation and Identity: Heterosexual, Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Journeys, traces and examines the "dominant" and "subordinate" pathways of mainstream and alternative sexual orientations and identities. This model has 2 major streams along which adults may originally identify, (1) the dominant heterosexuality - heterosexual and (2) the subordinate – lesbian and gay. Additionally there is a middle stream of bisexual identity development that can emerge from each of the other two. Along these paths of thought and experience, rising and falling waves of questions and experience progress. Through these questions individuals examine standardizations and dominant (heterosexual) perspectives, decide to learn about the subordinate culture, and perhaps move to the formation, and/or revision and integration of their personal sexual identity and an understanding and acceptance of other orientations. In the terminology of Cass (1989) and others (Taylor, 1999) these questions press at the need for congruence in social and personal identities. These pathways are traced through personal questioning, learning of diverse cultures and perspectives, critical questioning, and new experiences, definitions, personal concepts, and personal and organizational relationships to embrace diversity in sexuality.

Bridging transformative learning and the Sexual Orientation and Identity Journey offers a basis for adults to reflect on their experiences using adult learning and a heuristic perspective. Such a perspective emphasizes that as critical questioning, understanding, and construction continue these inward changes result in decision for action. Therefore, adults experience

"Changing from the Inside Out." Through critical reflection, learning, and action adults can move through complex, varied, and multidimensional stages of understanding in discovering or creating their sexual identities.

This approach is not intended to "name" or categorize adults' sexual identity in predetermined definitions and requisites. The ultimate goal is to be able to value and embrace multiple interpretations of sexual identity across individuals. In addition, it is recognized and appreciated that bisexual and transgendered (BT) adults may have more complex journeys to work through in their experience and in their relationships. Bisexual and transgendered adults also face the challenges and oppression of dealing with a heteronormative society, but they may face resistance or rejection from some members of the gay and lesbian community as well. In order to be inclusive and recognize the similarities of experiences, all GLBT adults are addressed with the conceptualization of this model, but at the same time BT adults may find the model too simplistic for their experiences. Further dialogue in this area is welcomed as it can be explored whether the bisexual and/or transgendered experiences might find consistency in an adaptation of this model or another construction entirely.

The Proposed GLBT Transformative Learning Model (GLBT TL Model)

A synthesis of these models takes Mezirow's 10 stages and blends them with an extracted outline of Wishik and Pierce's to create a process and a web of interaction through both shifting and framing perspectives or themes. (See Table 1.) The foundation for the proposed process provides insight into the critical questioning, learning about self and others, and the process of deliberation that may be missing from other conceptualizations prevalent in counseling and psychology.

Table 1: Proposed GLBT TL Process Integrated With Other Models

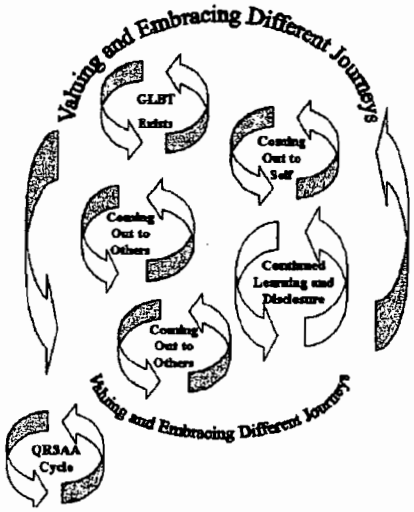
GLBT TL Process (King)	Wishik & Pierce (1991)	Mezirow (1991, pp. 168-169)
	Opposition	
QUESTION	Encounter new views	1. A disorienting dilemma
	Question	2. Self-examination with feelings of guilt or shame
RISK		3. A critical assessment of epistemic, socio-cultural or psychic assumptions
		4. Recognition that one's discontent and the process of transformation are shared and that others have negotiated a similar change
	Deliberate	
STRATEGY	Learn content	5. Exploration of options for new roles, relationships, and actions

		6. Planning of a course of action
		7. 7a. Acquisition of knowledge and skills for implementing one's plans
	Deliberate	
	Learn in action	7. 7b. Acquisition of knowledge and skills for implementing one's plans
ACT		8. Provisional trying of new roles
		9. Building of competence and self-confidence in new roles and relationships; and
ACCEPT NEW PERSPECTIVE	New perspective	10. A reintegration into one's life on the basis of conditions dictated by one's new perspective.

Furthermore, these process stages (Question, Risk, Strategy, Act, and Accept New Perspective (QRSAA)) are repeated as adults experience four potential "framing perspectives:" GLBT Exists, Coming Out to Yourself, Coming Out to Others, and Valuing and Embracing Different Journeys. (See Figure 1.) The framing perspectives identify major themes of understanding that GLBT individuals construct and may hold from one time or another as they cope with sexual identity development within a heteronormative society. The arrows pointing at the figure represent heteronormative expectations and messages that continually confront the GLBT adult. This explanation further recognizes that for some individuals a change could be a first order or major perspective transformation and for others it could be a second order change, which is less fundamental to the core of the individual's identity. GLBT adults also may continue a QRSAA process as they learn about and critically examine concepts and situations throughout their lives without necessarily resulting in these specific major perspective transformations. Indeed, sometimes individuals may experience the process, but reject, temporarily or otherwise, a GLBT sexual identity.

For some people there are external or internal catalytic events or moments (Donnelly, 2001) that culminate each sequence and commence a framing perspective. In other instances, people may just start to question the many personal and societal assumptions that surround them over time and that no one particular event catalyzes the experience.

Figure 1. The Proposed GLBT TL Model: Process and Framing Perspectives



These framing perspectives have a webbed relationship, which defy a linear, normative progression. And instead indicate a constant shifting back and forth through the QRSAA process and among the perspectives. This dynamic and structure emphasize the fact that GLBT individuals may never *finish* dealing with any of these issues. For instance, GLBT adults never cease coming out, but instead face it daily. However each "coming out" is dealt with through new understandings, contexts, and decisions. Also, all the experiences are contributing toward the development of a holistic and overarching perspective of Valuing and Embracing Different Journeys rather than describing a linear development of stages. This figure seeks to represent interdependent and synergistic relationships of the experiences.

The progression of critical reflection, deliberation, learning, and action is an iterative cycle that moves towards each framing perspective. However there is no "right time" or "wrong time" to traverse these stages. Instead all individuals have their own journeys that unfold in their understanding and experience. For some individuals the experience is swiftly moving, with no extended questioning and little risk. At the other extreme is a prolonged process that is wrought with intense risk and personal crisis with some adults never moving beyond an initial cycle of transformation. And even as one reaches the integrated perspective of valuing and embracing diversity, freedom to explore further understanding along the journey provides room for GLBT adults to never have to separate desire and sexuality (Lemert, 1996 in Brooks & Edwards, 1999), but instead to continually, reflectively, and authentically explore new understandings and constructions for themselves.

Just as the duration of the process has no scheduled timetable, neither does the experience itself. For some people sexual identity and coming out seem resolved in their young adult years, for others it emerges in midlife or later. Individuals have their own context, personality, and personal costs to navigate and in examining the process caution should be used against developing "normative" expectations and experiences (Brooks & Edwards, 1997; Hill, 1996). Additionally, the results can have broad variations in agreement with Queer Theory, which does not depict a unified homosexual identity (Brooks & Edwards, 1999; Hill, 1996). Certainly Queer Theory can be a basis for accepting the diversity of sexual identity experiences

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and interpretations inherent in these learning and developmental experiences. With this in mind, broad strokes of the images of each perspective are offered here to provide a structure for consideration. These perspectives can be used to guide adults in considering their own journey and in helping them to understand those of others. Please be mindful that these questions are not always politically or appropriately correct, but represent real, difficult, and many times conflicting perspectives.

GLBT Exists. In this perspective the adult becomes aware of the existence of GLBT individuals and goes through questioning their understanding, considering the risk of pursuing answers and making decisions, developing strategies for dealing with possible new perspectives and then acting and accepting the new "framing" perspective. Perhaps isolated or estranged from GLBT persons in the past, this experience elicits questions as to the community and their experiences. It may be through popular entertainment or literature where adults encounter GLBT individuals, or it may be through personal relationships. Adults in this perspective may have the following questions as they explore these sexual identities: Do I understand what GLBT means? How do adults define these varied identities? How can they be expressed? How are they responded to by society? Is there a community? Who, what, and where are these groups? How have my attitudes or actions impacted GLBT individuals? Indeed for some adults this perspective shift is a non-event as they have always known the GLBT community, but for others it could represent a moderate or major transformation.

Coming Out to Yourself. Within this experience GLBT adults are wrestling with their personal sexual identity and whether they are in fact GLBT. Self-doubt, fear, risk, exhilaration, excitement and potential can variously characterize this perspective. Questions that might emerge include: Could I be GLBT? Why? What caused it? Who is to blame? What did I do wrong? How can I learn more about what it means to be GLBT myself? What "kind" am I? Where and how do I fit in? Is it love and attraction to an individual person or a fundamental orientation? Do I have to change? What is the cost? How will I face the risk of no longer belonging to the mainstream among others, and even within myself? Do I have indications or actions of homophobia? How do I deal with my own homophobia? What does this tell me about how others may respond to me?

Coming Out to Others. The GLBT adult faces a lifelong question of when and where to come out to other people. In a society that increasingly treats coming out as a moment of revelation, public announcement, and climax, the reality of the GLBT experience is that adults have to continually engage in coming out throughout their daily lives as assumptions about their presumed heterosexuality are pressed on them from every direction. Questions that abound in this progression include, how do others see GLBT? Is it welcomed, accepted, tolerated, or hated? What is the cost to me personally if I come out in this specific context? Professionally? Among family and friends? Is it relevant to those around me that I am GLBT? Do I need to come out to be authentic? Is it important to me to be authentic with these people? What will happen if they accept or reject me? What do I need to do to come out? Who do I tell? How do I protect myself? How do I affirm others? What do I want to communicate? Do I facilitate others' coming out to me? What does this tell me about how others may respond to me? Multiple experiences of this cycle may be experienced as perspective transformation across the lifespan of some adults, hence more than one cycle is included in Figure 1.

Valuing and Embracing Different Journeys. As GLBT adults resolve their sexual identity and coming out to themselves and others they can continue the journey by looking at varying experiences. Rather than becoming iconoclastic in their own "GLBTness," they have an opportunity to develop a more integrated perspective of sexual identity. Questions that may be considered may include, is it OK for others to have different interpretations or experiences of GLBT? Do I need to embrace all GLBT variations and interpretations? Can I embrace all GLBT? How do I understand experiences different from my own? How do I relate to others? Where can I dialogue? What opportunities are there to participate? How can I accept, welcome and support other GLBT individuals in their interpretations of their sexual identities?

This preliminary GLBT TL Model provides a framework from which to look at the continuum of sexual identity development among individuals coming out in their adult years. Coping with more than individuation and young adulthood, GLBT adults have many more issues, dynamics, and risks to consider as they wrestle with their own understanding, acceptance, and decisions regarding coming out. Within a heteronormative society, marginalization is a major and continuing force in the sexual identity development of gay and lesbian adults, and even more pronounced for bisexual and transgendered adults. Again attention is drawn to how these external forces might be visualized as many arrows pointing at the entire process to depict the pressing, urgent forces with which GLBT adults continually need to be cope and navigate. The Model provides a basis for validating the individual's questions and contexts, to suggest new directions, and provide a basis for further dialogue about the many diverse experiences of this journey.

Implications – How to Use for Reflection

This model is offered in anticipation of further discussion and revision through the multiple lenses of diverse sexual identity development theory and experiences, transformative learning, and Wishik and Pierce's model. The immediate implications of the model are to contribute to our understanding, theory, and research regarding the progressive sexual identity development of adults coming out in a society that is dominated by heterosexuality. This can be accomplished through a heuristic model that examines our experiences, focuses on reflection, and develops meaning (Moustakas, 1990). To this end the model may be used as a basis for critical self-reflection from many perspectives. Suggested comprehensive guiding questions include: What can I learn from my journey? Where am I on this journey? Were the risks great or small for me? What helped me face the risks? What made it difficult? What strategies did I consider? Where did they come from, and how did I attain them? Was the question subtle or startling? Were GLBT individuals always visible to me? How did I understand the experience? How did I respond? What can I do to support others along their journey?

Personal, professional, and academic research regarding these experiences may use narratives and dialogue as natural vehicles to help GLBT adults reflect and process these experiences as they continue on their journeys (Brooks & Edwards, 1997; Donnelly, 2001). Feminist pedagogy has provided a tradition of examining and learning from personal experience in the light of power and oppression. Queer theory now extends critical theory and feminist pedagogy to question normative definitions of sexual identity (Brooks & Edwards, 1999). Building upon environments of respect and safety, adult educators and organizations can serve as catalysts to broadening discussions in our families, communities, and classrooms to include considering, valuing, and embracing varied understandings of sexual identities. Mining these experiences we can provide space and "permission" for adults to begin or continue to

integrate their desires and sexuality in their lives. Benefits are therefore possible not only for individuals, but also for our local organizations, community, and society.

As GLBT individuals and allies consider these questions together, new constructions of understanding and acceptance may be constructed. Each of us has the opportunity to come to new understandings and insights regarding ourselves, those like us, and those different from ourselves. Gaining a framework of learning and development and enveloping it with critical questioning, concern, and acceptance provides a basis for adults to construct their sexual identity in a place of safety and respect and to develop lifelong coping skills to meet the unending challenges that life will bring.

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In Solidarity: Using Community Health Education to build Queer Peace in Kosovo and Japan

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Abstract: *An international perspective is brought to issues of peace and community health education, creating linkages between peace foundations, such as mutual respect, understanding, conciliation, and solidarity movements. Community Education can acknowledge multiply-positioned Queer people, challenge heteronormative, sexist, racist or abled assumptions and strengthen Queer existence so that local Queer citizens can openly claim their citizenship and human rights.*

Introduction

As Peace Educators continue to apply peace-building methodologies with displaced persons and cultures around the globe, the necessity of including active peace principles and praxis within Queer [lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender] communities begins to emerge. Community Health Educators, using their 'accepted social status' are acting as 'make-shift' change agents for social re-construction when entering climates of extreme prejudice. Using the umbrella of HIV/AIDS education, for example, Community Health Educators are entering spaces where people are learning about and discussing social issues, such as approaching the homo/hetero divide, for the first time, and addressing the prejudices that bury within. This raises two questions for discussion in this paper: how does Community Health Education include peace-building principles into its curricula, and is this an effective path towards addressing Queer concerns in homophobic cultures? This paper will seek to synthesize related research and lived experiences into a comprehensive exploration of Community Health activities in the countries of Japan and Kosovo. Four distinct areas will be explored: a) peace principles within the foundation of Community Education, b) cultural and social background relating to citizenship and identity, c) a critical analysis of forces that entrap and disable Queer presence, d) illustrations of some community health initiatives within a peace-building frame, and e) lessons learned from field experiences.

The data for this paper emerges through two methods to ensure validity and reliability. First, the data stems from my personal lived experiences as a Community Health volunteer in Japan (2 years) and Kosovo (1 year) under the HIV/AIDS prevention context. Second, information extracted from qualitative interviews from local gay/bisexual males, acting as cultural liaisons, provides a narrative enquiry into their daily lives and struggles.

Background

Being Queer and maintaining a Queer life are two concepts that overlay this study. In post-war Kosovo and culturally traditional Japan, Queer being continues to struggle for existence. This struggle often overlaps into several different notable areas: human rights, cultural identity, social justice, and educational development. Adult Community Health Education, seen as the most socially acceptable form of education about Queer issues, continues to address Queer topics within their programming. Educators are aware that

these intersecting dimensions will emerge in grassroots programming, and aim to address when appropriate. In order to make HIV prevention impactual, it needs to focus on empowering all people in building their self-esteem and self-efficacy. For example, it is no surprise to find a Japanese or Kosovar gay man, in a heterosexual marriage with children, yet have secret male partners. Such activities are understandable in these homophobic cultures, however, it is the unsafe practices, relating to poor knowledge, skills and attitudes, which educators must address.

Peace Perspectives on Community Health Education

Peace education fits comfortably into Community Health Education as a method of delivery. It approaches the learning process from a holistic frame, which facilitates the interconnectedness of knowledge and praxis as it intersects with the differing curricula in Community Education. Fragmenting knowledge into isolated skill subsets only results in a holistic disconnectedness between each subject area (Bailey, 1991; Reardon, 1988). For example, learning how the cultural affects the scientific, and taking into consideration ethics, biodiversity and environmental conservation would constitute a holistic peace paradigm (Reardon, 1988).

Further, peacemaking is a dynamic process that pursues to actively promote Truth and social justice, and breaks down disabling stereotypes, power dynamics and differing violent mechanisms. It is 'education for complexity' – exploring qualities, diversity, and applying deeper and critical meaning to experiential learning (Reardon, 1988). The acceptance of Community Health Education's necessary programming by governments and its broad mandate of educating adults on necessary health, social and psychological needs can build essential peaceful qualities, such as mutual respect and understanding, that can benefit Queer citizens and their non-Queer counterparts, especially in socially disabling nations like Kosovo and Japan.

Kosovo and Japan: A cultural analysis

Kosovo, currently designated as a UN protectorate in the southern tip of Serbia & Montenegro, is a Muslim country that has undergone dramatic changes since the Kosovo conflict in 1999. It currently is striving to achieve legal country status, accept its multicultural identity and find some form of peace and reconciliation after suffering from damaging decade-long ethnic cleansing and superiority.

Japan, a world economic superpower, is historically no stranger to conflicts. However, Japan has significantly moved beyond its' turbulent past into a culture of peacefulness and calm temperament. However, like Kosovo, the culture remains dramatically conservative when it comes to people who are 'different' from the status quo.

It is noteworthy that both countries continue to re-define the role of women within their society, and in contrast to the Queer movement following the women's movement in the West, these countries are finding their Queer developments *alongside* the women's rights movement. This complicates their situations, as there are very few women leaders introducing Queer concerns into law, education or society in general.

Japanese and Kosovar cultures continue to actively oppress the lesbian and transgendered movement more so as these cultures view women as subordinate, and transgenderism as diseased. In the case of Kosovo, Kosovar transgendered people

'escape' to liberal Turkey for their new life, and Japanese Transgendered continue to stay underground. Lesbians entrench themselves into a circle of secrecy that remains closed to even their gay brothers. Bisexuality is a norm in both countries as opposed to identifying gay & lesbian people, however there is a clear difference between a bisexual lifestyle and a bisexual person. Very few self-identified bisexual male Kosovars would clearly continue their bisexuality if Kosovo were to be a gay-friendly region, and would opt for solely same-sex partners.

Queers who suffer from a double-marginalization (i.e.: Being gay and Serbian in Kosovo) relies on the gay/bisexual men to carry on the development of Queer people to continue the work, since there exists a patriarchy and ethno-centric hierarchal structure within these cultures. International support is vital towards supporting these gay/bisexual men, however it clearly compromises the already fragile indigenous development, as the Queer culture is still struggling to understand itself, let alone inform outsiders.

Entrapping Forces

A triangle of social isolation forms within societies that disable the Queer person from living 'out' his/her identity. Homo/hetero duality presents itself clearly within this frame, and the difference continues to maintain Otherism. These barriers manifest themselves through familial, educational and societal discourses.

To Japanese and Kosovars, the primary concern is family. Both countries have intense and intricate family connections that drive the life path of its citizens. There is intense pressure on the youth from elders to marry young, find a successful career and to have children. If this does not happen, then the family feels dishonoured and ashamed amongst their extended relatives, peers and colleagues. As my interviews reveal, this intense pressure is ongoing until the closeted Queer achieves heterosexual matrimony. Clearly, an anxious Queer finds it difficult to mitigate his/her difference, and risk social and familial rejection.

The second point of the triangle relates to the lack of educational and technological advancement. In the case of Kosovo, education and technology (under Serbian rule) has been stagnant and isolated for many years in comparison to the progress made elsewhere. Without the knowledge to link and learn from global happenings (i.e.: the surge of the AIDS crisis) then there is no contrasting literature (i.e.: HIV can be transmitted through unprotected anal sex) to the viewpoints being taught by misguided leaders (i.e.: There is no HIV in Kosovo). Further, while Japan leads the world in technological developments, its link to the West in areas of culture and society is slowly developing. Mainstream media are now profiling Queer people positively, which is beginning to dispel the hetero/homo divide and bridge understanding. However, AIDS is still viewed as a "white man's disease," and, as a response, some Japanese gay bars do not allow white Western men to visit. This calls for further clarification about AIDS in order to avoid a process where gay brothers are turning against each other. Without outside and differing knowledge infiltrating social development, debates and discussions cannot advance society, and difference remains unaccepted.

The third point on this triangular theory is the social climate. Both countries are not respectful and tolerant of being Queer. While Japan demonstrates low incidences of violence against Queers, Albanian Kosovars continues to possess terrorist-type activities towards all people, specifically targeting gay men and Serbians. Terrorist-like tactics

against gay/bisexual men remains high, as gay bashings and verbal assaults against suspected Queers continue alongside law enforcement agencies who position themselves as 'peacekeepers' but support anti-Queer violence. Formal education does not acknowledge Queer existence, and health services personnel propagate "homosexuality as diseased" in mainstream media (Haxhiaj, 2003).

Combined, these three points clearly disable the Queer from making any form of personal progress through seeking support, and perpetuates self-hate through unhealthy life practices. However, Community Health Education address each of these points through its programming. The key to Queer conciliation lies within not disturbing the triangle that surrounds, but building an inner life support of knowledge, life skills and a healthy attitude both on a personal and social basis until a time of collective action emerges.

Building Community Bridges

The methods of instruction and the curricula itself is most sensitive within Community Health Education when it comes to presenting Queer issues. It shapes itself within a multi-dimensional approach, such as a) Queer-as-normal discourse, b) identification and training of a potential Queer force, and c) improving the delivery of services by 'helper' organizations.

Addressing and representing Queer issues in a normative environment (Queerness spoken in solidarity with ethnic minorities, women and disabled people), rather than in an extra-ordinary context (i.e.: workshops about 'being gay' delivered to an uninformed and homophobic group) has shown most success. It circumvents the hazard of associating, for example, gay = AIDS, because all groups of people are spoken of, and the ultimate message that *everyone is at risk* remains the backdrop. While homophobic responses may still precipitate from the participants, it is through my experiences that some non-Queer learners may understand more concretely, through sense-making, that they do live in a society where there are people who have lives different from their own, and must deserves respect. Additionally, those that might be "Queer" receive the vital information about protecting themselves, and feel at par with other minorities and population groups that are struggling for acceptance. Further, Human Rights Education, an educational discourse introduced by Betty Reardon highlights, "society is not an abstraction divorced from notions of ethics and qualities, but is the forum for human moral development, applied to public and social as well as to the private and personal relationships and behavior. Human rights should form the very core of social education" (Reardon, 1995, p. 3). Community Health Education weaves this very Human Rights fabric into its educational blanket through its programming in difficult areas like Japan and Kosovo, removing heteronormativity and asserting equality and fair treatment for all.

Identifying Queer citizens to build a cycle of empowerment is not easy in Japan and Kosovo. It begins with the level of effort invested into building trusting relationships, especially in Kosovo, before anyone can begin discussing change. Participants from my interviews all described an intense climate of distrust of each other, using the potential disruption of the triangle of social isolation as a form of control. As a result, some Queers are afraid to come out to each other, see each other in public and live continually with the threat that one Queer person will "out" another in some way. Local Queers will reveal themselves openly to internationals, but will be very hesitant with their own local people.

Further, since the conflict in Kosovo, Queer people feel mixed towards the "new future" presented. Primarily, there is a sense of loss within the population over the once ethnically diverse nature of the Queer community in Kosovo. While Kosovars reveal that in their country ethnicity is the primary concern, for Queer Kosovars, the sexuality is primary, and ethnicity remains a less important issue. Currently, the UN segregates Serbians from Albanians, and momentarily other minorities (Roma, Montenegrins, etc.) stay away from the new Kosovo. This, in effect, disassembles the multi-ethnic Queer community that was built upon camaraderie and mutual support. There is little resentment towards Queer Serbians from Queer Albanians over alleged war crimes in the past, and reconciliation remains at the forefront.

Secondly, the insurgence of internationals have shifted Queer consciousness from a state of helplessness, to a new sense of hope dependent on the sharing of knowledge and resources between the two groups, technological development and a new country sensitive to democracy and human rights. Clearly, once the relationship between all these groups becomes strong, the multi-ethnic closet doors can begin to open once again.

Adult Community Health Educators, capturing on this phase, can now slowly begin to identify and train key local people of change, however the process remains extremely fragile since it is new ground. Creating a safe space, initializing socialization among Queers and discussing relevant issues remains the core component to empowering Queer citizens in Japan and Kosovo.

Improving health services (physicians, counsellors, social workers) for Queer citizens also remains vital. The homophobia Queer Kosovars experience by health services affects their choice of whether to get assistance or not. As similar in Japan, health services personnel do not practice confidentiality, and any revelation of 'difference' can be shared with family members, colleagues, neighbours etc., jeopardizing well-being and safety for the Queer person. This, in effect, causes the Queer to be silent with their true health concerns that possibly could "out" them. Therefore, Community Health Educators must focus on educating the health services personnel and acquire a 'safe list' of straight allies for Queer citizens.

In summary, the plethora of activities Community Health Educators must undergo to transition Japan and Kosovo remains extensive. As socially accepted interceptors carrying a mandate of a culture-health-education nexus under the peace-building umbrella, an array of programming and policy-making activities must take place in order to begin and sustain change.

Challenges

As Community Health Educators venture into uncharted territory of peace-building between homo/hetero dualities challenges often present themselves. These challenges continually guide programming, networking and strategic planning of the project implementation. Specifically, lessons learned from Japan and Kosovo link to trust building, fluctuating resources, cautious international support, and solidifying long-term sustainability.

Trust is essential when working with local Queer citizens in countries that do not accept Queerness. The Community Health Educator inherits some of these trust if s/he is Queer him/herself or has a demonstrated history of working actively to improve Queer lives. However, despite common Queerness or histories, the relationship must still

develop, and the educator must accept all styles of living, remain autonomous in areas of intra-cultural (gay men vs. gay men) conflict and remain steadfast in building relationships and intrapersonal skills within the local population.

Resources for the Community Education will continue to fluctuate as situations change rapidly. In Japan, Queer citizens were able to participate in activities through their own expense, as Japan is a self-sufficient nation. However, in Kosovo, financial support is key towards maintaining the change process. This creates a dependency on international organizations for support because Kosovars lack entrepreneurial opportunities and the proper cultural cohesion needed to publicize their concerns for support from government agencies.

The role of the international Community Health Educators must remain neutral and the local Queer population must have control over their involvement in order to safeguard some cultural signifiers. International support compromises indigenous development when it intervenes, therefore the local population must be able to direct the involvement. The international is not a member of the culture in which s/he is working within, and would not be able to understand the cultural needs that emerge. Decisions should come from the local population in order to ensure sustainability, and accuracy in the transfer of knowledge and skills, coupled with an effective behavioural change (i.e.: practicing safe activities). The ever-changing political and economic climate in nations such as these places great responsibility on risk management and mitigation strategies for all participating individuals and groups, however solidarity and cooperation between everyone can solidify a cultural union that has never been seen before.

Continually the international community struggles with sustainability once their work completes. The work I started in Japan did not continue past my departure due to the subliminal dependency that emerged from the Japanese Queer people I was working with. In Kosovo, there is a stronger focus on sustainability for the Community Health Education to continue past international involvement. Already, Gay and Lesbian Kosovars created an NGO, with internationals lending support where the local population feels it needs help with. Unfortunately, international funds still drive the NGO until some system of generating economic resources is in place. Kosovars are writing their own grant proposals, maintaining budgets and conducting a safe and careful public relations campaign to generate a healthy portrayal of Queer concerns in Kosovo. These efforts make the work sustainable, with Community Health Educators providing their educator skills when needed.

Conclusively, the challenges Community Health Education face can threaten the peace-building process. Trust and relationship building, resource allocation, indigenous development versus international development and a focus on capacity building works intersect each other, causing the educator to continually adapt his/her material and instruction accordingly.

Concluding Thoughts

As a peace educator and a community health educator, creating linkages between peace foundations, such as mutual respect, understanding, conciliation and solidarity movements remains at the forefront in programming initiatives. Further, as an openly gay Western male, building Queer existence in areas of extreme prejudice, in solidarity, is pivotal towards achieving a global form of Queer peace. It is these areas which are the

most resistant to change that we must focus on, as well as continue to actively support the inclusion of multiple-marginalized Queer citizens such as lesbians, transgendered persons, ethnic and/or disable Queers. Community Education can acknowledge these people, challenge heteronormative, sexism, racist or abled assumptions and strengthen Queer existence so that local Queer citizens could openly claim their citizenship and human rights, and begin healing. Since launching into this revised roadmap of social health, Community Health Educators have been creating spaces and discussions that aim at improving the dialogue between Queers and non-Queers, and start visualizing people who remain invisible, in solidarity.

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