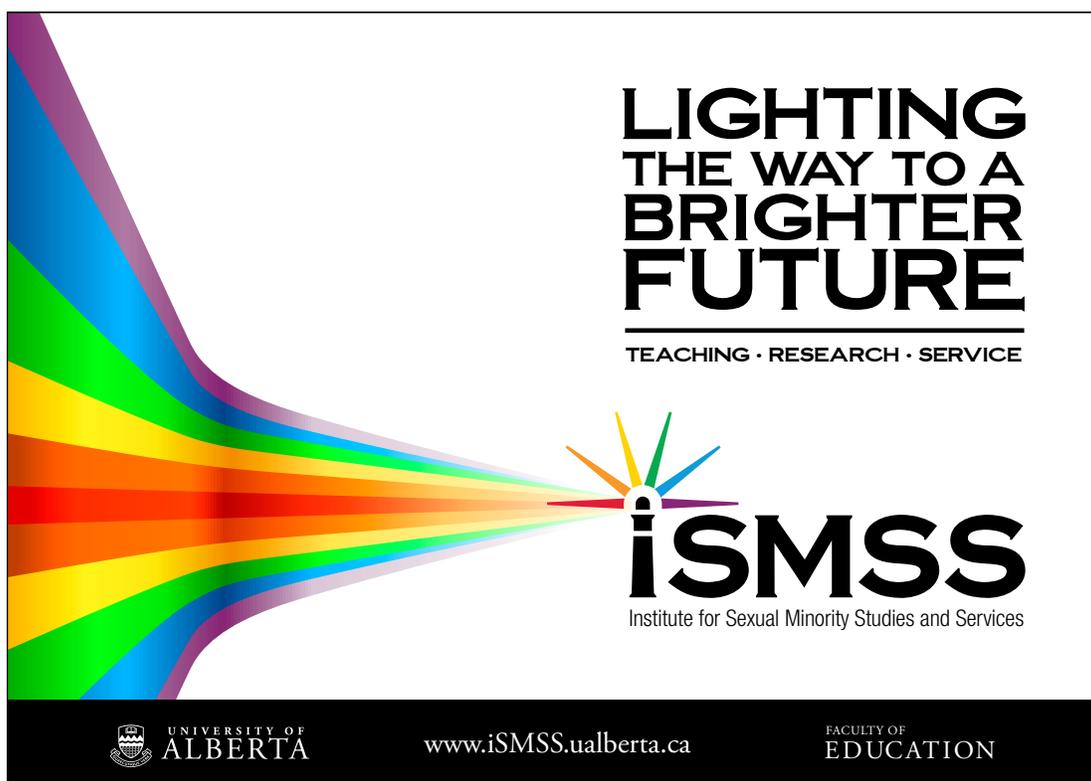


# QUEER ISSUES IN THE STUDY OF EDUCATION AND CULTURE II

A 2010 CANADIAN SOCIETY FOR THE STUDY OF  
EDUCATION (CSSE) PRE-CONFERENCE



**Friday, May 28, 2010  
8:30 AM – 4:30 PM  
Congress 2010, Concordia University, Montreal**

**André P. Grace, Cory M. Dawson, & Alexis K. Hillyard  
Pre-Conference Organizers and Editors of the Proceedings**

**QUEER ISSUES IN THE STUDY OF EDUCATION AND CULTURE II:  
A 2010 CANADIAN SOCIETY FOR THE STUDY OF EDUCATION (CSSE)  
PRE-CONFERENCE, CONCORDIA UNIVERSITY, MONTREAL**

Friday, May 28, 2010, 8:30 AM – 4:30 PM

**BIENVENUE! WELCOME!**

The Institute for Sexual Minority Studies and Services (iSMSS), an interdisciplinary institute in the Faculty of Education, University of Alberta is pleased to host and welcome you to the second CSSE Pre-Conference on *Queer Issues in the Study of Education and Culture*. In organizing this pre-conference, iSMSS hopes to continue to create a dynamic, communicative space for scholars and students across disciplines, activists, educators, artists, and others to share research and other work on queer issues in the study of education and culture. Once again, we had a wonderful response to the Call for Papers for this year's pre-conference. Papers included in these proceedings indicate a synergy between interdisciplinary queer research, educational and cultural practices, and advocacy to make the world better for sexual minorities across sex, sexual, and gender differences.

This year I would like to draw your attention to the importance of making schools a focal frontier in the queer civil rights movement in Canada. This work is vital to ensure that sexual-minority students and teachers have their rights as persons and citizens protected in schools as sites that still replicate a heteronormative status quo that finds particular manifestation in the silence and inaction that surround unchecked heterosexism, homophobia, and transphobia in so very many of our nation's schools. In the opening plenary Line Chamberland and colleagues will provide a francophone perspective while Catherine Taylor will provide an Anglophone perspective on homophobia in Canadian schools. The work that remains to be done was brought home to me recently in a most profound way as I sat in as an expert witness denied permission to speak at a teachers association's Complaint Appeal Committee review. The committee reviewed a case in which a student was violated by incessant homophobic bullying that was particularly virulent when the student was in Grades 6 and 7. Currently, the mother and son, who is now in high school, are considering next steps with their lawyer since the Complaint Appeal Committee felt the case did not warrant a hearing. Below is the impact statement that the student read at the review. It speaks to the need for school boards, schools, principals, and teachers to be held accountable 1) to develop policy that respects and accommodates sexual-minority students and those perceived to be, and 2) to implement that policy so that it is visible and expressed in every-day schooling and its social and cultural practices.

They told me “sticks and stones may break my bones, but names would never hurt me.” Whoever wrote that was definitely not in my shoes. I never got a “hello,” instead I got “faggot,” and for four years that word was something I tried to ignore – but years of torment are harder to forget. I smiled, I laughed, but most of the time I'd cry. I'd cry before school, at school and after school. I'd cry before I even got home so my parents wouldn't

have to ask me what was wrong. I told myself I wasn't who they belittled me to be, but confidence doesn't come easy for a kid. I was always watching my back and keeping note of all the things they'd say to me in class. When the coach asked for the class to split up into boys and girls, I didn't fit in with those two categories: "Hey fag, what are you doing in the boys' line? You're not a boy." It was even worse when my so-called 'friends' wouldn't even stand up for me. Being at a Christian school was absolutely, positively the worst experience of my teenage life. Transitioning from elementary to junior high with the same kids every year made it impossible to get away from the names. As the years progressed, the names from their mouths became bruises from their hands. I remember vividly the shoving into lockers and sand kicked in my face. I remember getting garbage thrown at me during lunchtime, and I remember the look on the teachers' faces when I was being harassed. I feel like this experience robbed me of the person I could have become. This entire process has ruined family vacations, relationships, and just overall my faith in people. I was told that I was going to be educated in a Christ life environment, but while we studied hell in bible class, it sounded like a vacation to me. I hated myself for the longest time. I was insecure, depressed, and I just longed for a way out. Yet even now, to this day, those memories cross my mind and I still shutter at the horrific names I hear that remind me of my time there.

While the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* and the laws and legislation it has engendered provide sexual-minority Canadians with many rights and protections, there is still much work to do so sexual-minority children and youth are treated as persons and citizens in our schools. Throughout this pre-conference day and in the closing plenary on Gay-Straight Alliances in our schools, let us reflect on the interdisciplinary work we need to do to respect all students and ease their hurt pain.

It takes a collective effort to create such a fine proceedings so we can share our work with one another. I would like to say a special "Thank you!" to Alexis Hillyard and Cory Dawson for their assistance in producing this fine record of our second meeting together. They have helped me tremendously to organize this pre-conference. Enjoy the day and your time at Congress at Concordia University in beautiful Montreal.

André P. Grace, Ph. D.  
Professor & Director, Institute for Sexual Minority Studies and Services  
Faculty of Education, University of Alberta

## Table of Contents

Call For Papers	5
Presentations	9
<i>Sexual Diversity and Homophobia in Quebec High Schools: What do we Know About it?</i> Line Chamberland, Michaël Bernier, Gabrielle Richard, Gilbert Émond*, Danielle Julien, Joanne Otis, & Bill Ryan**	9
<i>Identities in Transition: Considerations for Queer Student Teachers in the Move from Program to Field</i> Tara Flanagan, Nathan Grant Smith, & Fiona J. Benson	13
<i>Wrongly Accused: Male Teacher, 30ish, BA (Hon.), B.Ed., Assumed Pedophile</i> Douglas Gosse	17
<i>Sexual Minority Youth and Building Assets for Resilience</i> André P. Grace, Cory M. Dawson, & Alexis K. Hillyard	21
<i>Klaus Mann: An Outsider in his Time</i> Michel Mallet	26
<i>Trends in Canadian Newspaper Coverage of Gay Straight Alliances: 2000-2009</i> Lindsay Maxwell	30
<i>Queering the Student Body: Acting and the Pedagogy of Performing Gender</i> Janet A. McDonald	35
<i>Teachers, Sexual Orientation, and the Law: Balancing Competing Rights</i> Elizabeth J. Meyer	40
<i>Relating Queer: The Pedagogical Implications of Queer Counterstorytelling</i> Bonnie Owens	43
<i>Lessons in Social Justice: Queer Students Perceptions of Safe School Strategies and Legal Responses to Bullying in High Schools</i> Donn Short	47
<i>Reflecting Dissidence: Writing (Our) Queer Identities into Qualitative Research</i> Anne Stebbins & Robert Mizzi	51

<i>Facts of Life in Homophobia High: Findings of the First National Climate Survey on Homophobia and Transphobia in Canadian Schools</i> Catherine Taylor	55
<i>A Queer Circle of Friends, Indeed! The School Social as Intervention or as Movement</i> S. Anthony Thompson	63
<i>GRIS: 15 Years of Research and Education in Québec Schools</i> Olivier Vallerand, Janik Bastien*, & Liz Meyer**	67
<i>“...and some of the people who use it”: LGBT Representation in Professional Architectural Publications</i> Olivier Vallerand	71
<i>Alterity: Queering the Monadic Self</i> Wayland Walker	76
<i>Gay-Straight Alliances: Trends and Analysis</i> Kristopher Wells	81

## Call For Papers

### QUEER ISSUES IN THE STUDY OF EDUCATION AND CULTURE II A 2010 CANADIAN SOCIETY FOR THE STUDY OF EDUCATION (CSSE) PRE-CONFERENCE

<http://www.csse.ca>

Pre-Conference Location: Concordia University, Ottawa

Friday, May 28, 2010

8:30 am – 4:00 pm

Pre-conference Organizers:

André P. Grace ([andre.grace@ualberta.ca](mailto:andre.grace@ualberta.ca))

Cory M. Dawson ([cory.dawson@ualberta.ca](mailto:cory.dawson@ualberta.ca))

Alexis K. Hillyard ([hillyard@ualberta.ca](mailto:hillyard@ualberta.ca))

### PRE-CONFERENCE CALL FOR PAPERS

(Due Date for Proposals: Friday, January 29, 2010)

The Institute for Sexual Minority Studies and Services (iSMSS), Faculty of Education, University of Alberta is pleased to host the second annual CSSE Pre-Conference on Queer Issues in the Study of Education and Culture at Concordia University, Montreal, on Friday, May 28, 2010. In this Call for Papers, we invite submissions from scholars, students, activists, educators, artists, and others who research or otherwise engage queer issues in the study of education and culture. We encourage submissions from the wide-ranging topics presently constituting queer research and practice in education and culture from cross-cultural, historical, political, policy, comparative, and other perspectives. The intention of the pre-conference is to cover a diversity of topics, inviting stances and reflections from a variety of temporal, geographical, and interdisciplinary perspectives. We also encourage a variety of types of submissions, including academic papers from across disciplines, creative submissions, performances, storytelling, visual arts, and other alternative formats. Submissions may reflect the 2010 Congress theme, which is Connected Understanding. Conference presenters will have an opportunity to have their work published in pre-conference proceedings.

Details regarding location and other pertinent information will follow later. The submission deadline for proposals is Friday, January 29, 2010 at 11:59 pm. Proposals are to be sent by email to Dr. André P. Grace, Director, Institute for Sexual Minority Studies and Services, University of Alberta ([andre.grace@ualberta.ca](mailto:andre.grace@ualberta.ca))

To submit a proposal, please send in one file:

- A 100-word abstract of your proposal.
- A title for your proposal.
- Your proposal summary document (750-1000 words) (A list of references may be added and will not be included in the proposal summary word count.)

You must be a current member of CSSE to present at this pre-conference. A pre-conference fee of \$20.00 Canadian will be collected at registration at the opening of the pre-conference.

If you have questions, please contact Dr. Grace ([andre.grace@ualberta.ca](mailto:andre.grace@ualberta.ca)).

#### PRE-CONFERENCE FORMAT:

- (1) Presentations of various types (selected from proposals)
- (2) Guest speaker(s) (TBA)
- (3) Open dialogue session

#### **PAPER PRESENTATIONS / ALTERNATIVE FORMATS:**

- Depending on the number of proposals accepted, each presenter will have up to thirty minutes (30 min.) to present on the day of the pre-conference.
- In addition to presentation proposals prepared as described above, please include the following in the body of the email to which your proposal is attached: Name of author(s)/ presenter(s); Affiliation(s); Mailing address(es); Email address(es); Phone number(s); Title of presentation; AV requests; and don't forget to attach your proposal.
- The deadline for submission of proposals for the pre-conference is Friday, January 29, 2010.
- A committee will peer review proposals.
- Accepted authors will be notified by Monday, February 15, 2010.
- Criteria for judging proposals will include quality of the submission and the significance of the topic to expanding our conceptualizations of queer studies in education.
- Please send proposals by email, as a WORD file to:
- Andre P. Grace at [andre.grace@ualberta.ca](mailto:andre.grace@ualberta.ca)
- Accepted authors must submit (by email to Andre P. Grace) a written paper from three to five pages in length including references, single-spaced, and following APA guidelines, by Monday, March 29, 2010. The paper will be included in the Proceedings to be distributed at the Pre-conference.
- Guidelines for writing papers for the proceedings will accompany letters of acceptance of proposals.
- Cost of attending the pre-Conference is \$20.00 (Canadian), payable on site.

**Program Schedule**

**QUEER ISSUES IN THE STUDY OF EDUCATION AND  
CULTURE II  
A 2010 CANADIAN SOCIETY FOR THE STUDY OF EDUCATION (CSSE)  
PRE-CONFERENCE**

**Concordia University, Montreal**

**Friday, May 28, 2010, 8:30 AM - 4:30 PM**

**Rooms H613 & H634, Henry F. Hall Building, 1455 De Maisonneuve W.**

**8:30 Registration opens, refreshments and continental breakfast provided**

**9:00 Welcome: Dr. André P Grace**

**9:00 Plenary: Homophobia in Schools: Francophone and Anglophone Contexts (Room H613)**

Line Chamberland, Michaël Bernier, Gabrielle Richard, Gilbert Émond, Danielle Julien, Joanne Otis, Bill Ryan	<i>Sexual Diversity and Homophobia in Quebec High Schools: What Do We Know About It?</i>
Catherine Taylor	<i>Facts of Life in Homophobia High: Findings of the First National Climate Survey on Homophobia and Transphobia in Canadian Schools</i>

Plenary Chair: Dr. André Grace

**10:00 – 10:15 BREAK**

**MORNING SESSIONS**

	<b>Room H613</b>	<b>Room H634</b>
	Panel Chair: Cory Dawson	Panel Chair: Alexis Hillyard
<b>10:15</b>	Olivier Vallerand, Janik Bastien, Elizabeth Meyer <i>GRIS: 15 Years of Research and Education in Quebec Schools</i>	Bonnie Owens <i>Relating Queer: The Pedagogical Implications of Queer Counterstorytelling</i>
<b>10:45</b>	Tara Flanagan, Nathan Smith, Fiona Benson <i>Identities in Transition: Considerations for Queer Student Teachers in the Move from Program to Field</i>	Michel Mallet <i>Klaus Mann: The Outsider in His Time</i>
<b>11:15</b>	Donn Short <i>Lessons in Social Justice: Queer Students' Perceptions of Safe School Strategies and Legal Responses to Bullying in High Schools</i>	Janet McDonald <i>Queering the Student Body: Acting and the Pedagogy of Performing Gender</i>

**11:45 – 1:00 LUNCH (on your own)**

**AFTERNOON SESSIONS**

<b>Room H613</b>		<b>Room H634</b>	
Panel Chair: Robert Mizzi		Panel Chair: Kristopher Wells	
<b>1:00 – 1:30</b>	Anne Stebbins, Robert Mizzi <i>Reflecting Dissidence: Writing (Our) Queer Identities into Qualitative Research</i>	Elizabeth Meyer	<i>Teachers, Sexual Orientation, and the Law: Balancing Competing Rights</i>
<b>1:30 – 2:00</b>	Wayland Walker <i>Alterity: Queering the Monadic Self</i>	Dr. André Grace, Cory Dawson, Alexis Hillyard	<i>Sexual Minority Youth and Building Assets for Resilience</i>
<b>2:00 – 2:30</b>	Olivier Vallerand <i>“... and some of the people who use it”: LGBT Representation in Professional Architectural Publications</i>	Douglas Gosse	<i>Wrongly Accused: Male Teacher, 30ish, BA (Hon.), B.Ed., Assumed Pedophile</i>

**2:30 –  
2:45**     **BREAK (refreshments provided)**

**2:45 –  
4:15**     **Plenary: Gay Straight Alliance (GSA) Clubs: Meeting the Needs of Sexual Minority Youth (Room H613)**

Lindsay Maxwell	<i>Trends in Canadian Newspaper Coverage of Gay Straight Alliances: 2000-2009</i>
Scott Thompson	<i>A Queer Circle of Friends, Indeed! The School Social as Intervention or as Movement</i>
Kristopher Wells	<i>A Guide for Creating GSAs in Canadian Schools</i>

Plenary Chair: Dr. André Grace

**4:15 –  
4:30**     **Dr. André P. Grace: Closing Remarks**

## Presentations

### **Sexual Diversity and Homophobia in Quebec High Schools: What do we Know About it?**

Line Chamberland, Michaël Bernier, Gabrielle Richard, Gilbert Émond\*, Danielle Julien, Joanne Otis, & Bill Ryan\*\*

Université du Québec à Montréal (UQAM), Concordia University\*, McGill University\*\*

**Abstract:** *This communication is based on the results of a survey on school climate relating to homophobia completed in spring 2009 by 2757 students from 31 different high schools across the province of Quebec. Three out of four students said they have witnessed homophobic incidents since the beginning of the school year, while over a third said they have personally experienced such incidents (because they were LGB or perceived to be LGB). Data also show that homophobic incidents are rarely denounced, and that topics relating to homosexuality or bisexuality are not frequently discussed in the classroom. All these data point to the need to implement systematic policies and measures in order to create safer school environments for all students.*

#### **Context of the Research**

In a Canadian context of legal equality and openness to sexual diversity, educational institutions, like all public institutions, are asked to pay attention to the endemic nature of homophobia. The problem of homophobia in schools and its dramatic impacts on the physical and mental health of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transsexual and transgender (LGBT) teenagers has been repeatedly raised by various associations, the media and in multi-stakeholders forums. Several studies, mainly conducted in the US (and some based on large samples), have also documented the various forms (psychological, sexual, physical) of homophobic violence experienced by LGBT youth, especially in the school environment (California Safe Schools Coalition, 2004; D'Augelli, 2002 & 2003; Mass. Department of Education, 2004). The most recent biannual survey of the Gay, Lesbian & Straight Education Network (GLSEN) conducted among 6209 LGBT high school students revealed that nearly three-quarters of them (73.6%) frequently heard derogatory remarks about homosexuality, 86.2% reported having been verbally harassed and 44.1% physically harassed at school (Kosciw & Diaz, 2008). According to the First National Climate Survey on Homophobia in Canadian Schools, six out of ten LGBTQ students reported being verbally harassed about their sexual orientation and three-quarters felt unsafe in at least one place at school, such as changing rooms, washrooms, and hallways (Taylor et al., 2010). However, despite a growing consensus about the broad scope and consequences of homophobia in schools (absenteeism, suicidal ideation), its presence had not been scientifically documented, until recently, for the province of Quebec. In this paper, we present the main findings of the study *Impacts of homophobia and homophobic violence on school persistence and academic success*.

#### **Sample and Research Objectives**

The results are based on a self-administered questionnaire on school climate regarding homophobia completed during a mandatory course in the winter or spring 2009. In total, 2757 students in grades 3 and 5 from 31 high schools across the province have taken part in data collection. The sample is composed of 53% of girls and 47% of boys. 80% of students come from an institution where the language of instruction is French, and 20% where it is English. While the sex distribution corresponds to the official data of Ministry of Education, students from English-language institutions are overrepresented in our sample. Also, 69% of participants are from the Census Metropolitan Area (CMA) of Montreal, 7% from the Quebec CMA, and 24% from other regions of Quebec. With regards to sexual orientation, 92% of students said they were heterosexual, and 8% said they were either gay, lesbian, bisexual or questioning. This gives us sufficient numbers to make interesting comparisons and reliable analysis between heterosexual and non-heterosexual students.

Two main objectives were pursued by the study. First of all, the aim was to document and describe the climate, relative to homophobia, in public school establishments that offer teaching in the senior years of high school. Secondly, it was to examine the impact of young people's homophobic victimiza-

tion experiences on their academic career, both the factors that increase their vulnerability and those that support their resilience. As data for the second objective are currently being analyzed, we will mainly focus on the first one.

### **Homophobic Language and Incidents in Quebec High Schools**

Without creating a hierarchy among the different forms of discrimination, it may be appropriate to assess the prevalence of homophobic incidents compared to other types of incidents. Students have been asked to answer the following question: “Since you began attending this school, how often, to your knowledge, are students teased, intimidated, discriminated against, insulted or harassed for the following reasons?” Based on their answers, it is mainly because of their appearance, their size, their body shape or their weight that students are harassed or intimidated: 55% said it happened at least once a week in their school. The second most important reason is because a male acts too feminine or a female acts too masculine (gender expression): 44% said that this occurred at least once a week. Because they are *or* are thought to be gay, lesbian or bisexual comes a close third with 39%. Other motives of harassment and bullying such as physical handicap, skin colour, religion, country of origin or sex follow with lower frequencies. Thus, these results indicate that particular attention should be paid to the phenomenon of homophobia in schools.

Students were questioned on how often they heard comments such as “that’s so gay” at their school. If we combine answers stating that these comments are made *often* and *occasionally* we find a total of 87%. Opinions regarding these comments are however not unanimous. While some believe that these comments denigrate homosexuality, others believe they are only used to refer to something that is boring, uninteresting or too easy. It seems that teachers or other professionals of education might intervene or not depending on their understanding of the negative nature of these comments. Also, students were asked to answer this question: “Since you began attending this school, how often have you heard students call other students “fag,” “faggot,” “queer,” “lesbian,” “dyke,” “gay” or “homo” in an insulting or negative manner?” Here, as opposed to the previous question, there is no doubt about the negative content of these insults. They are intentionally used in order to hurt another student. If we combine *often* and *occasionally* we find that a total of 67% of students declare hearing these comments on a regular basis. In addition, we made a mapping of where homophobic insults occur in schools. If they are generally made in places beyond the control of adults, for example in the hallways or by the lockers, on school grounds and in the cafeteria, many students said they heard those negative comments *often* or *occasionally* in the classrooms (47%), in gymnasiums, at the pool or on playing fields (37%) and in changing rooms (34%). These are places that are more likely to be under adult supervision.

If we now look at homophobic victimization, nearly 4 in 10 students (38.6%) report having personally experienced at least one incident of this kind since the beginning of the school year. Unsurprisingly, LGBQ students are more likely than heterosexual students to have experienced homophobia (69.0% vs. 35%). In addition to being more vulnerable to homophobic victimization than their heterosexual peers, LGBQ students are more likely to experience it frequently and from a number of manifestations. However, we must take into account that a significant proportion of heterosexual teens are also vulnerable to homophobia at school. As explained earlier, this can be because of their gender expression, or reasons such as sports and activities they practice, the way they dress, the music they listen to and their circle of friends. Though reprehensible at any time, homophobic manifestations seem to often be based on assumptions and presumptions.

The manifestations of homophobia in Quebec high schools in Quebec are very diverse. Here is a concrete illustration: about a quarter of students were insulted, teased or humiliated and/or have been the subject of gossip or rumours to harm their reputation because they are LGB or thought to be LGB; almost one out of five students was excluded or rejected for the same reasons; about 1 in 10 students has been the victim of rumours, intimidation, threats or harassment through an online medium (cyberbullying) and/or has been pushed, hit, kicked, spat on or had something thrown at him/her. Other types of incidents appeared in the questionnaire, including theft and vandalism, being forced to do something against one’s will, sexual advances, and getting hit or sexually assaulted. We have not included such data here due to the very low proportions of students who were victims. However, in absolute numbers, it remains a real preoccupation.

Only 22.2% of victims have already reported an homophobic incident or episode they have experienced. In a context where more and more measures are taken to counter violence in schools, it can be useful to know the reasons given by students for *not* reporting homophobic incidents they were the victims of. Half the victims consider that the incident was not significant enough or serious enough to report, while about one third declared having solved the problem by themselves *or* having had the incident happen to them only once, hence their lack of interest in reporting such incidents. In addition, just over a quarter of students felt that nothing would be done to address the situation. Finally, lower proportions of victims report being afraid to be seen as “snitches,” “rats,” or “tattletales” or by potentially negative repercussions. Some of these reasons seem to indicate a certain trivialization of homophobia by students or even by schools (at least according to the perception of victims of homophobic incidents).

In the same vein, almost three quarters of students (74.3%) reported having seen or heard about at least one homophobic episode or situation since the beginning of the school year. The distribution of these incidents in terms of importance is almost the same as in the case of victims. Thus, insults, rumours, and exclusion are still coming on top of the list. However, being pushed, hit, kicked, spat on or having something thrown at *and* having personal property vandalized, stolen or destroyed are also frequently reported by students. It is possible that, although many students are not direct eyewitnesses of these events, rumours about their occurrence spread quickly within the school walls. Let’s specify that only 9.1% have already reported homophobic incidents they witnessed.

Finally, students were asked to indicate whether they had personally committed homophobic acts since the beginning of the school year. In spite of a possible social desirability effect, the fact remains that a third of them reported having committed at least one. We noticed that more boys (10.8%) than girls (5.0%) reported having committed such acts. More boys than girls declared having committed the following acts against a student who is *or* is thought to be LGBT: to insult, to tease, to make fun of or to humiliate a student: 32% vs. 17% respectively; to exclude or reject a student: 18% vs. 10%; to push, to hit, to kick, to spit on, or to throw something at a student: 9% vs. 3%. When asked how they felt about having committed these acts, these “aggressors” divide in two factions: the “prouds”, and those who “regret”. Among the “prouds”, 33% said it was funny and 25% felt that others approved of what they did. Among those who “regret”, 29% said they felt guilty and 17% felt ashamed. However, only 6% said they were afraid of being punished. Somehow, it joins the perception young people have of their schools as not adopting quick responses and measures in order to mitigate homophobia.

### **The Place of Sexual Diversity in Quebec High Schools**

When asked which outreach activities regarding homosexuality, if any, were offered or organized by their high school, 13% of students said a lesbian or a gay man was invited to the classroom to share her/his experience<sup>1</sup>. Otherwise, 12% saw information booths or attended (or at least heard of) a play on the subject. So roughly, about a third of students have noticed the holding of at least one outreach activity since the beginning of the school year.

With regard to the signs that lead students to think their high school has a certain openness towards homosexuality and bisexuality, just over three quarters of them, more exactly 77%, have noticed at least one such sign. Among the most frequent, we find lists of resources that offer help and support for gays, lesbians and bisexuals in the school agenda (ex.: Gay Line), posters, as well as signs indicating that student services (ex.: psychological services, teachers, spiritual life and community involvement facilitator, health services, etc.) are welcoming to gay, lesbian or bisexual students and able to answer questions regarding homosexuality and bisexuality. Also the possibility for another student to be openly gay, lesbian or bisexual is perceived as a sign of openness by a fairly large proportion of students (37%).

Just over half of students (56%) said their teachers had never discussed subjects relating to homosexuality or bisexuality in their classes (ex.: same-sex marriage, the gay pride parade, same-sex couples who decide to have children, etc.). The majority of students (58.7%) consider that their teachers discussed

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<sup>1</sup> In Quebec, community groups such as GRIS Montréal, GRIS Québec, and GRIS Chaudière-Appalaches intervene in schools by giving personal testimonies and answering students’ questions about sexual diversity.

these topics in neutral terms. Otherwise, 39.1% say they have talked about it positively. Finally, a small proportion (2.1%) said that it was done in negative terms.

### Conclusion

Homophobia is a reality in Quebec high schools. It affects LGB students but also those who are suspected to be LGB for various reasons. Our data show that homophobia seems to be trivialized by students (homophobic incidents rarely reported) and school teachers and administrators (students think nothing will be done to rectify the situation). Finally, the signs of openness towards sexual diversity seem fairly present in high schools, but the outreach activities and classroom discussions on the subject are not frequent. This makes us say that it is important to consider concrete measures to combat homophobia in Quebec high schools. These should focus on raising awareness about sexual diversity considering that a large proportion of students, heterosexual or LGB, are vulnerable to homophobia.

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## **Identities in Transition: Considerations for Queer Student Teachers in the Move from Program to Field**

Tara Flanagan, Nathan Grant Smith, & Fiona J. Benson  
McGill University

**Abstract:** *A tension exists between what some queer student teachers experience in a place of relative safety, the university setting, and in their lives in schools during field placements and upon graduation. They often reveal feelings of fear and acute anxiety about entering the field and about how to negotiate their identities as a teacher and as a queer individual. We will talk about identity formation and identity transition in the context of pre-service and service teaching and will report on some of our work to ease the transition between program and field for these students and their straight allies. In particular, we will highlight the utility of the workshops for increasing students' comfort with and understanding of this issue.*

The transition process is stressful at any stage of development because it entails significant adaptations in the ways that one thinks, feels, and interacts with others. In fact, transition periods often entail a conceptual change, a restructuring of the way that one conceives of something. The transition of importance that is addressed within our work is the move from pre-service teacher education into the field for students who identify as being queer. Research on transitions highlights that this process is particularly stressful in times of identity formation and of instability (Johnson, Holt, Bry & Powell, 2008). Although many post-secondary students struggle with their emerging identity as professionals, student teachers who identify as being queer often feel additional pressure to re-examine or hide their identities as they enter a profession that is not overtly welcoming of such teacher identities. There is a body of work that attests to the fact that schools are sites of rampant homophobia where a queer student teacher is unlikely to be affirmed, respected or cared for by teachers and students alike should their queerness become known during a field experience (Epstein & Johnson, 1998; Meyer, 2007; Wimmer, Chinnery & Morrison, 2009). Verdugo, Schalock, Keith, and Stancliffe (2005) highlight the need for methodologically stringent research in this area and discuss the best practices that support the transition process for marginalized groups. They stress the importance of examining the issues from a variety of perspectives and considering the complex relationships among stakeholders in the process.

However, in much of the literature and in typical practice, the views of the most important stakeholders, the students and teachers who identify as being queer, are not acknowledged. Thus, the particular needs of queer student teachers and their straight allies are often ignored, creating a chasm between actual needs for specific teacher preparation and what is currently available as a diverse group of students are getting prepared to embark on student teaching (field experience). Though not all needs are sensitively addressed in our classrooms, we tend to view university classrooms as open discursive spaces. Rosenberg (1997) has found students seeking "underground" or "confessional" spaces to ask the questions that they would feel uncomfortable raising in class or to sharing the story that they intuit would adversely fix them in a certain light were they to recount it openly. Clearly, provisions must be made for such spaces and dialogues for our queer student teachers to ensure their own professional and emotional survival in an environment that is often hostile to the open expression of their identities. Their straight allies also need opportunities to process positions that they are still working through.

Based on the need for such spaces and dialogues, we conducted a series of workshops to address the complexities and challenges of the transition from program to field by putting into practice Rosenberg's (1997) insights. We provided more than one space in which students could articulate as well as work through issues. This paper reports our initial post-workshop findings and highlights the process of creating these discursive spaces. Two workshops were designed and timed to ease this transition by responding to the needs articulated by queer student teachers and their straight allies to be, and feel prepared, for field experiences. Both workshops were timed to be prior to the participant queer student teachers and their allies embarking on a major and lengthy (8 week) field experience. Though the workshops were designed around this particular theme, the structure was open-ended to allow for the students'

to guide the direction of the discussions. We investigated students' feelings around being prepared for field experience, and needs surrounding this transition as articulated by queer student teachers and allies. Thus, our report is focused on questions and concerns queer student teachers and their allies brought to the workshops that they would feel uncomfortable raising in class. We anticipated the following outcomes for the participant queer student teachers and their straight allies:

- ✓ increased sense of connection and community
- ✓ lessening of fear and sense of isolation
- ✓ increased sense of support from faculty
- ✓ heightened sense of personal/professional empowerment
- ✓ access to personal/professional resources
- ✓ increased effectiveness during field experience
- ✓ increased likelihood of staying in the program (B.Ed.)
- ✓ increased likelihood of staying in the profession of teaching

In addition, we expected that the workshops would call more attention to issues affecting queer students in teacher education and will draw implications for the preparation and development of educational initiatives on the important transition from pre-service teacher education into the field for students who identify as queer. This sharing with a wider audience of those involved in teacher education also has the potential to engage faculty and students in "a deeper understanding through dialogue" (Shields, 2004, p. 120), and create change in places of teacher education that are more favourable to queer teacher development and retention in the field.

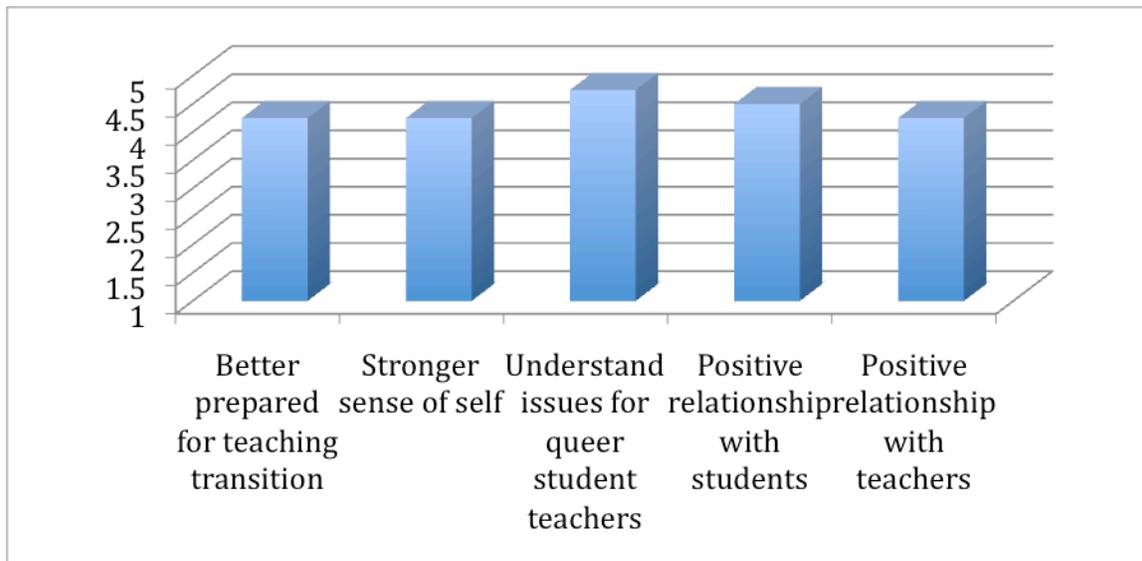
### **Methodology**

Our research questions for this study were: Do these workshops support queer student teachers and their straight allies? In particular, do the workshops help queer student teachers and their straight allies negotiate the school environments and contexts in which they are placed for field experience? Will these workshops support the transition for queer student teachers and their straight allies from program to field to professional membership? In order to evaluate the impact/success of the workshop design, evaluation was carried out longitudinally through questionnaires with volunteer participants during the workshops and through informal interviews that are currently being conducted as field placements finished in late April, 2010. This report is focused on the short-term changes that were assessed via the exit questionnaire (appendix A).

### **Results**

Twelve students attended the workshops of which 8 voluntarily completed the exit questionnaire. The design of the workshops allowed for much sharing of stories and discussion. Many questions directed at the researchers were gently redirected back to the participants in the hopes of pooling knowledge, coping skills, strategies and resilience. Some of our anticipated outcomes, such as "heightened sense of personal/professional empowerment" and "lessening of fear and isolation" (see graph below) were encouraged through this discussion and shared feedback. During the second half of the workshop, participants were provided with a "Quick Reference Sheet" with categories such as, "low risk classroom strategies", anti-prejudice interventions" and "helpful scripts" around scenarios such as having one's sexuality questioned by students in a classroom context. This sheet too, generated discussion and again, we opine, led to workshop participants feeling "better prepared for the transition to teaching [in the field]".

Overall, as represented in the graph below, participants found the workshop structure and content helpful in terms of preparing them for the transition from the program into the field.



It will be fascinating to find out, as the interview data is analyzed, whether these feelings were sustained and evolved during the field experience.

There were surprising outcomes to the workshops, some examples of which are that queer student teachers are as anxious about how to negotiate the relationship with their university field supervisors as they are about that with their cooperating teachers. We learned that safe spaces cannot be made safe enough for some of our queer students and their allies to risk coming to. And we were all shocked at the homophobia that our students were experiencing in their university program from peers and faculty – perhaps too, we were shocked at our own assumptions that such experiences were on the wane.

### Conclusion

Sam Steigler (2008), writing about the failure of teacher education programs to address queer issues and support young queer teachers, questions the effect that this neglect might have on queer student teachers’ “teacher identities” and their ability to address homophobia in their future practice. Our workshops are one response to this neglect. We are hopeful that our research around these workshops will be the start of more institutional support, assistance and guidance for our queer student teachers and their allies. By offering these workshops and opening up dialogue, we are also hopeful that participants will find the courage to escape the chains of heteronormativity and, in their work as teachers, be leaders in the struggle against homophobia in schools and society.

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## APPENDIX A

### Questionnaire

Name:

Thinking back to the focus of the McGill workshop that you attended, “*Queer Student Teachers and their Allies: Easing the Transition from Program to Field*” – and reflecting on your recent field experience, please circle the number that best represents your opinions. Further explanation would be greatly appreciated in the “Additional Comments” box. Thank you.

(1= not at all true and 5=very true).

Not at all true                      Very true      **Additional**

**Comments (if more space is required for additional comments, please add comments on to another page with a reference to the number of the question you are responding to).**

1.1. In terms of the focus of the workshop, I feel better prepared for the transition 2.to teaching	1	2	3	4	5	
1.2. In terms of the focus of the workshop, I have a stronger sense of self in my future role as a teacher	1	2	3	4	5	
1.3. In terms of the focus of the workshop, I have a grasp of some of the issues related to the 2.transition to teaching for queer student teachers	1	2	3	4	5	
1.4. In terms of the focus of the workshop, I have more confidence that I will have positive relationships with all my classroom students	1	2	3	4	5	
1.5. In terms of the focus of the workshop, I have more confidence in my ability to build professional relationships with my teacher colleagues	1	2	3	4	5	

## Wrongly Accused: Male Teacher, 30ish, BA (Hon.), B.Ed., Assumed Pedophile

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**Abstract:** *Androgenophobia, the prevalent societal conviction that maleness, the male body, and male sexualities are somehow unclean, perverse, and menacing, works as a cohesive force to create male teacher identities viewed as illegitimate, thereby placing male teachers at greater risk of false accusations of inappropriate conduct with pupils.*

### Introduction

Only recently have best-seller, accessible books been produced which focus on boys and education, including *Real Boys' Voices* (Pollack, 2000) and *The Trouble with boys: A surprising report card on our sons, their problems at school, and what parents and educators can do* (Tyre, 2008). Although it is widely believed that many boys are struggling in school compared to many girls, sexuality tends to be heteronormatively overlooked, even when gay adolescents report rarely feeling comfortable with overall school environment, and lower feelings of safety (Zheng, December 2009). Similarly, there is growing public debate over the dwindling numbers of male teachers, but few studies focus on the critical role of sexuality in the professional journey of male teachers (Gosse, forthcoming). This arts-informed narrative inquiry will delve into the experiences of primary-junior male teachers in Central Canada, who were falsely accused of inappropriate conduct with pupils. Sexuality is a site, particularly in elementary education, which remains concealed and guarded, but this arts-informed analysis will attempt to show how pivotal sexuality, and intersectional identity, can be in opening up the silenced trajectory of male teachers. This paper begins with a review of the literature on male primary teachers, then research methodology, next a look at theory, followed by a fictionalized, composite, arts-informed short story about a male teacher falsely accused of inappropriate conduct, and culminates in discussion of the researcher's impressions and questions.

### Review of the Literature on Males Primary Teachers

There is a perceived shortage of male teachers in North America, Australia and the United Kingdom (Gosse, forthcoming); Obstacles to males becoming teachers include the impression that teachers are overworked, underpaid, and at greater risk for accusations of inappropriate conduct with students. Furthermore, male teachers are privy to a heightened level of surveillance due to *androgenophobia*—the prevalent societal conviction that maleness, the male body, and male sexualities are somehow unclean, perverse, and menacing, and *erastephobia*—a pervasive societal expectation and fear of impending pedophilia by males in general, and male primary-junior teachers in schools specifically. Moreover, there is virtually no allusion to male primary/junior teachers wrongly accused of inappropriate conduct in the current debate over hiring and retention of male teachers (Gosse, 2009).

### Methodology

I employ arts-informed, narrative inquiry to reach multiple audiences, such as school boards, teacher federations, teachers, teacher candidates, and scholars, and to make our scholarship more visceral or heartfelt (Gosse, 2005). I am inspired by the *testimonio* of Latin America (Beverley, 2000), the narration of a significant life experience in a novel or novella, told by a narrator who is the real protagonist of the events s/he encountered. My composite character goes by the *nom de plume* of Jason Gudda, and I am writing a short story based on single, semi-structured interviews of 90-120 minutes each, with 6 men falsely accused of inappropriate conduct with students.<sup>2</sup> I hope to promote questions and awareness of the phenomenon of false accusations, important to Faculties of Education, school boards, policy makers, education students, and the broader fields of queer and men's studies.

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<sup>2</sup> *Tracing the Professional Journey of Male Primary Teachers in Ontario* is supported by Nipissing University and the Elementary Teachers Federation of Ontario (ETFO). I would like to thank my colleague, Michael Parr, and research assistants Johanna Kristolaitis, Taralyn Parr, Brenda Dillon, and Ashley Parr for their contributions to this project.

## Theory

*Queer* as a verb is at the core of this arts-informed narrative inquiry, and entails the interlocutor's way of reading the story with two major tenets (Gosse, 2006): examining what knowledge is being accepted and endorsed as 'natural,' 'normal,' or 'good' and; reflexive inquiry through the lens of sexuality into social phenomena, interactions, and institutions, specifically the halted, gut wrenching journey of my participants, wrongly accused of inappropriate conduct with their pupils. Furthermore, Bucholtz & Hall's (2004) notions of authorization and illegitimation will be applied.

### Jason's Testimonio

*Monday, 6h00, Jason's condo*

"What a glorious day!" he says aloud, exulting in the sunshine.

Last night he had walked the dog over the lake. The moon was alien and unnerving, and his breath not unlike the grey fog rolling over the snowy dunes. Even the dog had been skittish. He had hurried home and watched hockey with a blazing fire.

"I have to get there before 7h30 ... the laminator needs to be warmed up...gotta get the stations set up...the markers out...the Bristol board..."

The phone rings. Who could be calling at this early hour?

"Mr. Gudda? This is Carole Dawson calling from ..."

*8h10, Jason's school*

His mind was reeling! How could this be? He had been a teacher for 9 years! He called his wife.

"Jennifer, how are you?"

"I'm fine, Jason. Now for G-d's sake, tell me what this is all about?"

"A student accused me of touching her sexually..." His voice trailed off.

"What? You've got to be kidding?"

"I wish. No, I met with Carole Dawson this morning as soon as I got in. She told me that the older sister of one of my students said I touched her sister's breast yesterday."

"Oh my G\_d! What did you say? What was Ms. Dawson's demeanour?"

"Well, Ms. Dawson was matter-of-fact. Not overly sympathetic. She's going to call the parents and talk to the girls."

"Can you remember anything that occurred that might have led up to this accusation?"

"Yesterday, the girl's sister jumped the line-up to go to the gym. I asked her to go to the end of the line. She said "Idiot" half under her breathe, and initially refused, so I approached her, and told her she had to meet with me today after school. The older sister wasn't even present."

"Unbelievable! I'm outraged!"

"We'll have to wait and see what happens. Carole is trying to talk to the sisters today, and to arrange a meeting with the parents for this afternoon, if possible."

Jason hung up the phone. "What could I have done differently?" he wondered. "I've coached basketball and drama here for the past 8 years. I do my best to meet the needs of all my kids! I've never so much as touched a student on the shoulder."

In 20 minutes he had to face his class, and he felt like a criminal.

.....

*Thursday, 18h00, Jason's condo*

"Unbelievable! Honey, you've gone above and beyond the call for a teacher! Don't be down on yourself. It wasn't your fault! You're a happily married man for G\_d's sake!" They sat on the couch. Jason's eyes were red.

"And now they say the older sister has been brushing up against male teachers, and positioning herself, so that boom, when you turn around, there she is! Carole thinks she may have convinced her

younger sister to concoct this story together for revenge and attention.” He shook his head. “A female teacher can go down the hall and get hugged by ten students, but if a male ever did that, th-they’d get written up. In fact we’ve been warned, starting in teachers’ college, and then from our principals, vice-principals, and colleagues. Don’t be alone with students! Don’t touch students! I did absolutely nothing wrong, and *me voilà!*”

“I know, Jason. The truth will come out. You’ll see. It’ll be alright,” said Louise.

Jason looked at her sadly. “Rumours are already circulating. My career’s over. The principal is still interviewing people, and she said it may take a while. The school board told me to sit tight. Easier said than done...”

.....  
*A week later, 12h15, private office in school library*

“Unreal! So Ms. Dawson interviewed the sisters, and it’s obviously a lie. She interviewed other kids in the class who saw what happened, and it’s obviously a lie. The parents even admitted that their daughters lie all the time. So what now?” said Louise.

“Best case scenario, I get to change schools, and even then....this may follow me forever. I had to see my doctor due to stress.”

“But at least you got an apology though, right?”

### Discussion

Bucholtz & Hall’s (2004) notions of authorization and illegitimation are intimately linked to *andrognophobia*, the prevalent societal conviction that maleness, the male body, and male sexualities are somehow unclean, perverse, and menacing, and *erastophobia*, the pervasive societal expectation and fear of impending pedophilia by males in general, and male primary-junior teachers in schools specifically. *Authorization* is the power to legitimize certain social identities as culturally clear or understandable, e.g., the nuclear family, the heterosexual couple with 2.4 children, the woman teacher, while *illegitimation* is the revoking or withholding of certain identities as valid or legitimate, e.g. gay and lesbian couples, leather daddies or dykes, the male teacher.

In our survey of 223 male primary-junior respondents, 28 claimed they had been falsely accused of inappropriate conduct with pupils; 22 agreed to an interview by phone, in person, or two in-school interviews coupled with in-class observations. Of the 6 men whom we interviewed, all are self-defined white, middle-class heterosexuals. Furthermore, they were eager to have a voice long denied them, and support from someone other than their loyal spouse. It must be noted that many of our gay participants indicate lack of spousal and familial support, and remain cautious about revealing their gay identities to students, parents, guardians, and administrators; None divulged any false accusations of inappropriate conduct with students. Again, none of the men who disclosed false accusations of inappropriate conduct with students self-identified as gay, despite widespread social beliefs that gays are sexual predators and “after our children” (Jennings, 2005).

Moreover, it must be noted that even for white, heterosexual, married teachers, the fears of accusation of inappropriate conduct with students, even over innocuous behaviours, are rampant, and the psychological aftermath enduring. As one participant articulates, “Devastating. Even though the child came up (I didn't see her) and hugged me. Rumours spread to the extent that I was suffering tremendously and wanted to quit. My wife was an amazing support. The school board was...let's just say, less than supportive.”

Andrognophobia and erastophobia have become a widespread social phenomenon, not only for gays and male teachers but men in general, including fathers. One father, who is also a teacher, reports, “Having to watch my back with regard to being alone with a student. The fact that it even impacts on my family life. I have to think twice before my daughter invites friends over (no sleepovers) because of the possibility of a false accusation.”

When accusations of inappropriate conduct against teachers by pupils are proven false at the school, school board level, or beyond, these pupils, and other accusatory parties, should be obliged to

provide written apologies to the teacher, and public apologies, as appropriate (Gosse & Parr, 2010): A new section could be created in the OCT blue pages of *Professionally Speaking* devoted to the impact of false accusations on innocent parties—this might take the form of narratives from innocent parties, anonymity respected as appropriate, who relate their stories; Schools, school boards, and the OCT should provide annual, comprehensive, and more readily accessible statistics and reports on all investigations, and outcomes, related to accusations of inappropriate conduct by teachers. What are largely held to be *illegitimate* male identities, and dangerous sexualities, as opposed to more *authorized* female identities, and what are viewed as more benign female sexualities, must be critically examined in education, taking into account widespread androphobia and erastophobia. Only then will the dwindling numbers of male teachers in education be better understood, the paucity of positive male role-models for children recognized, and catalytic links forged to boys' lack of engagement and achievement in school.

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## Sexual Minority Youth and Building Assets for Resilience

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Sexual minorities include those individuals whose sexual orientations and gender identities fall outside heteronormative categorizations of sex, sexuality, and gender as well as outside the dichotomies of male/female and heterosexual/homosexual binaries (Grace, 2007, 2008). They comprise such positionalities as lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans-identified, intersexual, two-spirited, and queer. As a key focus in our research on sexual minorities in educational and cultural contexts, we explore how this spectrum of groups, often disenfranchised due to variations in sex, gender, and sexuality, mediate the complexities of change, institutional and community cultures, and civil society in order to learn and live in contemporary times. Through this research linked to advocacy, we seek to counter heterosexism, homophobia, and transphobia as destructive forces in education and culture. In this regard, we focus on developing and implementing queer critical educational and cultural practices that respect and accommodate sexual-minority individuals across the diverse sex, sexual, and gender locations they occupy. In this work, we locate education as a sociopolitical and cultural project that generally reflects society and the traditions and contexts that bind it in particular ways. From this perspective, we proceed aware of two realities: heteronormativity is culturally engrained, and education legitimates particular ways of being and acting in the world in keeping with this hegemony (Grace & Wells, 2005, 2009). Despite these systemic facts, we still believe that education, if it is driven by a politics of hope and possibility, has the potential to play a key role in political and cultural work for social transformation (Allman, 1999).

In this paper, we discuss our research investigating how Canadian sexual-minority youth grow into resilience. We problematize the notion of resilience as we locate it as a process and an outcome of an individual youth's prowess at cultivating the attributes and capabilities that enable mediation of adverse heterosexist, sexist, homophobic, and/or transphobic ecologies. Drawing on Goldstein and Brooks (2005a, 2005b), we situate growing into resilience as a developmental asset-creating process as we share reflections from youth participating in our research. We conclude with a focus on what schools might do to respect and accommodate sexual-minority students so they can grow into resilience as they mediate often exclusionary school and community cultures.

### Researching Resilience as a Process, a Capacity, an Outcome, and a Construct

As a construct, resilience is multidimensional and still indeterminate in nature. It is riddled with “(1) ambiguities in definitions and terminology, (2) variations in interdomain functioning and risk experiences among ostensibly resilient children, (3) instability in the phenomenon of resilience, and (4) theoretical concerns, including questions about the utility of resilience as a scientific construct” (Luthar, Cicchetti, & Becker, 2000, p. 543). Regarding its multiple definitions, “theoretical and research literature on resilience reflects little consensus about definitions, with substantial variations in operationalization and measurement of key constructs” (Luthar, et al., 2000, p. 544). Still, it is generally understood that the concept refers to managing or surmounting great risk in the face of major stressors, difficulties, and threats to individual development (Doll & Lyon, 1998). Furthermore, in contemporary research, resilience is not reduced to a personal characteristic of an individual; instead it is considered to be a sustainable recovery process and a capacity and outcome associated with effective adaptation in the face of tremendous adversity or trauma and significant threats to personal welfare, health, safety, and security (Luthar, et al., 2000).

Growing into resilience “involves the interplay between strengths of the individual *and* external supporting factors in the individual's social environment,” which some researchers now relate to students' lived everyday experiences (Johnson, 2008, p. 386). Some researchers have also explored the dynamic interplay between resilience and risk. Pianta and Walsh (1998) explain, “Risk and resilience are not a characteristic of a child or a family or a school but are *characteristics of a process involving the interactions of systems*. More specifically, resilience is produced by the interactions among a child, family, peers, school, and community (emphasis in original)” (p. 411). As they see it, a successful process of resilience building must be sustained, and it may involve multiple and interactive factors and actions from the point of initiation through to other stages in the process. Emerging research has shown that the process is a dy-

namic one in which “positive adaptation ... involves a developmental progression, such that new vulnerabilities and/or strengths often emerge with changing life circumstances” (Luthar, et al., 2000, p. 544). Rutter (2006) discusses this progression:

Protection may derive from what people do to deal with stress or adversity. That is, the notion of resilience focuses attention on coping mechanisms, mental sets, and the operation of personal agency. In other words, it requires a move from a focus on external risks to a focus on *how* these external risks are dealt with by the individual. More generally, this means that resilience, unlike risk and protective factor approaches, forces attention on dynamic *processes*, rather than static factors that act in summative fashion. ... Protection may derive from circumstances that come about long after the risk experience. In other words, resilience may sometimes reflect later recovery, rather than an initial failure to succumb. (p. 8)

### “It’s Like Piranhas, Man”

Resilience and risks must be considered concurrently. For youth, risk factors include poverty, physical and emotional abuse, family dysfunction, and poor parenting or other deficient relationships with adults; these factors disable the process of growing into resilience and tend to be interconnected, multiplicative in negative developmental and social consequences, and cumulative in impact over time (Doll & Lyon, 1998). For the sexual-minority youth participating in our research, those who felt at risk or threatened stayed “in the closet”; that is, they remained silent about their sexual-minority positionalities. Still others were able to confront risk and transgress the adversity that heterosexism, sexism, homophobia, and transphobia instigate and propagate. This transgression amounted to taking steps to politicize targeting of the queer self by courageously confronting homophobic and transphobic persons and the verbal abuse and other violence that are trademarks of their ignorance and fears. Here are the narrative reflections of some youth research participants:

We had a couple of our Day of Silence posters sort of half torched with a lighter, but in a way it worked to our advantage because we had someone put them on a poster and write, ‘Homophobia at work. We are not imagining.’ We told a reporter who asked if there was still evidence of homophobia, ‘Well here is some visual evidence.’ (Gillian)

I would say I am 100% out. If anyone ever asks, or if someone says something offensive about gay people, I will come out straight away and confront that. (QC)

I just decided it was easier to shake homophobia off than worry about it. I don't know when I decided that, and I don't know how I decided that. It's just something that I did. Ever since then, if people don't understand I can try to help them understand, if they're willing to listen. But if all they're going to do is make judgments, I don't need that. I'm better than that.” (Ryan)

[I walked up to my teacher and] said, ‘It’s like piranhas, man. I cannot be fed to them like this, you know. What are we going to do?’ So after school one day, he kept the entire class and sat me in front of them and let me speak. I just basically looked at them all and said, ‘I don’t understand what it is about me that you all find so offensive. I don’t understand what it is that makes you treat me this way. It has a huge effect on me. I don’t know if you guys realize it, but I just want to be your friend. Just have some compassion.’ I probably said this in less astute words at the time. You know, you’re in grade five. But I did get up in front of the class and just spoke to them like human beings. I held them accountable. (Sam)

### Resilience as a Developmental Asset-Creating Process

As we investigate how sexual-minority youth grow into resilience, we situate the notion as a developmental asset-creating process that enables the individual to transgress the adversity induced by heterosexism, sexism, homophobia, and transphobia; deal with consequential mental and emotional trauma;

grow into self-respect and self-confidence; set realistic goals and engage in problem solving as part of surviving, thriving, and acting in the world; and build supportive, collaborative relationships (Goldstein & Brooks, 2005a, 2005b; Grace & Wells, 2007). Here we provide narrative reflections from youth as research participants that variously speak to each of these aspects of growing into resilience.

### **Dealing with Consequential Mental and Emotional Trauma**

[In rehab, my counsellor] made me do this exercise, which I still remember. It was hard to do at first because I really didn't like myself for a lot of things, like for being gay and different, or for being an Aboriginal. I blamed myself for the whole sexual abuse incident, and I blamed myself for being an addict and hurting my family. I blamed myself for a lot of things, so I really didn't like myself. I hated myself. I had no internal strength at all. [My counsellor] made me look into a small little mirror, and he said, "Jon, I want you to look in that mirror and say to yourself that you deserve happiness, over and over again. Say Jon, you deserve happiness." And for a while I really couldn't do it—actually say that to myself. And when I did, I started crying because it was so emotionally hard to do, because I really didn't believe it. But then I just started to realize that I really did deserve it. Everyone deserves happiness. It still gets me to this day. It chokes me up. So that really helped me out, just to show me that if you believe in yourself, or if you are happy with yourself, then you can find the strength for anything. You can. (Jon)

### **Growing into Self-Respect and Self-Confidence**

I am at a place in my life where I am really comfortable with the person I am. I am comfortable with being myself and acting the way I want to act. I am just really happy in general. (Erica)

For a while it was awkward for me to be who I was. I was bouncing all over the place. I was bisexual. I was straight. I was gay. What was I? It was a very uncomfortable time in my life. I really didn't know who I was or how to describe it. I was lost for a long time until just this year. That's when I started getting really comfortable with it. And I am comfortable with it now. I'm really happy. I'm probably happier now in my life and in my own skin than I ever have been in the last 18 years. When you are who you are you are the happiest. (Jon)

I know I came away from Camp fYrefly as a much better, stronger person. The second I got home I came out to my mother because I felt confident enough to do it. But I also felt, how could I not after this experience? I was interacting with 13 and 14 year olds that were completely out. Here I was a 23 year-old, and I wasn't out. I thought, this is an opportunity not only to have a giant weight lifted off my shoulders, but it was also an opportunity to be visible and to educate others. That was probably the biggest change. (Shawn)

### **Setting Realistic Goals and Engaging in Problem Solving as Part of Surviving, Thriving, and Acting in the World**

Because I graduated this year, I'm leaving a legacy behind for the GSA [gay-straight alliance]. I made a whole GSA binder with all my resources and stuff. Also, they have my story in there, so they know where I was coming from. Lately that's been my thing, getting involved in the gay community as much as possible. (Jess)

I was sort of the leader of our gay-straight alliance club. We went around to all the different high schools in the city and did presentations to their gay-straight alliances. We went to our school board and I hosted a two-day student leadership workshop. We also came up with a presentation that we could make to the grade nine Wellness classes. We went and asked the teachers if they would be comfortable with us coming and presenting to their class. They all said yes. Now I really want to be a teacher. I want to be able to give back to youth and make sure that youth have a safe space that they can go to. (Derek)

At my university I was our Student Union Vice President Academic and I was out. I was out for the entire year, and it was known. That does help to make an impact because it helps to normalize. It helps with exposure because all of a sudden more people see that. More people interact with it. I feel very positively that I bring benefits to the queer community. I know that, especially when I was still working in the residence, the impact it had there was enormous. (John)

### **Building Supportive, Collaborative Relationships**

I felt it was very important that before I addressed my family, which was personally a huge thing for me, I wanted to have a social network. I wanted to have someone to fall back on. I mentioned it to a friend to ask her what she thought. I guess it would be fair to say, I was testing the waters. (Mara)

My entire family is just so supportive. I've always had a support system at home, which has made it easier when and if I don't get that support outside of the home. (Jess)

I feel I was able to [get out of that darkness] due to my own sense of inner strength and the strength of my friends and my supports around me. I would never have come out of that if I didn't have my friends saying 'QC, get out of it. Get out of this space. You don't need to live here.' (QC)

I think, in some ways, just having OUTreach, other support groups, and having other friends that are gay was great. Tuesday was the queer day, so it was a nice break and I was always happy. [And here at Camp fYrefly] I think the biggest thing I have found is that you realize how many other people there are in the community who are willing to stand behind you and support you. That's the biggest thing. I found my first year that the day I left camp I had my pod leader's e-mail address and she said, 'If you ever have problems you can contact me and I can help you find support'. (Helen)

Some days when I come home and I've just seen the most beautiful girl, I can say [to my younger sister], 'Chris, guess what I saw? The most beautiful girl! She was so pretty and so nice.' And she's like, 'That's cool.' She doesn't need to say a lot. It's just nice that she's okay with saying that's cool, or that's so awesome that you saw someone that you have a crush on, or whatever. (Erica)

### **Concluding Perspective**

These days we remain challenged to deal with institutional conservatism in many heteronormative families, schools, and churches. Unable to let go of traditions and myths, these institutions have historically failed to recognize, respect, and accommodate sexual-minority children and youth. Since schools as public spaces ought to advance safe, healthy, and inclusive ecologies, our priority as researchers advocating for sexual-minority children and youth is to advance a transformation of heterosexualizing schools through our research and educational and cultural work, which we place in dynamic equilibrium. We agree with Doll and Lyon (1998) who argue:

Schools and communities need to increase greatly the commitment of their resources to [sexual-minority and other disenfranchised] students existing within hazardous niches of multiple, chronic risk conditions. In doing so, the focus needs to be on eliminating sources of risk *and* enhancing sources of support. In those cases in which causal risk factors are known, it makes good sense to attempt to remove or ameliorate them, if possible. (p. 359)

So how might schools engage in more productive strategizing that emphasizes protective processes that promote the capacity of children and youth to deal with risks and grow into resilience (Johnson, 2008)? They and the school boards responsible for them could start by developing supportive policies that enable principals, teachers, and school counsellors to develop and deliver programs that help youth grow into resilience. The focus of these programs should be on creating proactive safe, healthy, and inclusive school cultures where principals, teachers, and school counsellors receive training where they learn about

1) the characteristics, dispositions, and needs of sexual-minority children and youth; 2) policies and curricular and cultural resources that can assist them in their work; and 3) forming an inter-professional resource network that uses an asset-creating approach to help youth grow into resilience. Following Forman and Kalafat (1998), these programs should help youth to develop skills to solve problems and make decisions as they mediate the sociocultural everyday of heteronormative school environments. They should also connect youth with caring adults who, as mentors, can help youth set clear goals. These adults ought to set expectations with an eye to helping youth build self-confidence and self-esteem through positive reinforcement that emphasizes their abilities and capacities. This work is at the heart of helping sexual-minority children and youth to grow into resilience.

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## Klaus Mann: An Outsider in his Time

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**Abstract:** *This paper examines the manner in which Klaus Mann (1906-1949) embodies the image of the outsider during the period of German National Socialism. This status prevented him from fitting into society- a reality which would come to surface in his engagement as an author and public speaker.*

Klaus Mann's segregation from society was hardly one-dimensional. A variety of factors were responsible for compounding his outsider status. One need not venture even outside the realm of his own family in order to recognize this outsider status at the source. Indeed, as the son of literary icon and Nobel-prize winner Thomas Mann, the reception of Klaus Mann's works was often overshadowed by his father's notoriety; a repercussion which also had a significant impact on his development as an individual. Moreover, his status as a half-Jew, a homosexual, a bohemian, but also as a German in Exile prevented his integration into society. The cumulative effect of these factors would come up to surface in his active engagement as author and public speaker. Approaching Mann from a biographical and literary perspective, this paper will examine his embodiment and portrayal of otherness in the context of German National Socialism.

In 1905, after the birth of his first child Erika, Thomas Mann was not hesitant in admitting to his brother Heinrich that he would rather have had a boy: "Ich empfinde einen Sohn als poesievoller, mehr als Fortsetzung und Wiederbeginn meiner selbst unter neuen Bedingungen" (Naumann, 2001). A year later, on the 18<sup>th</sup> of November 1906, Thomas Mann would announce the birth of his first son, Klaus, to his entourage. Thomas Mann was of course very pleased and full of hope. In light of this, one would assume that Klaus would have been his father's pride and joy. Ironically, his daughter Erika would become his favourite child, while Klaus turned out to be an embarrassing disappointment. According to Klaus Mann himself, he was never more than a stranger to his own father: "der Vater, der dem Sohne ein fremder bleibt" (Naumann, 2001). One could claim that Klaus proved to be a disappointment and an embarrassment to his father - a reality which could be linked to their contrasting personalities, but perhaps mostly to Klaus' flaunted sexuality. In comparison to the stern and introverted Thomas Mann, Klaus was very expressive and, one should add, rather flamboyant. Even at a young age, Klaus was eccentric. He never shied away from an opportunity to express his difference - of sexuality; of personality; of worldview - and this stands in stark contrast to his father Thomas, who never openly expressed his attraction to men, except of course for his homo-erotically flavoured *Death in Venice*, which he published six years after Klaus' birth, in 1912. In 1925 at the age of 19, Klaus Mann openly outed himself in his first novel called *Der Fromme Tanz* (The Pious Dance: The Adventure Story of a Young Man), which is one of the first German novels to have homosexuality as a central theme. This early novel would be the first in a long line of biographically influenced works. But unlike following writings, *The Pious Dance* is a novel untainted by the politics of the Nazi Regime and one could even claim that it exclusively reflects Klaus Mann's wild, daring and scandalous lifestyle as a young adult. Indeed, for Klaus Mann, these were true roaring 20s- being himself in his 20's in the 1920s. He enjoyed Berlin's underground scene and all the possibilities the metropolis had to offer - including its higher tolerance regarding a significantly growing homosexual community. As reflected in the *Pious Dance*, Klaus did not keep his homosexuality secret and even considered it as being something special; a symbol of nobility. It is thus not surprising that, following in the footsteps of his French role models Rimbaud and Verlaine, he was often referred to as Thomas Mann's *enfant terrible*, much to the dismay of the latter. As I mentioned, Thomas and Klaus Mann had very divergent personalities and one might assume that this discrepancy was the source of their incompatibility: yet, Klaus, like his closeted father, was both homosexual and a writer. When one considers Thomas Mann's wish for a son who was a continuation of himself, one might think that Klaus was following the right path. However, both Klaus' lifestyle and his literary attempts were constantly looked down upon by his father. Unlike those of Thomas Mann, Klaus' early publications were not well received by the critics, which perhaps influenced his father's own opinion in that regard. If one is to view the father-son relationship through the lens of Thomas Mann's wish, then one might say that Klaus was truly

his father's son, but in a way repellent to Thomas Mann, for Klaus dared to live to the fullest his father's repressed desires and consequently, proved to be his antithesis. The estrangement and victimhood Klaus felt at the hands of his father were reflected in an even larger scale under the Nazi regime. At first, Hitler's rise to power seemed surreal to Klaus Mann. However, having already witnessed the harassment to which he and his family had been exposed<sup>1</sup>, Klaus knew he had to flee the country when Hitler was officially elected chancellor - which he did, only a few days later, on the 13<sup>th</sup> of March 1933. Staying in Germany would have meant, at the very least, putting an end not only to his eccentric lifestyle, but also to his freedom of speech as an author.

Apart from being gay, the fact that he was a prominent half-Jew gave him all the more reason to leave Germany. Although the Nuremberg racial laws were only enacted in 1935, the Nazi Party used popular anti-Semitism to gain votes; already in the 1920s and 1930s, the political right wing blamed poverty, unemployment and the loss of the First World War on the prominent and wealthy Jews, as well as on the political left wing. Klaus' mother, Katja Pringsheim, grew up as the daughter of a multi-millionaire Jewish university professor in Munich, whose Renaissance-style Palace was, to quote Klaus Mann's biographer Uwe Naumann, "das Zentrum der intellektuellen und Mondänen Welt" (Naumann, 2001) in Munich. Klaus' prominence was thus enhanced by his mother's wealthy intellectual and influential Jewish background. Being openly gay, a decadent author and a prominent half-Jew, it is clear that Klaus Mann would have easily been a target of hatred for the Nazis, had he not acted on his urge to leave his homeland. When he emigrated from Germany, Klaus inevitably added another dimension to his already long list of "outsider" stigmas: one of being an emigrant - and a German one at that. Although he was hoping that his exile would be temporary, Klaus Mann, like many other compatriots confined to the same destiny, soon realized that a return to the homeland was clearly out of sight. The hatred against him continued without his physical presence in Germany: in fact, on the 10<sup>th</sup> of May 1933, his books were amongst those that were considered un-German and thus burned in the large bonfire of books that were set alight across the country, hence confirming once more that he was unwanted in Hitler's Third Reich.

Klaus Mann's first destination in exile was Paris. Even though he was already acquainted with the French capital, he returned to *La ville lumière* not as a tourist, but as an exile-seeker, much to the apprehension of the Parisians. To quote Mann: "Die meisten Leute [in Paris] schauten uns schief an; nicht weil wir Deutsche waren, sondern weil wir Deutschland verlassen hatten" (Mann, 1952). It was the status of an emigrant in political exile and not as much the German origin that was problematic to the Parisians, as was common for many other cities receiving German emigrants at this time. Driven by a sentiment of alienation as an emigrant and by concerns regarding the alarming political situation in Europe, Klaus Mann's focus in his early literary creations, which mostly dealt with representations of *eros*, shifted to engagement in his later works. As a result of this, he became an ambassador of German exile literature as well as an advocate of the "Other-Germany", a movement of anti-fascist German Artists and Intellectuals. While in Paris, Klaus Mann met Emmanuel Querido, who in April 1933, founded the Querido publishing house in Amsterdam. With the help of the German publisher Fritz Landshoff, Querido created a German department to his publishing house, since it became impossible for many German authors like Klaus Mann to publish in Germany. This made it possible for German-speaking authors in exile to publish in their native language, without the censorship they encountered under Hitler's regime. On this, Claus Gigl explains that: "In den an Deutschland angrenzenden Staaten konnten die Autoren weiter in ihrer Muttersprache schreiben; sie fanden ein deutschsprachiges Lesepublikum vor und es bestand die Möglichkeit, ihre Bücher und kurzen Wegen nach Deutschland [zu ihrer traditionellen Leserschaft] zu bringen" (Gigl, 2003). Thanks to the *Querido Verlag*, Klaus Mann created the journal *Die Sammlung*, which to quote Karina von Lindeiner, "aimed at providing an international platform for intellectuals from many countries, as well as a literary and political journal *by* and *for* German exiles" (von Lindeiner, 2007, 212-224). For the next few years, Klaus Mann spent his time between Paris and Amsterdam, the city where he published most of his works while in exile.

Even though his post-1933 writings clearly denounce the dangers of German fascism, the *eros* aspect continues to play a major role in the composition of his works. Consequently, Klaus Mann must from then on face up to the existing conflict between *eros* and antifascist resistance, whether it be in his novels or in his private life. Two of his exile novels exemplify this primary conflict between his aesthetics of *eros* and engagement. *Flucht in den Nordern* (Escape to the North) and *Der Vulkan* (The Volcano).

*Flucht in den Norden*, which describes the early concerns of exile through its female protagonist who flees Germany to seek refuge in Finland, was published in 1934. Mann considered this novel to be a: “Liebesroman mit einem moralpolitischen Hintergrund”, since the novel describes the “Einbruch der Politik in die private Sphäre der Menschen” (Mann, 1952). Johanna, the protagonist, needs to make a choice between fulfilling her personal desires in the safe haven of Finland, or joining her fellow citizens in the anti-fascist resistance in Paris: thus revealing an example of conflict between *eros* and engagement in this first novel written in exile. The same topic of exile resurfaced in his novel *The Volcano* - but this time, he developed it to a greater extent. Published through Querido a few days before the Second World War was declared, this novel presents through fiction a panorama of German emigration from 1933 to 1939. Through its various protagonists, Mann’s second exile-novel exposes the suffering and persecution of citizens marginalized by the Nazi regime for their religious beliefs, sexual orientation and political views. By giving voice to the repressed, Mann strived to inform his contemporaries of the apocalyptic (hence the volcano metaphor)<sup>2</sup> political situation which was threatening Europe. Whether they were Jewish, communists, antifascist artists or homosexual - and whether their emigration led them to Paris, Amsterdam, Zurich or America, all of the protagonists depicted in his chronicle of German exile represent to some extent his own autobiographical experience as an expatriate and as an outsider. Just like him, the characters portrayed in his novel, also suffer from social exclusion as a consequence of their literary, political and social activism. In his autobiographical work *Kind dieser Zeit*, Mann explained that: “Die Schriftsteller, unverbesserlich, werden nie aufhören von sich selbst zu erzählen. Aber sie werden sich als Teil eines Ganzen wissen, wenn sie ihr Privates einzukehren scheinen” (Mann, 1932). Through this quote, one can conclude that Klaus Mann wrote about his own personal experiences, but he did so in a spirit of collectiveness, so that future generations could learn from it. In *The Volcano*, the main protagonist, Martin Korella - alias Klaus Mann - asks himself the following rhetorical question: “Für wen schreibe ich? Für die Kommenden” (Mann, 1939). For Thomas Mann’s eldest son, who unlike his father once again dared express his otherness, it is the duty of being politically active that is important - regardless of the outcome - when he explains that: “Wer an diesem wunderlichen Prozesse teilnimmt, mit vollem Einsatz aller seiner Kräfte, der hat doch wohl nicht umsonst gelebt, auch wenn sein irdisches Werk hinfällig ist und umsonst gewesen scheint” (Mann, 1939).

When Austria joined Germany through the *Anschluss*, Klaus Mann soon realized that Europe had become for him a “volcanic soil” - In *Der Wendepunkt* (The Turning Point), he describes his views of the political situation on the continent: “Wohin wir unsere Schritte wenden mochten- überall gemahnte uns das dumpfe Grollen an die Unabwendbarkeit, die Unentrinnbarkeit der Explosion” (Mann, 1952). So threatening that he saw no alternative but to seek refuge across the Atlantic, in America. Like in the case of his exile in Paris, Klaus Mann, thanks to previous trips and Speech-tours, was already acquainted with the United States. Already in 1939, hoping to broaden his audience in America, he started writing his books in English. This experience turned out to be often frustrating, diminishing and, to quote his own words, gave him a “Quälendes Gefühl der Unsicherheit. Plötzlich ist man wieder ein Anfänger: jeder Satz bereitet Kopfzerbrechen“ (Mann, 1952). Despite his efforts, Klaus Mann’s integration in America proved to be difficult. His efforts to succeed as an author and political activist remained largely recognized, except for the lukewarm success of his work *Escape to life*, which he co-wrote with his sister Erika, and his lectures entitled: *A Family Against Dictatorship, Germany and the World, or My Father and his Work*. His greatest literary disappointment however, was the failure of his magazine *Decision*, which was meant to be an “Instrument, um die Beziehungen zwischen amerikanischer und europäischer Geisteswelt zu intensivieren” (Naumann, 2001). Overcoming this first upset, which had even pushed him to commit suicide, he managed to find some remaining faith in the cause he was fighting for by joining the American army, but only succeeding after several refusals linked to his suspected homosexuality and communist ties. His motivation for joining the armed forces was determined by his wish to fight directly against the Nazi regime, but also by his desire to put an end to his sentiment of exclusion and solitude as a German emigrant and author. While in the army, he took part in the Italy-campaign and became a correspondent for an army journal called the *Stars and Stripes*, where he remained active until the end of the war. Even before the capitulation of Germany, Klaus Mann wondered in agony whether people like him could one day play a role in post-war Europe. He saw himself belonging to a group of people that perceived themselves as being “cosmopolitans by instinct and necessity, precursors and pioneers of a universal civilization” (Strauss/

Miermont, 2002). Despite the fact that he strived to inform and warn his contemporaries, he was aware that his true audience would be found in generations to come; in a new wave of pioneers of a universal civilization: “Nicht euch, den Zeitgenossen, gehört unser Wort; es gehört der Zukunft, den noch unborenen Geschlechtern” (Mann, 1952), says Mann in *The Turning Point*. But as early as 1945, he was appalled to see that the Germans showed no sign of remorse or of culpability. He was persuaded that if the *Führer* had won the war, the German nation would have venerated him, unable to distinguish good from evil (Strauss/Miermont, 2002). Under these conditions, Klaus Mann dismissed the option of returning permanently to his homeland. He nevertheless remained optimistic of being able to contribute in the moral, intellectual and political vacuum that remained as a consequence of the war. But after too many disappointments, including the obvious signs of an upcoming Cold War, as well as the impossibility to publish in Germany his works written abroad, he saw no other choice but to commit suicide. Mann took his life while still in self-imposed exile, in Cannes, France, on May 21<sup>st</sup> 1949.

Although an outsider in his time, Klaus Mann is remembered today as a pioneer of both queer and German exile literature, but perhaps foremost as a sharp-sighted prophet whose message was to warn the world against the danger of National Socialism in Germany and in the rest of Europe. His legacy is that of a visionary who gave his all for a *Vaterland* that, as he had ultimately come to realize, would never accept him as a son.

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### Notes

1. Beyond Klaus Mann's own experience, both his father Thomas and his sister Erika were often heckled by brown shirted storm troopers when they gave speeches or appeared in public.
2. I have discussed about this novel in my Master's thesis entitled: "Der Konflikt zwischen Eros und Engagement in Klaus Mann's Exilromanen *Flucht in den Norden* and *Der Vulkan*."

## Trends in Canadian Newspaper Coverage of Gay Straight Alliances: 2000-2009

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**Abstract:** *Gay Straight Alliances (GSAs) in Canadian public schools have gained considerable media attention since reports first surfaced in 2000. This study analyzed newspaper reporting about GSA creation and summarized the shift towards greater respect and inclusion of LGBTQ students and their allies within public schooling.*

### Introduction

GSAs are voluntary, extra-curricular clubs for students who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or queer (LGBTQ), who are questioning their sexuality, or who consider themselves to be allies to the LGBTQ community (GLSEN, 2000). In both Canada and the United States, GSAs must obtain a faculty advisor (Lipkin, 2004; Valenti & Campbell, 2009). From this common foundation, GSAs can play a wide range of roles in the schools they inhabit. For example, Griffin, Lee, Waugh and Beyer (2005) describe some GSAs as ‘invisible’. These clubs are not advertised within schools, and consist primarily of emotional and psychological support delivered individually to students by the school counsellor. Other, highly visible, GSAs educate for institutional change within their schools and have liaisons with the outside LGBTQ community. Fluid and dynamic, GSAs can play many roles simultaneously. For instance, a single GSA can provide individual counselling for some of its members while also holding school-wide anti-homophobia events or marching in the community Pride Parade.

Just as the functions of GSAs are varied, so too has been the opposition to their creation. In reviewing the literature on politicized GSA legal cases, those individuals and community groups protesting their formation have relied on two broad arguments. GSAs have been viewed as either dangerous because they promoted homosexuality or as unnecessary because the teaching of sexuality was not seen to be within the jurisdiction of public education (see Lipkin, 2004; Macgillivray, 2006; Miceli, 2005).

Canadian newspaper coverage of the formation of GSAs provided rich data with which to map the trends in public (dis)approval of queer youth activism and the queer community as a whole. It also offered insights into how the role of schooling was cast as a socializing and political agent with regards to sexuality. While public opinion may not always be “right,” it nonetheless reflects what many people believe (Levin, 2009). From the first newspaper coverage of the creation of a Canadian GSA in Vancouver in 2000, to the latest stories appearing on the front page of the Windsor Star in 2009, queer youth activism in public schools has caught the attention of the Canadian media throughout the past decade. Canadian newspapers are thus used as a measure of Canadian public opinion with regards to GSAs.

American sociologist Melinda Miceli, author of *Standing Out, Standing Together* (2005) described the unique position GSAs hold in the media documentation of social movements. According to Miceli, GSAs are subject to the assertions of a wide range of parties, all of whom claim some sort of expertise.

Parents, community members, psychologists, lawyers, students, and educators can all voice their opinion, claiming they have some degree of expertise on GSAs in schools. They can frame their opinion as experts about their own children, about the academic needs of students, about developmental concerns, about religious moral and the values of their community, etc. (p. 169)

In Canadian coverage of GSAs, I argue that because nearly every viewpoint was treated as containing some sort of expertise, very few, if any, were censored. Newspaper coverage of GSAs is textual evidence of the Socratic “marketplace of ideas,” where all opinions are presented, if not welcomed, in the public sphere. Using Canadian newspaper coverage of GSAs from the 2000’s as a case study, I have explored the following research question: what trends can be ascertained of public acceptance of the queer community in formal schooling?

## Methods

The 66 news stories, editorials, and letters to the editor that covered GSAs over the last decade in both regional and local newspapers were collected from the Canadian Newsstand Database, and the Windsor Public Library Archives. All Canadian newspaper articles covering GSAs were published between 2000-2009. There was no data available before the year 2000.

Viewpoints were coded based on the informants' description or opinion of the purpose of, or role(s) played, by school based GSAs. The codes were then broken into the following four groups:

1. GSAs as dangerous
2. GSAs as unnecessary
3. GSAs for safety and protection
4. GSAs for education and activism

Passages supporting the code 'GSAs as dangerous' included making queer identity synonymous with pedophilia or alcoholism, a focus on queer sex acts, accusations of luring children to homosexuality, advancing the 'gay agenda', and of using GSAs as vehicles for indoctrination. Passages supporting the code 'GSAs as unnecessary' included a violation of parental rights, admonishing schools to protect all students by not singling out LGBTQ students, fears that GSAs would segregate the student body, and an insistence that schools focus exclusively on teaching reading, writing, and arithmetic. Consistent with earlier cases, these two codes categorized all opposition to GSAs in public schools.

Supporters of GSAs envisioned the clubs serving two distinct, though sometimes overlapping purposes. Views coded as safety and protection primarily advocated for protection from gay bashing, seeing GSAs as providing support and counselling to LGBTQ students, and promoting tolerance. Viewpoints coded as education and activism saw GSAs as vehicles of bringing about wider social change, emphasizing human rights, demonstrating support from the larger LGBTQ community, and stressing affirmation and inclusion rather than tolerance. This coding is consistent with Griffin et. al.'s (2005) distinction between visible and invisible school based GSAs.

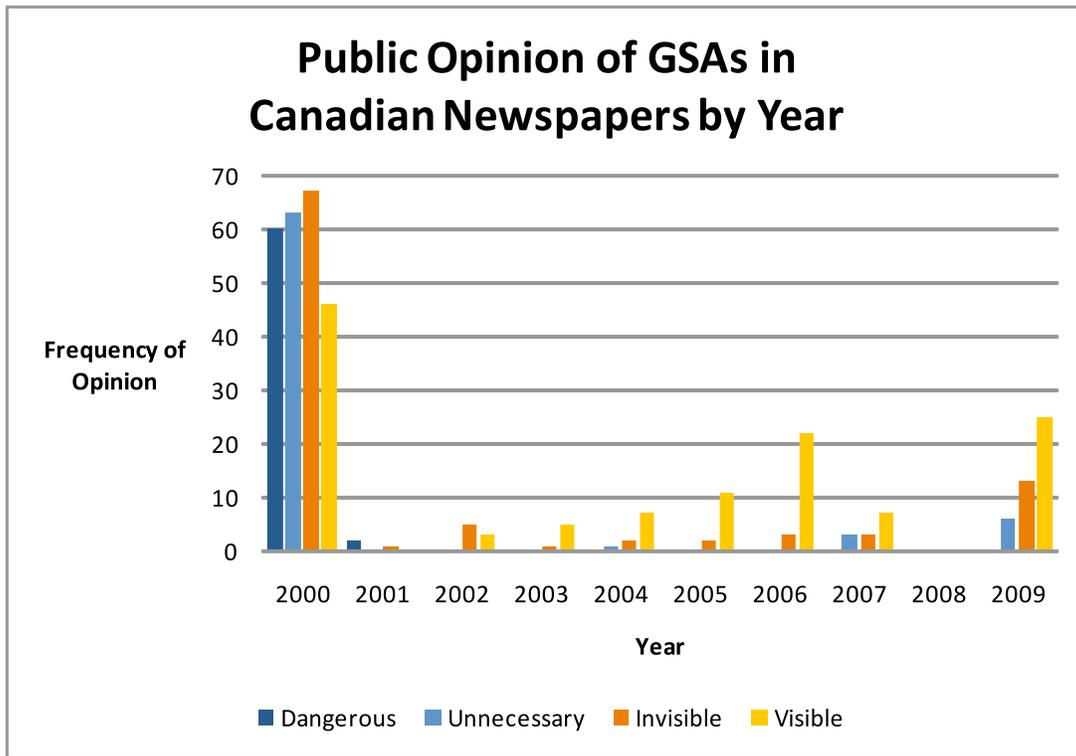
It was common for a single newspaper article, particularly from the front page of a newspaper, to report views from several coding categories. Hence, the graph in the results sections provides more data than the total number of articles, representing the recurrence of each published opinion.

## Results & Discussion

The following graph indicates changes in printed public opinion from 2000 to 2009. Fifty articles were coded from the year 2000, with a majority opposing the creation of school based GSAs. The next year, just one article covering GSAs was published (which supported their creation), and the average number of articles published during the rest of the decade (2001-2009) was 1.7.

In the years after 2000, opposition on the grounds that GSAs are dangerous disappeared completely from the public domain. Published opinions regarding GSAs as unnecessary dropped significantly, from 63 published comments in 2000 to 6 in 2009. Opinions that saw GSAs as a means for education and activism formed the majority of total published opinions after 2003.

Figure 1: Public Opinion of GSAs in Canadian Newspapers by Year



The overwhelming majority of the articles came from British Columbia, likely because reports of the first GSA in Canada came from Coquitlam. British Columbia was also the only province where it was reported that the provincial teachers’ union actively voted to support GSAs. Partially contextualizing the decrease of the number of stories printed after the year 2000 was the motion passed that year by the British Columbia Teachers Association to support the creation of GSAs throughout the province. Once their creation was protected by the BCTA, it is possible that GSAs ceased to become newsworthy. Their declining novelty could have diminished newspapers’ willingness to seek out these stories, thus resulting in fewer total stories published.

Another partial explanation for the decrease in opposition is the generational difference in tolerance toward homosexuality, as documented by Andersen and Fetner (2008). Although Andersen and Fetner studied changes in Canadian attitudes between 1989 and 2000, their finding that tolerance increased within all birth cohorts could mean that as younger generations matured into adulthood over the 2000’s, they did not voice opposition in the media the way their older counterparts did.

The following tables tally the frequency of each viewpoint. Infrequently published opinions are of particular interest as they demonstrate the edges of the debate. They are the parameters within which the more frequently reported opinions fall.

Table 1: Opposition to GSAs by Frequency of Opinion

<b>Opposition (Dangerous)</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Opposition (Unnecessary)</b>	<b>Frequency</b>
Advancing the 'gay agenda', or propaganda and social engineering from gay lobbyists	25	Schools should protect all students, not just LGBTQ	17
Promoting homosexuality, or luring students to 'the gay lifestyle'	15	GSAs violate parental rights, sexuality should be taught exclusively by parents	16
Focus on sex acts, 'a gay sex club for kids'	7	GSAs will segregate, isolate, or harm LGBTQ students	12
Pathologizing (comparing to alcoholism, pedophilia, etc.)	7	Sexuality is not a school or union issue	7
Indoctrination	4	Policy has not been developed	7
Preemptive picketing (picketing schools where no GSA exists)	2	Schools should just teach the 3 R's.	6
GSAs will incite violence	1	Gay bashing and homophobia are non-issues	5
GSAs infringe on religious rights	1	Children are/should be asexual	4
<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>73</b>

Table 2: Support of GSAs by Frequency of Opinion

<b>Support (safety)</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Support (education)</b>	<b>Frequency</b>
Protection from gay bashing or suicide	57	Educating to effect systemic change	40
Individual support	21	Connecting to human rights	26
Promoting tolerance	11	Support from outside LGBTQ community	24
GSAs are no different than the chess club	5	Stresses acceptance, affirmation and inclusion (rather than tolerance)	18
Opportunity for individual counseling for LGBTQ students	2	GSAs as social (as opposed to individual) space	14
GSAs should be permitted, but not advertised	1	Youth leadership	4
<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>97</b>	<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>126</b>

### Conclusion

The results lend support to the research question and indicate that there is a noticeable trend in public acceptance of the queer community in formal schooling. I do not, however, claim that homophobia toward youth has disappeared entirely. It is possible that many of the opposing arguments to GSAs (especially those in the "GSAs as dangerous" category) became less socially acceptable to voice publicly. While it is encouraging to see many of the hateful comments toward LGBTQ youth wane in the Canadian press, there are likely self-censoring enclaves of the population who continue to hold these views. Further research is needed to determine to what extent self-censoring is taking place, and what, if anything, can be done about it.

While the time constraints of this study did not allow for triangulation, the research would have been enhanced by having multiple coders analyze the same data to produce more accurate results.

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## Queering the Student Body: Acting and the Pedagogy of Performing Gender

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**Abstract:** *This paper will use aspects of habitus, queer and third-space theory to analyse experiences of an actor-training student undertaking a production of Romeo and Juliet (2008) in Australia.*

This paper is a section of a larger research project that interrogates the construction and process of inscription upon actors-in-training throughout the rehearsal and production periods of an annual Shakespeare Festival held by a regional university in Australia. For the purposes of this brief paper, it will focus on the journey of one male acting student, Christopher, and the reception of his embodiment of a “Romeo” in a 2008 production of Shakespeare’s *Romeo and Juliet*. Under the fictional conditions of a play in rehearsal and performance, the process of transformation of the actor-body can create a gender ambivalence that articulates gender fluidity and an anticipation of gender transgression in an audience.

### Performing the Fictional Body

Actors are products of culture and cultural products (Buchbinder, 1998, p. 2), they are complicit in the business of creating and maintaining a gendered set of symbols and images that are rendered visible and repeatable in the eyes of consumers. For actors-in-training, they practice the complex creation of ‘making a man or woman’ and their mediated or virtual body becomes a constructed body that signifies fictional space and externalises internal gender traits that are then “read” by an anticipating audience. There is a kind of pedagogy occurring in this cultural exchange: the actor’s body becomes a citational agent that impacts upon the consuming public in variable and sometimes surprising ways. The body “stands for” or becomes a metaphor for fictional gender performance that is so coercively alike to reality. The blurring of the fictional and the actual body is a by-product of any actor’s experience.

The ability to navigate gender knowledge and complexities is the practice of the social processes of gender (Connell, 1995, p. 65). Connell states that “practice (social and gender) makes a world”, the rehearsal or practice of social processes in the fiction is not only a parallel to the actual but also meta-process of the actual. Vicki Bell in her book on *Performativity and Belonging* suggests that either actual or fictional gender performances are the same citational practices (p. 201) in that they display gender as a text to be read on or off the stage. The 20 year old man/boy who played Romeo has an actual name, Christopher, and his body is subjective to him and has its own personality traits and ways of seeing the world. His body is the actual entity of inscription or site of embodiment. Once he began to build his Romeo in rehearsal, with the help of the director, he embarked on finding an alternative set of behaviours that create “Romeo” for public consumption; his body began to become objectified as something other than Christopher. This is when the body enters into the fictional world of the play and Christopher’s Romeo began interacting with other fictional characters to represent the fictional world of the play. The rehearsal period gave way to the production phase when Christopher’s Romeo is placed on the set, in costume and makeup, and with additional music and other aesthetic theatrical devices to entertain an audience. It is here that Romeo and Christopher become something beyond only subject (Christopher) and object (Romeo) where the body is read by the audience gaze as a metaphor for a fusion of Renaissance and modern boy-ness.

For Christopher, he was aware of the process of inscribing and embodying a character; the constant interplay involved with his journey from subjectivity to metaphor on the stage. A character is a contrivance and the actor is self-aware of the performance of its self; actors are trained to see themselves simultaneously as their character and themselves so that gender-sharing between the fictional and actual body becomes necessary. This is the locus of what Connell (1995) calls “body-reflexive practice” (p.61) where the actors are made aware of the simultaneous experience of themselves ‘in’ and ‘as’ their bodies. There is a similar logic involved in the boy actors from the English Renaissance who would have played Juliet in the original productions; their actual bodies were male, yet performed as female on stage, resulting in a fluidity of gender where the audience suspended their disbelief enough to accept the transgendered body. Fictional gender of a character, then, can be inscribed upon the actual body of an actor re-

ardless of their own gender. Romeo is not real, but the body of the actor performing Romeo is, and the character thus travels from the play text to a performance text and is manifest upon an actual body. In the creation of a particular demonstration of Romeo, Christopher was aware of how he was affected and changed by his own fictional citation of Romeo (as we shall return to soon).

### **Habitus and fictional space**

The cultural and social literacy that young actors must gain in order to work between the objectivity (external “objectified” performance of character in a public forum) and the subjective (inner creation/motivation of subjective character work developed in the relatively private realm of rehearsal) is a most dynamic and changeable space for learning. This space provides a portal through which we might witness the process of gender construction; a highly complex system of inscription and embodiment that is repeatable upon the body and continually changes throughout the lives of the characters in performance because the actual bodies are also in continual flux. The rehearsal space and the public stage, therefore provide a discreet location for the realization of Pierre Bourdieu’s notions of habitus and field. If the social field is the university-produced actor-training program, then the practice associated with this habitus blurs objectivity and subjectivity (what Bourdieu calls “socialized subjectivity” (Bourdieu and Wacquant in Tranter, 2006, p.4). Habitus is not biologically determined, but a process of social and cultural construction: “habitus describes people’s embodied capacity to assume the attitudes and actions required within particular social fields” (Tranter, 2006, p. 4). Bourdieu could be explaining the process of gender construction or actor-training already discussed in this paper; the development of habitus and gender seem synonymous with how individuals acquire “dispositions and understandings of the world through objective structures and personal history”. Fictionalized or not, the habitus of an actor-training program that produces a Shakespeare production remains concerned with social reproduction and the conditions of material existence. The fictional space/location, such as the world of the play on stage is actively reflexive, simultaneously subjective and objective thus moving beyond the established dualism of these two phenomenon. The actors’ body is an intense site/cite of body-reflexivity which is both object (a material thing), subject, and agent (a representation for change/meaning) to create a fictional yet believable social world; the practice itself is deliberate and self-referential.

### **Third-space and the fictional body**

Homi Bhaba’s theory of third-space can also be brought in here to describe the “otherness” of this creative and pedagogic space; one that might suggest that creative and cultural activity of “acting” is a habitus that is open and challenges “natural intelligences” (Tranter, 2006, p.4). The third-space is the location between objectivity (metaphor or fiction, the character) and subjectivity (the actual actor body), but it is not limited to any single synthetical result from a combination of the two (as seen in Hegel’s Dialectics). The third-space encompasses and encourages ambivalence which “ruptures” a dialectical discourse by transforming the assumed dualities. This has the power to point to the process of construction of a colonial image (that is, an image that is singular, “known” and homogenous) as the third-space also invites critique through fictional comparison to reality. The habitus of actor-training, therefore, takes a cultural artifact, like a Shakespearean text, and invites modern behaviours and actual bodies to intertextually transform the 500 year old words; a third-space created at the site of rehearsing a fictional world alongside the actual world. Bhabha might say that the very act of mimicry renders visible (and therefore invites contestation and dialogue) the long-held biases and assumptions about the role of Romeo and is gender representation (it could be argued that the cultural baggage associated with this character constitutes its own field and can be a “normalizing” presence upon the actor-body). He states that this visibility is “always produced at the site of interdiction, that is, ...a discourse uttered between the lines and as such both against the rules and within them....mimicry is at once resemblance and menace (1994, p.86 & 89).

This is illustrated by the data gathered from audience members over five performances of *Romeo and Juliet*. Christopher described his Romeo as an “adolescent” who grows from being without experience towards gaining experience, a “loner” and “bookish”. He felt that he was “re-living” his adolescence, and although he was completely aware of the character as something separate from him, he nonetheless used his own experiences to fuel his understanding of Romeo. He was not necessarily prepared for the audience’s response (a completely different field, the audience only see the finished product and

not the process of creating a character) which created their own meanings about Romeo that could not be divorced from Christopher's actual body. The descriptions of Romeo ranged from "hot", "fag", "emo", "affectionate", "romantic", "charming", "a thinker", "looks like a girl", "average teenager", "poetic", "Johnny Depp", "weak", "a gentleman", "adorable", "free spirited", "sook" and "sexy". What was consistent in the feedback was the variety of words used to describe the character on stage and the blurring of gender identity so that Romeo was simultaneously attractive to (both male and female respondents) and yet also "weak" and "faggy". One of the most emotive responses was from a young man stating "[Romeo was] rad. [I'd] be all over him if I was a girl. Got a good mix of masculine and feminine, sensitivity and toughness". We took this to mean that Romeo had succeeded in confounding the masculine supremacy in world of the play, but that Christopher's body was also the site of gender transgression and slippage.

The "interdiction" of these various responses suggest that Christopher's Romeo exists somewhere between all of them; the words above describe partial glimpses of audience reactions that creates a potentially powerful state of incompleteness of "almost the same [as what they expected], but not quite" (Bhabha, 1994, p.86). There is a metonymy in the language used to describe Romeo because they are also describing Christopher and this creates multiple meanings that are contradictory. Chris's gendered-performance of "almost male, but not quite" illustrates Bhabha's notion of "mimicry", in this case any expected and popular version of Romeo as romantic notion from the 16<sup>th</sup> century played by Sir John Gielgud or Sir Laurence Olivier (we'll call this a colonial and homogenous representation) is not only destroyed, but the slippage of the expectation produced a surprise in the audience; the "fag" can also be desirable to a heteronormative audience. In Queer discourse, Chris's body is a queered surface that is a vehicle for gender transgression whether intended to transgress or not.

### **Queering the body is a pedagogic process**

Even before the production went into performance, the poster that was distributed to local schools revealed some initial gender confusion by "readers". One particular incident was relayed to us by the box-office staff who spoke with a concerned local resident who stated that she would not be bringing her students to the show because it was obviously an all-female cast. The box-office staff enquired after how they had made this assumption, and she replied that the poster obviously revealed "two girls about to kiss", thus the poster represented an overt lesbian production. More so than the female actor playing Juliet, the gender of Christopher's body was the locus of gender confusion; the masculinity of Christopher was erased, feminized and also sexualised (perhaps demonized in this case) as lesbian by the local resident. The actor-body queers any simple dualities between what is presumed as "straight" or "queer" because their bodies are never entirely fictional nor actual when in performance mode; they exist in a contrived world where gender is also represented, suspended, and enigmatic. Again the capacity for reflexivity models Bourdieu's meaning of habitus in action where we see the body's "embodied capacity to assume the attitudes and actions required within particular social fields" (Tranter, 2006, p. 4).

The revelation of this to both Christopher during my interviews with him, and for the audience revealed an active process of process of "queering" (as an active present participle, rather than a forgone conclusive noun) which can promote critical thinking, gender playfulness, and pedagogical practices that transgress and transmute, and make visible (perhaps make absurd) the inability of a straight/queer or feminine/masculine binary to locate gendered experience. Like Queer theory, it moves beyond seeking a discourse of contradictions, rather, it is a subtle process that mimics, mirrors and "menaces" the assumed stability of it as a fixed or stable gender performance. This is a different mode of action to 'queer pedagogy' which aims to recover queer voices in theory and queer lenses in critical analysis. According to William Spurlin (2002), critical pedagogy and queer theory both "enable critique of the reproduction of knowledge and cultural narratives that serve the interests of dominant social groups" (p. 10), to ultimately expose and contest normalising processes in society (Kopelson, 2002, p. 20). What intrigues me most about queer theory is that it subsumes critical pedagogy and actively aims to dismantle the myth of binary oppositions so that actions can "disorganise, rather than merely organise around" any binary (Kopelson, 2002, p. 19; Sedgwick in Spurlin, 2002, p. 9). Much of the recent published scholarship about queer pedagogy articulates moving beyond "queer" as a simple identity category in opposition to straight, toward "queering" as a process of "disrupting dominant cultural understanding of the 'naturalness' of heterosexuality and conventional gender relations" (Anderson, 2007, p. 3). Zoe Anderson tells us that

“queering” becomes “a mode of teasing out the strange regulatory manner” that allows a normalising processes to persist. The interrogation of absolutes in education certainly opens an aperture for the mainstream use of the term “queering” as a verb (Britzman in Kopelson 2002, p. 25) to have playful and irrelevant pedagogical intent. The anticipating audiences produced responses that suggested their active involvement in queering Christopher/Romeo as they tried to wrestle with the images presented to them which were simultaneously “gay” and desirable.

### Conclusion

There is a similarly shared impetus for creating spaces and naming the processes of critical engagement and enablement in habitus, third space and queer theories. Bourdieu’s social theories, like those of Homi Bhabha, and queer theory all invite the reader to indulge in critique in order to deliberately move away from the binary opposition imbedded in dualistic discourses so that new discourses regarding transformation and fluidity can emerge. With the birth of the reader, meaning becomes deferred and this forms the basic building blocks of critical pedagogy. Paulo Freire (*Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, 1970) reminds us that all pedagogy is a political act as there is a process of inclusion and exclusion at work in terms of content and methods; a “queering” pedagogy seeks to actively participate in and develop a discourse that can transform thinking and revise the “habitual [heteronormative] ways of reading texts and reading the world” (Spurlin, 2002, p. 12). The spark for seeking this kind of gender transformation maybe linked to desire, not just pedagogical desire in a yearning for experience and knowledge, but also a more fundamentally narcissistic “drawing of the eye” that is associated with actor performances. R.W. Connell (1995) tells us that exploration of desire is commonly excluded from social theory (especially pedagogical theories) but the practices that shape and realise desire are an aspect of gender order and ordering (p. 25). Perhaps this is because notions of desire (especially in mediated bodies) is often worn on the body; bodies of students are texts and are laden with messages either intended or imposed, and a body in denial of knowledge of itself risks becoming what Foucault would call a “docile” body that is without self-critique or awareness of how normalising processes act upon it.

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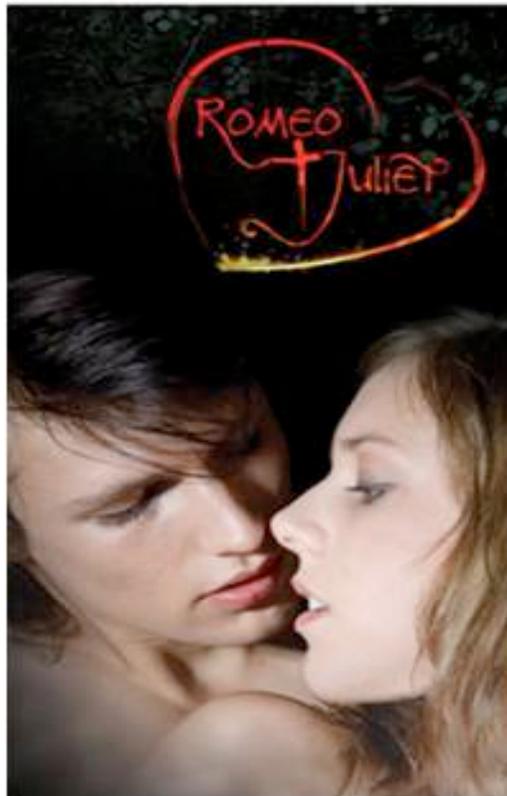
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### Biography

Dr. Janet McDonald received her Ph.D. majoring in Theatre for Youth from Arizona State University in 1999. Her doctoral dissertation investigated boys who do Drama inside the elite colonial institutions of the Greater Public Schools of Brisbane, Australia. She has been a high school Drama teacher since 1987 in both Australia and the USA, and her experiences working in an all-male boys’ school as a Drama teacher encouraged her to investigate the construction and surveillance of gender in educational contexts.

McDonald is currently Associate Professor in Drama and Theatre Studies at the University of Southern Queensland (USQ) and Head of the School of Creative Arts. She is also an active member of the Public Memory Research Centre at USQ. She was a co-recipient of the USQ Excellence in Teaching Award (2008) and serves as the Chair of Youth Arts Queensland (the state's peak body for youth arts). Her current research interests include: regional youth arts initiatives, as well as her ongoing research into masculinities and actor-training at USQ. In 2009, McDonald was a co-recipient of the prestigious Australian Learning and Teaching Council Citation for Outstanding Contribution to Student Learning.

#### Images



Christopher Hunter and Kate Murphy as Romeo and Juliet.  
2008 production of *Romeo and Juliet* presented by the School of Creative Arts and Artsworx at the University of Southern Queensland, Toowoomba, Australia.  
Image by Cindy Laine, 2008

## Teachers, Sexual Orientation, and the Law: Balancing Competing Rights

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**Abstract:** *Sexual orientation issues in schools are hotly contested and have led to many recent legal challenges. Since 1995, sexual orientation has been a federally protected class; however, the field of education has been slow to adjust to this legal shift. This paper presents seven cases from Canada dealing with teachers, sexual orientation, and schooling, and discusses how the Canadian human rights framework attempts to balance competing rights.*

### Summary

The current progressive political climate in Canada was achieved through a long and slow process of legislative reform that culminated in the adoption of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. This important document was entrenched into the Canadian constitution by the Constitution Act in 1982. As part of the supreme law of Canada, this document superseded all existing laws, and for the first time the rights of all persons to be treated equally was given constitutional status. Although public education is governed by provincial statutes, all publicly funded institutions must abide by the spirit and letter of the Charter (Watkinson, 1999). This new constitution guaranteed protections for many historically marginalized groups. Sexual orientation, however, was not initially included as a protected class for equality rights under section 15 of the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*.

Although equality rights supported by the Charter were enforced starting in 1985, sexual minorities were not recognized as a protected class until ten years later, following a unanimous decision of the Supreme Court of Canada in the landmark case of *Egan v. Canada* ("Egan v. Canada," 1995). This ruling provided that discrimination based on sexual orientation was prohibited by s. 15 of the Charter, and this decision effectively placed the category of sexual orientation on the list of protected groups in the *Charter*.

Since the Supreme Court's 1995 decision in *Egan v. Canada*, various cases have tested the interpretation and application of the equality rights extended in that case. The first case in an educational institution after *Egan* was decided was *Vriend v. Alberta*, ("*Vriend v. Alberta*," 1998). This case was due to a university employee being fired from his position as a lab coordinator, solely because of his homosexuality. Vriend was employed by a Christian university that had instituted a position statement condemning homosexuality and requiring all students and employees to comply with the University's position. Vriend was called on to resign when he confirmed that he was homosexual, but he refused and was fired. He initially brought forward a human rights complaint; however, it was dismissed because the province of Alberta did not have sexual orientation listed as a protected class in its human rights legislation. In this case, the Supreme Court stated that not protecting individuals from discrimination based on sexual orientation was an "unjustified violation of s. 15 of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms," and ordered that the words "sexual orientation" be read into provincial human rights codes as a prohibited ground of discrimination (*Vriend v. Alberta*, 1998, p. 2). This human rights framework and how it influenced the remaining cases discussed frames the discussion of the evidence presented in this paper.

The data presented in this paper are comprised of seven legal cases (1995- 2005) as well as federal and provincial legislation from Canada. These cases were selected based on an exhaustive review of the case law and Canadian legal scholarship to identify cases that addressed issues relating to sexual orientation and teacher expression. The following cases are discussed: *Vriend v. Alberta* (1 S.C.R. 493 1998), *Ross v. New Brunswick School District No. 15* (1 S.C.R. 825 1996), *Trinity Western University v. British Columbia College of Teachers* (S.C.R. 772, 2001 2001), *Chamberlain v. Surrey School District No. 36* (4 SCR 710 2002), *Kempling v. British Columbia College of Teachers* (B.C.D. Civ. 2004), *School District No. 44 (North Vancouver) v. Jubran*, 2005 BCCA 201 (BCSC 6 2005) and concludes with a discussion of the recent amendment to the Alberta Human Rights Act, Bill 44.

## Conclusions

Gay, lesbian, and bisexual teachers and their allies have played an important role in challenging the regulatory regimes in their schools and communities. It is well documented that gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender (glbt) youth are particularly at-risk of being victimized by peers, of being rejected by teachers and administrators, of dropping out of school, and having higher rates of suicide ideation than their heterosexual peers (Bochenek & Brown, 2001; California Safe Schools Coalition, 2004; D'Augelli & Hershberger, 1993; Dorais & LaJeunesse, 2004; Fisher, 1999; Kosciw & Diaz, 2006; Lock, 2002; Thompson & Johnson, 2003). In order to better support glbt youth, we need educators who are able to clearly and effectively teach about diversity, equality, and human rights especially regarding sexual orientation and balance these lessons with respect for diverse religious views. The information presented in this article aims to provide educators with such guidance.

These legal battles are costly to communities. In addition to the financial and emotional burdens created by pursuing legal action, these highly public battles can often polarize communities and generate more hostility towards targeted individuals. In the end, gay, lesbian, and bisexual educators have often had to fight for many years to get schools to do the right thing: update policies, provide new professional development workshops, and add more inclusive curricular materials to course work, and in the school library.

Faculties of Education must also work harder to better prepare teachers and administrators to address these issues. Teacher education programs can help provide new teachers with important opportunities to explore bias-related issues in courses on multicultural education and explicitly address gender and sexual diversity issues. They should also provide future teachers examples of inclusive curricular materials, models for talking about topics related to gender and sexual orientation, as well as sample class activities that allow students to practice addressing and challenging incidents of homophobia, transphobia and related forms of gendered harassment (Meyer, 2008). Providing student teachers a safe environment in which to practice having these discussions and experience a model of an anti-oppressive classroom is important so that they can experience this form of learning and develop confidence in their abilities to effectively address bias and teach inclusively (Meyer, in press).

Educational leadership programs and coursework must also present legal, ethical, and anti-oppressive approaches to school leadership. Programs should include what these philosophies would look like when applied consistently in one's leadership style and infused throughout a school community. School administrators need to be aware of existing legal protections and work to create an environment where homophobia and transphobia are not tolerated and all student identities and family structures are included and valued. By challenging discriminatory and damaging policies and practices in the courts, these educators have made substantial contributions to creating more positive and inclusive learning environments in their schools. Together, these activists have helped lead the way for improved social equality for gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, and queer individuals and families.

A complete version of this paper is in press:

Meyer, E. J. (in press). *Teachers, Sexual Orientation and the Law in Canada: A Human Rights Approach. The Clearinghouse.*

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## Relating Queer: The Pedagogical Implications of Queer Counterstorytelling

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**Abstract:** *In this review, I draw parallels between Queer narrative pedagogy and counterstorytelling within Critical Race Theory. Doing so fosters a multi-axis approach to social justice work and could serve to expand the value of counterstorytelling to both general and specific anti-oppression movements.*

Currently, educational scholars in a myriad of disciplines are examining the effects of using narrative evidence as a pedagogical device to expand the critical thinking skills and social and cognitive awareness of adult and youth learners. A particularly undertheorized field of study in this regard is the inclusion of Queer narratives to address issues of gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ) marginalization within dominant educational discourses. In this review, I will use a lens of Critical Race Theory to determine how the educational discourse surrounding the pedagogical use of narratives addressing issues of gender, sexuality, and queerness in the classroom reflects the idea of counterstorytelling. In their current, theoretical incarnation counterstory theory has thrived to centralize race in the fields of education and law and have bolstered the efforts of Critical Race theorists in these disciplines. More theorization of the use of narratives in pedagogical practice is necessary to explore their potential implications for broader social justice application.

I surveyed seven articles that concern the way Queer narrative evidence has been and can be used in educational practice and research. In these articles, narratives are considered communicative building blocks that help shape and are shaped by discourse (Vicars, 2006). As such, dominant narratives inform cultural and societal values about gender and sexual identities that render some expressions normative and others illegitimate. Both straight/cisgender and Queer identities are formed via the discourses at work in this system of cultural value allocation (Vicars, 2006). Ó'Móchain (2006) states that the use of Queer narratives specifically, serves different but equally valuable purposes for Queer and straight/cisgender students. For Queer students, narratives mitigate the effects of negative messages about delegitimized sexual identities. In dynamic, real-life Queer characters, Queer students can find points of identification that contradict the pervasive archetype of the Queer victim. For straight/cisgender students, Queer narratives evoke empathetic responses that challenge them to think introspectively and imagine new pathways for gender and sexuality development. Ó'Móchain adds that these positive effects are even more apparent when narratives are used in contexts in which the open discussion of gender and sexuality is officially or informally discouraged (Ó'Móchain, 2006).

In these contexts, Vicars (2004) avers that stories of Queer experiences in education convey to researchers and educators the weight of their pedagogical decisions. Namely, that educational practices can offset the harmful effects of enforced heteronormativity for Queer students in schools. Queer narratives provide students, educators, and researchers with unique tools useful for framing and analyzing multifaceted personal experience (Grace & Benson, 2000). Furthermore, Delgado (2001) suggests, "that we occupy a normative universe...from which we are not easily dislodged" (p. 41). It is normative universes, created by the use of majoritarian narratives, which dictate how Queer narratives should be read and valued (Willis, 2007). Therefore, use of narratives in the classroom provides the means for students to critique society's definition of normal as well as transform the way they interpret and explore interpersonal and systemic experiences (Grace & Benson, 2000; Vicars, 2004). The resulting critique of heteronormativity allows students to think globally about their identities and positionalities in the world. By promoting their awareness of majoritarian stock stories, narratives challenge students to engage social justice inequities enacted in their schools and communities (Ó'Móchain, 2006).

The school is one of the most deliberately chosen and useful sites for the execution of dominant ideologies (Grace & Benson, 2000). Positioning the authentic Queer voice as a threat allows schools to sanction only specific Queer embodiments in order to regulate the way deviant Queer narratives can be judged (bell hooks as paraphrased by Grace & Benson, 2000; Lewis, 2001). Within education, the positionality and value of every body and expression is dictated by curricular, pedagogical, and policy decisions (O'Connell, 2004). These decisions enacted in the everyday working of schools justify outward

physical, emotional, or pedagogical violence against Queer students and educators (Grace & Benson, 2000). Conversely, some school approaches have instead “draped a pall of silence” over sexuality issues and inquiry (Lewis, 2001, p. 204). In addition to this general silencing, educational paradigms and socially constructed educational values that encourage teachers to separate their personal and professional lives means that many Queer teachers do not explicitly reveal their sexual or gender identities in classroom settings (Grace & Benson, 2000). This not only limits personal classroom disclosure for Queer teachers but also impacts the messages teachers, in general, put forth about queerness. Personal Queer experience, especially that which portrays the positive value of queerness, removed from school settings coupled with the prevalence of negative messages about Queer identities and individuals, facilitate the development of harmful majoritarian stock stories.

These stories are enacted by straight/cisgender youth in the form of pejorative name calling and bullying and internalized by Queer youth in ways that can be damaging to their identification and educational success during formative years (Toynton, 2006). Queer youth identify some of these stock stories that characterize queerness as pathological, evil, unnatural, and temporary (Willis, 2007). In youth narratives, researchers were able to draw parallels between the dominant discourses and how youth envisioned their own identities. Youth characterized themselves as deviants, melancholy and sometimes suicidal loners, and in some cases as *good examples* who, through hard work, could overcome negative stereotypes (Willis, 2007). Grace and Benson (2000) quote Jennings (1994) to assert that the disruption of these harmful attitudes is imperative for the prosperity of Queer individuals and that the best way to ensure that prosperity is through Queer narrative pedagogy, “as long as we remain silent and allow our enemies to define us, we will never be free. Only through telling our stories can we shatter the myths and expose the lies that allow bigots to portray us as a threatening “other”” (p. 91).

Counterstorytelling theory suggests that the disruption of these stock stories is possible through the centralizing of the experiences of marginalized individuals. The use of Queer narratives in schools protests the construction of certain personal and historical stories as deviant or harmful (Vicars, 2006, p. 348). For these protests to be most effective in connecting to both Queer and straight/cisgender listeners/readers they should originate in the marginalized self (Toynton, 2006). Centralizing the voices of marginalized persons presents Queer narratives under alternative value systems that see being Queer as having positive influences on a person’s life. Toynton (2006) writes how his own experiences have proven invaluable in that they provide unique opportunities for telling stories that re-determine the value of Queer experiences. In fact, several of the surveyed theorists posit practical methods for and benefits of challenging these stories.

For example, while some educators and educational researchers do feel the justifiable need to conceal their sexual identities, others share their stories in efforts to combat the heterosexism and homophobia among their students through authentic interactions (Grace & Benson, 2000). Vicars (2006) posits that narratives are particularly useful in this regard specifically when combating behaviours of majority persons in education. He suggests that since pejoratives are the material manifestations of majoritarian stock stories, intercepting their use can complicate normative behavioural scripts. While challenging heterosexist comments is temporarily uncomfortable for both the person who originally uttered them and the person challenging their use, there are lasting positive effects from the implied critique of normative valuation that far outweigh the harm of the original utterances (Toynton, 2006). However, preemptive confrontation of dominant ideologies can be just as effective as reactionary confrontations, if not more so (Grace & Benson, 2000). The structure of the narrative forces students to critically consider the authority of their voices and the voices of others but ensures their ability to do so in fairly non-threatening ways (Grace & Benson, 2000; Ó’Móchain, 2006). Willis (2007) affirms that Queer-life narratives are *transformational scripts*, the increasing pedagogical prevalence of which will drastically increase educators’ access to positive Queer pedagogical methods (p. 190). By drawing from this methodological bank, educators can help both Queer and straight/cisgender students reauthor their own sexuality narratives and challenge them to think critically about how dominant discourses influence the value they themselves place on gender and sexuality variance (Grace & Benson, 2000; Willis, 2007).

In order to accomplish this increase in critical cognitive and social awareness, educators and educational researchers must combat the physical separation of students from queerness. As I mentioned previously, substantive discussions of gender and sexuality variance are relatively absent in the class-

room; markedly so in the United States. One of the most powerful uses of narratives, as well as one of the most apparent parallels between counterstorytelling theory and Queer narrative pedagogy, is their ability to facilitate figurative proximity when physical proximity is limited by geography and/or ideological climate. Storytelling is the most effective way to convey the intricacies of life experiences and for many students, stories represent their only encounter with experience that is diverse from their own (Vicars, 2006). Queer narratives are particularly effective for connecting both majority and minoritized students and educators with marginalized individuals and experiences (Ó'Móchain, 2006).

For Queer students, the pedagogical use of Queer narratives is particularly significant because unlike other minoritized identities, i.e. racial, ethnic, religious, etc., Queer folks do not experience Queer cultural development in their families and other social units (Toynton, 2006). For many of these students, the curricular inclusions of narratives are the only supportive space in which they can start to form and explore their Queer identities (Grace & Benson, 2000). Grace and Benson (2000) describe autobiographical queer-life narratives as giving Queer students the space and tools to explore their self-hood and how their presence or absence in education, history, and society is shaped by dominant discourse. This introspection yields the development of new counternarratives. Increasing the diversity of available Queer narratives with which Queer students can model their identities would provide options that run parallel, and simultaneously contrary to, the deficiency-based majoritarian descriptions of queerness outlined previously (Willis, 2007).

Teachers being able to share their individual Queer identities or even, I would argue, use any real-life narratives in practice, even *second-hand* narratives better allows them to connect to students. Solórzano and Yosso (2002) reveal that the voice of the educator presenting retold counterstories can provide a useful commentary on the experiences of a marginalized individual within systems of oppression. This is especially important for Queer narrative pedagogy given the barriers in place that prevent the entrance of Queer persons into education and restrict the identity disclosure of Queer teachers (Grace & Benson, 2000). If the educator, any educator, who is positioned in a place of almost absolute authority in the classroom, utilizes Queer narratives in their practice, they yield some authority to those narratives by virtue of their use. If narratives are approached using counterstory theory in a thoughtful and respected manner, teachers convey a positive attitude of queerness to Queer and non-queer students alike.

A common worry among teachers is that under current political and social climates, advocating queerness in the classroom might cause some students to ignore educational content or even disrupt classroom activity (Grace & Benson, 2000). More importantly that calling attention to queerness in the classroom has been shown to increase harassment of those students who are visibly Queer or labeled as Queer by their peers (Toynton, 2006). This fear is why Queer narratives and counterstories can be so useful for addressing issues of gender, sexuality, and queerness in the classroom. When the price of physical proximity is too high, narratives provide a way to address these issues without risking the safety of marginalized students. Narratives bridge the gap between the experiences majority students have and the experience they will never, and can never have (Vicars, 2006).

In general, research shows that “knowing queer persons and having knowledge of queer history and culture are associated with increased tolerance toward queer persons and support for queer civil equity” (Yang, 1998, as cited in Grace & Benson, 2000, p. 94). Narrative pedagogy makes real *othered* experiences for straight/cisgender students. Educators remarked at the straight/cisgender students’ level of empathy and respect for the situations of Queer individuals and the challenges they face (Ó'Móchain, 2006). Queer students are not the only one’s unwittingly internalizing negative messages about sexual and gender variance. Straight/cisgender students receive much of the same messaging from families, communities, and schools. For non-queer students, considering how they come to understand queerness and Queer people and how that informs their own sexuality, narratives can have transformative effects (Grace & Benson, 2000). While many non-queer students are uncomfortable with this process, Ó'Móchain (2006) finds that natural curiosity replaces reservation or indignation if the approach is non-threatening. The authority of the educator who uses Queer counterstories mentioned previously, impacts the attitudes of straight/cisgender students towards their Queer peers. More importantly perhaps, is the impact this method has on the student’s behaviours outside classroom interaction. O’Connell (2004) emphasizes that orienting students to identities outside their current societal scope of understanding, including Queer identities, is the first step towards developing an awareness of a personal responsibility to so-

cial justice. Furthermore, because of the standing of schools in society, the justification of Queer experience in mainstream education through the inclusion of narratives, impacts social justice advancements in broader cultural and societal attitudes towards queerness (Grace & Benson, 2000).

In conclusion, counterstory theory has the potential to sway countless social justice movements, impacting their legitimacy and success. The parallel encompassed in this review between Queer narrative pedagogy and counterstorytelling theory fosters a multi-axis approach to social justice work and could serve to expand the value of counterstorytelling to both general and specific anti-oppression movements. After all, if majoritarian stock stories are reinforced through constant presence and repetition, then increasing the prevalence of marginalized counterstories, especially in controlling institutions like schools, has the potential to effect dramatic cultural and ideological shifts.

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# Lessons in Social Justice: Queer Students Perceptions of Safe School Strategies and Legal Responses to Bullying in High Schools

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**Abstract:** *This study employed a series of interviews with sexual minority students and teachers combined with observations in the field, documenting and critically inquiring into the effectiveness of anti-harassment policies and safe school legislation to address the problem of bullying of sexual minority students in Canadian high schools.*

## Introduction

The particular focus of the larger research project on which this paper is based, was to examine the potential of safe school legislation and equity policies to combat the bullying and oppression of sexual minority students in high schools at the particular site of the TDSB. My main purpose was to inquire into how safety was defined and understood by sexual minority students and their allies – particularly in the absence of legal guidance – and then to inquire into how sexual minority students reported that safety was pursued at their schools. Finally, I considered how those definitions and understandings might be translated into law and policy reform that re-conceptualizes current approaches to safety. This paper reviews conceptions of safety and perceptions of threats from the perspective of sexual minority students and their advocates, taking seriously the legitimacy of their voices.

## Methods

To explore these questions in a way that purely doctrinal or theoretical research can rarely accomplish, I spent three months in 10 Toronto high schools within the TDSB, interviewing approximately 25 sexual minority students and fifteen teachers and guidance counsellors. The students in the study ranged from grades nine through twelve with equal gender representation. Students ranged in age from fifteen to eighteen. Students were recruited through teachers who were known to be supportive of sexual minority students in their high schools, often running gay-straight alliances or teaching sexuality and/or gender studies. Teachers, committed to making a difference for sexual minority students at particular schools, opened their doors to me, allowed me to sit in on classes day after day, and, most importantly, directed me to students they knew to be queer. The teachers who granted me access to their students (and other teachers who did not) also described their teaching experiences through formal interviews. As I spent time in their classrooms, these conversations also included informal “day to day” conversations that unfolded over the days or weeks spent in their schools. Teacher and student informants were asked to identify other informants who were part of the cultural community. This technique is known as “chain sampling” or “snowballing”. The purpose was to obtain a diffusion of knowledgeable informants in similar experiential areas of investigation. Chain sampling or snowballing in the educational context was the most useful and practical way to gain access in two crucial ways. First, snowballing at one site allowed me to access students who identified as gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender or queer, whom I would otherwise have had no way of identifying. Second, snowballing allowed me to access different sites, being introduced into a different school, usually to a teacher at that site who was informed and involved with “queer issues”.

## Results

Ontario high schools are governed by the same safe school legislation and regulations. In the TDSB, each school looks to the TDSB Safe School Foundation Statement and the Equity Foundation Statement to fulfil notions of safety and equity. According to students and teachers in this study, however, there is a range of conceptions of safety at schools. This range corresponds to the degree to which the safety concerns and needs of sexual minority students are variously considered. For a few schools, that conception is a marvel for sexual minority students. At others, sexual minority youth were ignored or incidentally considered when administrations were compelled to do so. At these schools, most of the con-

cern was on “visible minority” students who were perceived to be the greatest threat to the school. The range of conceptions can be represented in this way:



*Figure 1: Model of Conceptions of Safety*

At one end of the spectrum, school administrators conceptualized safety as an extreme in which “control of identity” of the students was paramount. In this configuration, the students were read as dangerous, often black, and the particular object to be controlled, male. The process of “othering” or “social distancing” that resulted from this perception, pushed black students, or some members of the group, away from the “normal” centre as it was perceived by the policy actors at the school. “Othering” marginalized this population in such a way as to produce inequities, resulting in alienation. Because of the power of the policy actors and the possibility that black students internalized the labels, diminution of their social standing within the school was believed to give rise to self-fulfilling prophecy, i.e. the label came to be accepted even by the students and the students, in fact, came to behave in ways the labels suggested they should. The minority fulfilled the prophecy of the social construction despite the efforts of the controlling group of policy actors to ensure the opposite, i.e. the “whiteness” of the black students.

At other schools, “security” was the primary focus of ensuring a safe school environment. The emphasis in the school was on “physical safety”. Measures included surveillance cameras, dress policies, security guards, an emphasis on containing and, if unsuccessful, responding to violent behaviours. Equity policies were secondary to concerns about violence and the presence of gangs in the school. Schools in this category, as well as schools that might be classified as schools where identity was controlled, perceived their own students as the threat to certifying the safety of the school. Many, if not most, schools may fall into this category.

Not surprisingly, given the status as “other” that most sexual minority students occupy in their schools, most students felt that safety had to be defined broadly with significant room for impact on the school culture, and not just as after purpose responses undertaken following an “incident” of bullying and harassment. Consequently, further along the model are schools that sexual minority students conceptualized as promoting equity as a means of achieving a safe and secure environment for students, teachers and staff. At this site, students and teachers emphasized equality and focused less on monitoring their own students. These schools may be uncommon, but the results of these efforts were effective in the estimation of students and teachers at the schools where equity as safety was stressed, notably for sexual minority students.

A smaller number of students made a distinction between equity and social justice. Therefore, at the other extreme on the safety spectrum was a school that not only promoted equity, but actively pursued goals of social justice. For these students social justice meant the pursuit of equality and the elimination of all oppression in the school, often tied to work in the outside community – while equity was seen as a more limited goal, often equated with a respect for diversity. The distinction between equity and social justice, in the view of some students, was contingent upon the extent to which a school was proactively trying to change the school culture, to address, for example, the heteronormativity of official and unofficial space in schools – especially the curriculum. For many students, heteronormativity was viewed as being more immediately threatening to their personal identities and safety, than bullying and any fear of physical or verbal harassment or violence. These students acknowledged, however, that for students in other Toronto schools, students in smaller cities, and in rural settings, concerns about physical and verbal violence were significant. The chief ingredient of a classification of “social justice” was a proactive approach in which justice was looked for in the school environment and sought in the larger community as well. This conception of safety was proposed by informants at the site an ideal model for all schools, notwithstanding an acknowledgment that transformation would likely be long term for most schools undertaking it. In whatever category, or categories, a school might be classified along this study’s model, con-

ceptions of safety at these five schools were not perceived as absolutes. For example, a school that might be classified as a school in which safety was conceived of in terms of creating a climate of equity, might also be concerned with social justice or even security. A school that emphasized a commitment to “safety as equity”, also tipped towards “social justice” in some ways.

The question must be posed: is this representation in *Figure 1*, from control-security-equity-social justice, a continuum? Do the pursuit of equity and social justice lead to a structure of security and attempt to control student identity? Do these interviewees – and critical educators – seek to replace one form of hegemony with another? Dan W. Butin has suggested that educators who insist that students gain knowledge of and acceptance of anti-oppressive pedagogies that are being offered to students are being just as oppressive as the practices that deliver oppressive, hegemonic perspectives. He has critiqued the anti-oppressive pedagogies as “limited” on the grounds that they “remain beholden to a notion of anti-oppression education as itself somehow outside of the potential for oppression” (Butin, 2001). Citing Foucault, Butin (2001) critiques Kumashiro, in particular, and equity or anti-oppressive education, generally:

There is no possibility that anti-oppressive education may itself be a pedagogy of silencing which is resisted by those in disagreement. Foucault has shown that we should be sceptical of any discourse that purports to be outside relations of power. In turn we must acknowledge that anti-oppressive education imposes itself upon students, from the texts to be read to the intellectual positions defended and attacked. (p. 14)

What Butin appears to miss in his critique, however, is the emphasis on critical pedagogy in developing, not an ethos nor a mindset in the students, but rather a freedom to question and to interrogate. Kumashiro (2002) responds to Butin’s critique in this way:

...[A] pedagogy informed by “posts” perspectives does not hope that students embrace or come closer to “the” anti-oppressive practice or perspective, nor does such a pedagogy need to resign itself to the fact that students might instead embrace oppressive ones. Rather, it hopes that students question the effects of a variety of practices and perspectives, including the ones their teachers say are anti-oppressive. In particular, it teaches students to look beyond a variety of practices and perspectives, not to reject what they are taught, but to examine and experience ways that any practice or perspective can produce different knowledge, identities, relations and forth, sometimes oppressive ones, sometimes anti-oppressive ones, and sometimes both ... “Posts” perspectives on anti-oppressive education problematizes the assumptions of educators that they can know with certainty what is oppressive or anti-oppressive and that their students do not need to be examining the multiple and often contradictory effects of what it is that they are learning. (p. 18)

I asked one of the teachers in a control-governed school if teaching equity was merely replacing hegemony with hegemony. I set out her answer at length:

I just did *Lord of the Flies* with my class, which is all about societal control, as you probably know. Maybe if we need to look at control as setting limits for the good of everyone. Control of some sort is usually necessary in any institution, especially one full of often impulsive and foolish young people who sometimes can’t see beyond the next five minutes or who come to school with a lot of negative baggage that they dump onto the school community. It’s like the free speech issue: free to a point, but we don’t typically let racists or Nazi types bellow their crap in public.

You know that I’m an easy-going teacher, but I sure am not easy-going about people being mean, rude, disrespectful, “primitive” and obnoxious - not at all.

In these types of cases, the equity stuff should form a foundation and be an ongoing campaign, but when it comes down to the behaviours I mention above, I don't shy away from certain "punitive" measures. However, what I would do is, for example, instead of suspending them and sending them home, have in-school suspensions or removal from classes, maybe peer guidance for

some, and in that context, put the student through a process that communicates - via their own reasoning, if possible - in no uncertain terms, why they may not behave in such a manner in the school, and why this is so. Ideally, we would have social service back-up right in the school so that a kid could get ongoing help. However, as you know, we don't get the funding for that and that's unlikely to change.

Peter McLaren (2009) best articulates, for me, the kind of work I saw being done at schools pursuing equity and social justice and the kind of programs these students – and teachers – would like to see undertaken at other schools”:

...[S]chooling should be a process of understanding how subjectivities are produced. It should be a process of examining how we have been constructed out of the prevailing ideas, values, and worldviews of the dominant culture. The point to remember is that if we have been made, then we can be “unmade” and “made over” ... Teachers need to encourage students to be self-reflexive about these questions and to provide students with a conceptual framework to begin to answer them. Teaching should be a process of constructing, of building a social imagination that works within a language of hope ... (p. 80)

In sum, this horizontal scale from “control” to “social justice” does not necessarily represent unchallengeable truths about these and other schools, but is, rather, a useful means by which to view the organization of safety in educational narratives on the ground. Many schools, no doubt, present elements of several or all of these conceptions in varying degrees. For many sexual minority students, schools were not places of learning or even social development, but places where they were abused and terrorized and oppressed for being different. What these conceptions establish is that this oppression takes more forms than Walton's “generic” bullying. Queer students perceived their safety to be threatened in ways that may be different from heterosexual students. For example, the degree to which high school students utilized an expression like “it's so gay” and the high degree to which heterosexual students failed to see this as anything other than an innocuous expression was striking; whereas, for sexual minority students, and their allies, the expression was a constant reminder that security was under threat and their safety tenuous.

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## Reflecting Dissidence: Writing (Our) Queer Identities into Qualitative Research

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**Abstract:** *This presentation dives into the messy work of writing (our) sexualities into our qualitative research. Based on our research with queer educators, this presentation suggests that while a) queering research methods opens up new ways of conducting research and b) sharing a queer identity with research participants strengthens connections, there are some limitations to both notions. One limitation is that given the individualized and diverse nature of constructing queer identity and knowledge, queer educational researchers might inadvertently place themselves in the impossible position of trying to understand and make sense of other queer realities. We draw on examples from our research projects to illustrate the curious tension that exists between queerness, identity and education within a social science inquiry.*

### Introductory Thoughts

Anne and Rob, two queer doctoral students with the Faculty of Education, met on the picket line during a labour dispute at York University in the fall/winter of 2008/2009. As we walked the line, we talked about our unique experiences working as queer educators and we discovered that there were many similarities in our research interests around investigating the experiences of queer educators. We learned that we grappled with many of the same issues: what does it mean to be a ‘queer’ educator and how do we ‘queer’ research? We met and spoke with other queer students during the strike and shared our challenges with them. What we stumbled across was not what we expected; we found that other queer graduate students had different conceptualizations around what it meant to be queer or embody queerness. For example, what we would have considered to be “queer” was considered to be “unqueer” by some of our colleagues. These conversations drew attention to the fact that queer is very subjective in nature and that to expect our colleagues and, at a later point, our research participants to adhere to our definitions of queerness would be considered an act of appropriation. Therefore, we remained open by listening to our colleagues’ definition of what being, becoming and belonging to the “category” of queer could mean. While walking on the picket line we experienced a certain degree of tension between asserting our understanding of queer and respecting different perspectives on queerness. While such evocative discussions could be the direct result of participating in a politicized space, what we point out here is that there might be some serious implications for our doctoral research projects. We realized that how we conceptualize our queer identities might be radically different than how our study participants perceive their queer identities and this difference opened up some interesting quandaries and questions. This tension that we identify forms the thesis for this paper.

Educational research that hails itself as queer often seems to invoke queer identities to ground its work (Talburtt & Rasmussen, 2010). In fact, we both conducted research where we focused exclusively on the experiences of teachers who self identified in some way as queer. As such, our qualitative research places a strong value on the narratives of teachers who generously share their stories and classroom experiences with us. We understand queer as encompassing an array of practices and identities and this prompted us to explore the uneven territory of queerness in our research. We acknowledged that queer has a curious presence in education; it pops up in surprising places and in unusual forms. And yet, the uncanny ability of queer to exceed our imaginations continues to cause us discomfort and tension in our research. Just as we might claim to understand queer’s potential to disrupt the clean and tidy corners of identity, we are sometimes uncomfortable or unprepared when queer reveals identities to be relational, fluid and unpredictable. At times we find ourselves at a loss of how to proceed when we encounter ways of performing or understanding queer that are foreign to us.

By characterising queerness as an identity are we quarantining queerness in such a way that makes it intelligible or familiar to us? How do we move beyond identity politics in our queer research? Or is this a productive goal? Identity politics continue to haunt our research even as we struggle to free our-

selves from this more traditional way of understanding queerness. By approaching queer as an identity we are locating queerness inside the self, and in the context of teaching, queerness as an identity often becomes a sort of secret self that has to grapple with troublesome heteronormative dynamics of classroom and workplace life.

Issues such as those identified in the earlier paragraph led us to question how we situate ourselves within our research. The messy business of locating ourselves in our research prompted us to ask questions that we had not previously considered: how do we conceptualize *our* sexualities through a research lens? What are the limits of our thinking around sexuality when we include ourselves in our work? How does writing about queer educators through our eyes shape our research? How do we encounter queerness and sexuality and how is this influenced by the complex histories of our sexual identities? As Corey (1992) suggested, “To be out is really to be in - inside the realm of the visible, the speakable, the culturally intelligible” (p. 125). In other words, our “insider” queer subjectivities might advance access to queer knowledge; however, what we wish to point out is that given the spectrum of queerness that remains pervasive in queer circles, how can we hope to make culturally intelligible connections with our queer participants? By mentioning a spectrum of queerness, we are acknowledging that queer understandings of sexuality have many layers, identities, communities and practices.

We begin by exploring some of the dilemmas and possibilities that we are struggling with as we encounter (our) queer identities and practices in our research projects. Significantly, this paper is also an exercise in thinking about the limits of our thinking, namely what we can and cannot bear to think about in relation to queer sexualities, educational spaces, and our research more generally. Our shared interest in queer educators is a place to begin this discussion and is an especially relevant location given that queer bodies and pedagogies are often precariously positioned within heteronormative educational institutions. What we mean is that thinking about sexuality and education tends to be a risky exercise since “putting the terms, ‘schooling’ and ‘sexuality’ together is the stuff of which scandal can be, and often is, made” (Epstein & Johnson, 1998, p. 1). So while homophobia continues to be a pervasive element in the field of education (Pinar, 1998), sexuality in general and queer sexualities in particular are undeniably a part of the histories of our experiences of schooling. As a result, we bring those experiences to bear on our work as researchers in the field of education. To further crystallize our emerging ideas, we operationalize this work of locating queer selves in our research through two approaches: *Queering Educational Research* and *Researching Queer Educators*. Although we recognize the difficulties inherent in our research, we hope that these two perspectives can, at least, help us create productive research possibilities. We consider some of the implications and difficulties that arise when we think ourselves and our queer sexualities into our doctoral research.

### **Queering Educational Research**

We envision that in order to evoke our queer identities and experiences in our research, we will need to queer educational research. What we mean is that traditional research methods tend to restrict, bind and categorize our data collection methods according to certain rules and categories that are rendered (not) acceptable in terms of advancing knowledge. However, by queering educational research, we argue that a much richer array of methods can surface and, consequently, we are able to access data that traditional research methods would generally have difficulty with. When we refer to the process of queering educational research, we are referring to research that is done in education contexts that are not bound by traditionally rigid rules, categories or labels. Rather than adopting traditional research methods, queering research seeks to adopt a plethora of research practices to help get to the crux of the matter.

Robert’s research methodology offers an example of what we mean by queering educational research. He uses autoethnography in his research project to reflect on his experiences living and working as a queer educator in Kosovo. Autoethnography is generally considered to be a non-traditional form of inquiry that connects ‘the personal to the cultural’ (Chang, 2008; Ellis & Bochner, 2000). Through autoethnography, the researcher’s identity, experiences and presence in the research are given equal consideration to those of the participants when the researcher analyzes the data. In many ways, autoethnography is a “queer” research method because it resists traditional ethnographic forms of inquiry by taking into account the often marginalized experiences of the researcher without relying on rigid “methods” that make up an autoethnography (e.g. Mizzi, forthcoming). Rather, the method of writing the autoethnography be-

comes a personal endeavour. Robert's autoethnography inquiry into his lived experience enables him to invoke his queer knowledge and experiences that would have otherwise gone unarticulated if traditional research methods managed his research intentions.

Therefore, by queering educational research, innovative and fluid approaches to conducting research emerge and, as a result, researchers are able to interrogate their tendencies and ask difficult questions of themselves and their research participants. Queering educational practices opens up new possibilities for research participants to describe their queerness and lives in richer detail. This method also invites researchers to imagine different types of research participants and projects.

### **Researching Queer Educators**

In addition, by locating ourselves in our research, we are able to draw greater connections to participants who take part in our data collection. Our queer identities and experiences provide access to queer knowledge, language and bodies that might have been overlooked if we did not think about how our identities and experiences can inform the knowledge that is shared by our study participants. We understand that by including ourselves in our dialogue with participants, we are able to strengthen the relationship between the researcher and researched, hence, stimulating a deeper conversation to further enrich the knowledge being shared. We draw on Anne's research history to elucidate how her queer identity and experiences helped her to better access and interpret the queer knowledge, language and bodies that surfaced during her data collection.

Anne conducted semi-structured interviews for her research project; she asked her female participants how they made sense of their lives as sexual minority teachers. One of her participants talked about the difficulties of feeling invisible at school, especially given that she felt like she was living her life openly as a queer woman. Anne found this particular interview to be difficult because she had trouble understanding the ways that the participant positioned her sexual identity at school. The participant refused to adopt more traditional labels to describe her sexuality, such as lesbian or bisexual, in favour of simply describing herself as non-heterosexual. Anne felt uncertain about whether or not to describe this participant as 'in' or 'out' of the closet; Anne had to confront the reality that the closet did not properly characterize the participant's sexual identity and as a result, she was forced to question the usefulness of the closet as a way of understanding the sexual identities of her participants more generally. By focusing on queer as an identity category, Anne was limited in her ability to understand the ways that her participant located her queerness.

Perhaps we sometimes resist seeing queerness in its various guises because as queer researchers we are implicated and invested in particular understandings of queer. However, if we understand identities as complicated and sexual identifications as possible sites of resistance, then it becomes necessary for queer researchers to interrogate the tendencies of their research practices and ask difficult questions about how they make sense of their own as well as their participants' queerness. If we do not take queerness for granted or use one way of being queer as a point of departure in our research, then we might be more open to recognizing and sitting with the ways that educators make sense of their queerness and their lives even when it abrades our own queer practices, understandings or identifications.

### **Some Limits to Our Two Research Approaches**

While the benefits are clearly pointed out in the above two approaches, we also intend to consider some of the limits of writing (our) queer identities in our research. Do our queer subject positions and experiences, as well as our interest in education, restrict the ways that queerness can be conceptualized, indeed thought about or imagined, with regards to schooling?

With this question we are thinking about the friction between queer bodies and classrooms and the spaces in schools where queer bodies and pedagogies do not seem to exist. We wonder if there is something unthinkable about queerness in these places. The ways that we have come to know (and make sense of) education, are related to our individual experiences of schooling as students and as educators. And many of those experiences sit uncomfortably alongside our queer identities. However, the point that we are making is that none of these individual experiences are shared; each experience is autonomous and influences the ways that both of us differently conceptualize queerness.

Queerness is hard for us to locate; it is a slippery term that is in the process of undoing and also of becoming. Sometimes the queer identities that we are attracted to, and attached to, offer us certain possibilities in our research. It is as if our queer identities are what prop us up, offering us a secure sense of self and yet they also have the potential to undo us if we imagine our queerness as a core or finite sense of ourselves. The ways that we know and understand ourselves as queer and as educators is bound up in our muddled and crowded histories as queer students and teachers. For instance, what might have been considered as a smooth “coming out” process for one queer educator might be quite the opposite for another queer person. And yet in many ways our queerness remains indescribable and unnameable in certain contexts. The lives of sexual minority teachers who are members of cultural diasporas that refuse to acknowledge and respect sexual minorities within their culture is one example in which an indescribable and unnameable queer identity remains at the fore. In short, what queer might mean to us, as we have come to know it, might be considered “unqueer” to our study participants or the methodologies in which we use to conceptualize our research projects given the subjective nature of being queer. Is there something about queer that closes down thought or defies articulation about queer educators? Does the process of confronting or accepting this awkward limit of queerness and education allow us to think ourselves into spaces that are normally unthinkable? While we cannot offer the necessary responses to these questions, we hope that this paper can encourage further conversations around the curious nature of queerness that haunts educational spaces.

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# Facts of Life in Homophobia High: Findings of the First National Climate Survey on Homophobia and Transphobia in Canadian Schools

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It is by now a truism in Canadian education circles that students need to feel safe and welcome if they are to learn, and huge efforts have been made in the last thirty years or so to adapt school cultures and curricula to diverse students and to address hostile climate through safe schools programs. As progressive as Canadian schools have generally become in diversifying the cultural content of curriculum, providing differentiated instruction, and offering guidance on respectful behaviour, many schools remain a sort of “Land That Time Forgot” where LGBTQ students are concerned: hence the title of this paper, “Homophobia High.” I have been active as Principal Investigator in partnership with Egale Canada for a study investigating this situation, “The First National Climate Survey on Homophobia in Canadian Schools.”<sup>3</sup>

The study was conducted between December 2007 and June 2009 and involved over 3700 high school students. Data were collected through two methods: individual participation in an open-access on-line survey and in-class participation in a controlled-access online survey implemented by 20 school boards across the country. We are now in the process of finalizing our project reports. In this paper I present some of the key findings from the study. Dr Line Chamberland’s paper will address the findings of her Quebec-based study.

## Survey Instrument

The survey questionnaire was developed by the Education Committee of Egale Canada and refined through review of climate surveys conducted in the U.S. (Koskiw & Diaz, 2006). Participants were asked a series of self-report questions on their school climate with a particular focus on experiences, impacts, and support. It was a relatively long questionnaire that took respondents an estimated 20-30 minutes to complete. Seven of the 54 questions were open-ended. The rest were closed-ended responses in “check all that apply” and “check the best match” formats. The entire questionnaire (now inactive) can be seen online at [www.climatesurvey.ca](http://www.climatesurvey.ca). Project reports can be seen at [www.climatesurvey.ca/report](http://www.climatesurvey.ca/report).

## Sampling

The survey was conducted in two phases. Our main method of reaching students in the individual open-access phase of the survey was through social networks. We compiled a list of every organization in the country known to have LGBTQ youth group components or clients and provided them with information about the survey. In addition, a link to the survey was posted on the Egale Canada website and Facebook™ site in order to encourage participation from individuals who may not be associated with any LGBTQ youth groups. Some participants learned of the survey through media coverage in major venues such as CBC Radio, the *Toronto Star*, and the *Winnipeg Free Press*. Others were informed of the survey by educators whose school boards had approved the survey but had not formally implemented it in their schools. We expect that a number of participants heard about the survey through snowball sampling.

For the closed-access phase of data collection, we made formal research applications to a random selection of approximately forty school divisions distributed across Canada to conduct the survey during class time. In the end, twenty school divisions representing all regions of Canada except Quebec approved the study, and of those, 15 implemented it in sufficient numbers to permit meaningful statistical analysis. Classroom teachers supervised the survey sessions. Most sessions were conducted online in a computer lab but in some remote communities without Internet access, paper copies of the questionnaire were com-

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<sup>3</sup> The study was funded by the EGALÉ Canada Human Rights Trust, the University of Winnipeg Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) Grant Competition, and Sexual and Gender Diversity: Vulnerability and Resilience (SVR), a research team funded by Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR) and Fonds de Recherche sur la Société et la Culture (FRSC) du Province de Québec.

pleted and mailed.

### Participants

In total, over 3700 individuals participated in the survey, with a total useable sample of 3607 after data cleaning.

- Nearly three-quarters (71%) identified as straight. A quarter (26%) identified as LGB or questioning, and 3% as trans.
- In the individual open-access phase, 73% of participants identified as LGBTQ; in the in-school phase, 14.1%. This percentage of general-population students identifying as LGBTQ is consistent with Saewyc et al's (2007) findings in their report on the health of LGBTQ youth in British Columbia, where only 89% of male participants and only 82% of female participants identified as "completely heterosexual."
- Participants were distributed among the regions of Canada (except Quebec): 25% were from British Columbia, 24% from the Prairie provinces (Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Manitoba), 30% from Ontario, 15% from the Atlantic provinces (New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island, and Newfoundland), and 6% from the North (Northwest Territories, Yukon, Nunavut, and Labrador).
- Almost half (46%) lived in a small city or suburb, 43% in urban areas, and 11% in rural environments, First Nation Reserves, or Armed Forces Bases.
- Students from 149 school districts participated in the survey.
- Participants approximately represented the ethnic diversity of Canada, with 66% identifying as White/Caucasian, 19% as Asian, 6% as Aboriginal, 6% as mixed ethnicity, and 3% "other." For purposes of analysis racialized ethnicities except Aboriginal were grouped as "Visible Minorities." Although a problematic term in some ways – not all racialized people are "visible" and not all are minorities – using the category enabled us to map onto categories used in Statistics Canada and the sociology literature which recognizes Aboriginal and Visible Minorities peoples as groups who experience discrimination in Canadian society.
- Average age was 17.4 years ( $SD = 4.23$  years) with a median age of 17 years.

### Analysis

After the data collection process was complete, cross-tabulations with chi-square ( $\chi^2$ ) estimations, independent samples t-tests, and analyses of variance (ANOVAs) were conducted, depending on the classification or "level of measurement" of the variables/questions (i.e., whether they are dichotomous, ordered, or continuous). Finally, effect sizes were calculated for all chi-square (using Cramer's  $V$ ), t-test (using Cohen's  $d$ ), and ANOVA (using Cohen's  $d$ ) significant tests. All findings reported today passed significance-testing at a  $p$  level of  $<.05$ . Test results can be found in the project reports and refereed publications listed at the end of this paper.

### Highlights from the Findings

#### Hostile Climate

##### Homophobic comments.

LGBTQ students do not need to be directly targeted by homophobic or transphobic language to be exposed to it; most hear it and many use it in everyday school life. In some of these usages, such as "fag" and "dyke," the intended meaning is clearly an accusation, in jest or in earnest, that the targeted person is LGBTQ; in others, such as "that's so gay" ("*t'es gai*" in French), the meaning is closer to "that's stupid" or "that's worthless." Whatever the intention, however, the result is that LGBTQ students are hearing terms that signify a core aspect of their identities used as insults. Ultimately, they get the message that "gay" is the last thing one wants to be in school culture.

In our survey, over two-thirds (70.4%) of all participating students reported hearing expressions such as "that's so gay" every day in school. In addition, almost half (47.5%) reported hearing remarks such as "faggot," "lezbo," and "dyke" daily. LGBTQ students were somewhat more likely to notice homophobic comments than non-LGBTQ students were, but the numbers were consistently high for both groups.

However, there was considerable variation across the country. Among Ontario participants, 80.9% reported hearing it daily, as did 74.9% of Northern participants, 71.1% of Prairie participants, and 69.0% of Atlantic participants. BC had the lowest reported rate at 53.7% (which may be attributable to the high proportion of BC students who were from Vancouver School Board, which has an extensive anti-homophobia program).

Caucasian students were significantly more likely to hear “that’s so gay” every day at school than other students (75% of Caucasian students compared to 65.7% of Aboriginal students and 57.5% of “Visible Minorities” students). However, each ethnic grouping reported similarly high rates of hearing the comment at least weekly (94.0%, 87.1%, and 86.3%, respectively). Half of Caucasian (50.0%) and Aboriginal students (49.0%) heard comments such as “faggot” and “lezbo” daily, compared to 39.2% of “Visible Minorities” students, with similar numbers hearing the comments at least weekly.

### **Transphobic and sexist comments.**

Negative gender-related or transphobic comments are almost as common in school culture as homophobic comments. Almost half of the female LGBTQ participants and almost two thirds of the trans participants reported hearing transphobic comments about girls “not acting feminine enough” every day or every week at school (47.0% and 62.2% respectively). There were even more comments reported about boys “not acting masculine enough” (73.2% of female LGBTQ students heard such comments daily or weekly, as did 66.7% of male LGBTQ students and 79.1% of trans students).

While our participants’ responses suggest that boys were subjected to more comments than girls about how they measure up to gender conventions, the reverse was true for negative comments about boys or girls in general, with the latter being much more common. (Almost two-thirds [62.7%] of female LGBTQ students reported hearing negative remarks about girls in general daily or weekly, as did 72.1% of male LGBTQ and 72.7% of Trans students).

## **Direct Harassment and Assault**

### **Verbal harassment.**

LGBTQ participants reported high levels of direct verbal harassment. For example, 57.0% had been verbally harassed about their gender expression (compared to 25.5% of non-LGBTQ students, a figure which however shows that large numbers of non-LGBTQ students experience verbal harassment about their gender expression, which suggests that the message needs to get out that it is wrong to harass anyone about their gender expression, whether LGBTQ or not.)

The level of verbal harassment experienced by trans students was particularly high, with three quarters (74.2%) having been harassed about their gender expression, compared to just over half (55.2%) of LGBTQ students and one quarter (25.5%) of heterosexual students. They were also more likely to be verbally harassed because of their perceived gender or sexual orientation (trans 68.2%, LGBTQ female 54.8%, LGBTQ male 41.6%). Trans students may be reporting high levels of harassment on the basis of perceived sexual orientation because they are often perceived as lesbian, gay, or bisexual whether they are or not. Greytak, Koskiw, and Diaz (2009) report similarly elevated levels of harassment among trans students in their climate survey of U.S. schools.

Perhaps because they too are often misrecognized as LGBTQ, students with one or more LGBTQ parents reported higher rates of verbal harassment than students without any LGBTQ parents. While one third (36.5%) had been harassed about the sexual orientation of their parents, higher numbers were harassed about their own sexual orientation (44.0% *versus* 20.1% of students with no LGBTQ parents) and perceived sexual orientation (45.6% *versus* 19.7%) as well as about their gender (45.2% *versus* 22.3%) and gender expression (58.3% *versus* 34.3%). Youth avoid disclosing that they have LGBTQ parents not only to avoid hearing hurtful comments about their loved ones, but to protect themselves from harassment. As one participant wrote, “I am not out about my family members because people are so stupid that they think that if you know someone who is LGBTQ than that means you are too.” Sexual development in a high school community is difficult enough without having peers insist on misreading one’s sexual orientation.

### **Physical harassment.**

Although the classic image of physical homophobic harassment and assault typically involves male students, female LGBQ and trans students more likely to have experienced this because of being LGBQ (25.4% and 25.0% respectively, compared to 17% of male LGBQ youth. Female LGBQ students were also more likely than male LGBQ students to have had property stolen or damaged because of being LGBQ (18.3% *versus* 11.7%), but less likely than trans youth (24.4%). Trans students also reported higher rates of physically harassment or assault because of their gender expression (37.1%, compared with 21.3% for LGBQ students and 10.4% for heterosexual students).

Students with one or more LGBQ parents were also at higher risk. Over a quarter (27.2%) had been physically harassed about the sexual orientation of their parents and they were much more likely than students with no LGBQ parents to be physically harassed or assaulted in connection with their own sexual orientation (25.4% *versus* 11.1%), their gender (24.6% *versus* 10.2%), their gender expression (30.4% *versus* 13.3%), and their perceived sexual orientation or gender identity (26.5% *versus* 11.5%).

### **Sexual harassment.**

Recent studies have shown that sexual minority youth experience much more sexual harassment at school than do sexual majority students and that sexual harassment is a particularly damaging form of bullying that is strongly associated with depression and other dangerous health outcomes (e.g., Gruber & Fineran, 2008). In our study, levels of sexual harassment were high across the board for LGBQ students: 35.7% of female LGBQ youth, 41.4% of male LGBQ youth, and 49.4% of trans participants reported having been sexually harassed in the past year, compared to 16.6% of female heterosexual youth and 23% of male heterosexual youth. Notable here is that both straight and LGBQ males are even likelier to have experienced sexual harassment than their female counterparts, which fits what we are learning about the aggressive sexual mockery and harassment endemic to adolescent masculine culture (Stein, 2005). One interesting exception was that female bisexual students were much more likely than lesbian students to have experienced sexual harassment, in numbers surpassing male LGBQ students (43% *versus* 33.2% of lesbian students). Students with one or more LGBQ parents were also much more likely than other students to have been sexually harassed at school (44.7% *versus* 25.7%).

## **Impacts**

### **Distress.**

As we might expect, LGBQ students were more likely than non-LGBQ students to find it upsetting to hear homophobic and transphobic comments (85.8% *versus* 58.3%). However, the fact that the majority of heterosexual students reported finding such comments to be upsetting on some level deserves attention. Some heterosexual youth may be distressed at homophobic comments because they themselves are perceived to be LGBQ, and many have LGBQ friends or family members. However, research into the psychological impact of repetitive exposure to bullying suggests that bystanders are damaged in ways similar to the direct victims of bullying. For example, bystanders may suffer longterm depression, anxiety, feelings of helplessness, somatic complaints, and skipping school (Janson, Carney, Hazler, & Oh, 2009). Further, some research suggests that the experience of cognitive dissonance that arises from failing to intervene when abusive behaviour is occurring puts bystanders at risk of some forms of psychological harm that actually exceeds the levels found in direct victims (Rivers, Poteat, Noret, & Ashurt, 2009).

The distress experienced by heterosexual students supports the position that homophobic comments poison the school climate for everyone because they are an assault on human dignity. Although some bystanders react to abuse by rationalizing that the victim somehow deserved it, the finding that 58% of heterosexual students are distressed by homophobic comments suggests that there may be a great deal of untapped solidarity for LGBQ students among their heterosexual peers. Although only 5.6% of non-LGBQ students reported finding homophobic comments “extremely upsetting” (in comparison to 23.1% of LGBQ students), it is important to note that the numbers of LGBQ and non-LGBQ students who find homophobic comments to be either “very” or “somewhat” upsetting are both high: 62.6% of LGBQ students and 52.7% of non-LGBQ students.

### **Perception of places in school as unsafe for LGBTQ students.**

People directly affected by an issue are more likely to be aware of safety concerns arising from that issue than people who are not, and this greater awareness was reflected in the survey responses: LGBTQ participants consistently identified more spaces as unsafe for LGBTQ students than did non-LGBTQ participants. LGBTQ participants were most likely to identify their phys. ed. change rooms as being unsafe (48.8%), followed by washrooms (43.1%), and hallways (42.5%). Slightly over half as many non-LGBTQ participants identified these spaces as unsafe for LGBTQ students (30.1%, 27.8%, and 25.1%, respectively). Overall, more than half (53.4%) of all participants reported that at least one place at their school was unsafe for LGBTQ students. Although this number was higher for LGBTQ participants (70.6%), almost half (46.5%) of heterosexual youth saw at least one place in their school as unsafe for LGBTQ youth. There was considerable regional variation in students' likelihood of reporting at least one part of their school as unsafe for LGBTQ students, ranging from 42.1% of students in the Atlantic provinces to 62.4% in the North.

### **Sense of personal safety.**

Participants were asked if they ever felt unsafe at school for a variety of reasons. Predictably, there was a large gap with reference to sexual orientation or perceived sexual orientation, where 52.7% of LGBTQ participants reported feeling unsafe at school, compared to only 3.4% of non-LGBTQ respondents. However, when all identity-related grounds for feeling unsafe are taken into account, including ethnicity and religion, almost two-thirds (64.2%) of LGBTQ participants feel unsafe at school, compared to less than one-sixth (15.2%) of non-LGBTQ respondents. Similarly, 61.3% of students with one or more LGBTQ parents reported feeling unsafe at school, compared to 28.4% of students without any LGBTQ parents. Results revealed even higher percentages of trans students feeling unsafe in school than LGBQ students (78.0% and 62.8% respectively).

Further, female LGBQ students were much more likely than male LGBQ students (73.2% *versus* 56.4%) to feel unsafe at school, and in numbers approaching the level of trans students (78.0%): as one lesbian participant put it, "School is not a safe place for anyone like me."

These findings are interesting in a few ways. First, popular understandings of bullying in school culture might lead one to expect that heterosexual males would be most likely to commit homophobic harassment and that their targets would be gay males, whom they would have opportunity to bully in unsupervised gender-segregated spaces such as change rooms and washrooms. Second, it is sometimes said that lesbians have it easier than gay males, that society in general tolerates lesbians more than gay males, and that being a lesbian or a bisexual female is even trendy. These findings would refute both of these popular conceptions of life for LGBQ girls and women. Overall, our findings suggest that whether one is female, male, or trans makes a big difference with respect to how safe one feels. Female LGBQ students in our study were not attributing their feelings of being unsafe to their gender, however, even though they reported high levels of verbal and physical harassment. Only one quarter (27.4%) said they felt unsafe because of their gender or gender expression, which is about the same as for males at 23.6%, and much lower than for trans youth at 61.5%. Even though most female students did not report feeling unsafe because of their gender, the high levels of female LGBQ students feeling unsafe could be attributable to their exposure to the enormous amounts of negative language about girls that circulates in school culture as well as to the high levels of verbal and physical harassment that they experience.

### **School attachment.**

We asked a series of questions gauging school attachment. Almost half of the LGBTQ participants (44.3%) that "It is hard for me to feel accepted at my school," compared to fewer than one in six non-LGBTQ students (14.4%). Trans students reported even lower levels of school attachment, with a third 29.9% strongly agreeing that they sometimes felt very depressed about their school, compared to 19.9% of LGBQ participants and 6.1% of non-LGBTQ students. Similarly, 29.7% of trans respondents strongly agreed with the statement, "sometimes I don't feel like I belong in my school," compared to 18.1% of LGBQ students and 6.3% of non-LGBTQ individuals. Even though many students with one or more LGBTQ parents are not LGBTQ themselves, their responses followed a similar pattern of school attachment to the responses by LGBTQ youth. On some items students with LGBTQ parents showed

weaker school attachment than LGBTQ students, which suggests that students may find it even more socially alienating to have to hide their parents' LGBTQ identity than to hide their own.

## Adult Response

### Intervention.

Most LGBTQ students saw teachers as ineffective in addressing homophobic harassment (67.0% of LGBTQ females, 64.6% of LGBTQ males, and 67.2% of trans youth), and less than half of LGBTQ students reported incidents of harassment to school staff (40.8% of LGBTQ females, 38.2% of LGBTQ males, and 46.9% of trans youth). Even fewer reported to their parents, and female LGBTQ students were less likely to confide in their parents about harassment they had experienced than either LGBTQ males or trans students (34.4% *versus* 42.8% of LGBTQ males and 40.3% of trans youth).

Both heterosexual and LGBTQ parents alike should be dismayed to learn how frequently their children, LGBTQ and heterosexual, do not confide in them about the discrimination and assault they are enduring during their days at school. Even among students with an LGBTQ parent, 29.5% described themselves as uncomfortable talking to their parent or parents about LGBTQ issues (compared to 42.4% of students who did not have an LGBTQ parent).

### Policy.

Overall, only a third (33.8%) of all respondents reported that they knew whether or not their schools had policies about or procedures for reporting incidents of homophobia. Unsurprisingly, more LGBTQ respondents knew whether or not their schools had policies about or procedures for reporting incidents of homophobia (43.9%, compared to 29.7% for non-LGBTQ individuals). We found that in schools where LGBTQ students and students with LGBTQ parents reported that they know they are included in safe school policies, students in general reported hearing expressions like “that’s so gay” less often than participants from schools without such policies (65.4% *versus* 80.6% reported hearing such comments every day). The same relationship holds for homophobic comments such as “faggot,” “queer,” “lezbo,” or “dyke” (47.9% compared to 62.6% reported hearing such comments every day). Students from schools with relevant policies or procedures also report that when homophobic comments are made, school staff members are more likely to intervene at least some of the time (86.0% *versus* 66.8%) and less likely to never intervene (14.0% *versus* 33.2%). LGBTQ students from schools without procedures for reporting homophobic incidents were less likely to see parts of their school as unsafe, including change rooms (42.9% vs. 64.1%), washrooms (39.3% vs. 53.4% %), hallways (37.9% vs. 57.3%), the gymnasium (17.9% vs. 39.1%), the school grounds (25.7% vs. 44.1%), and school buses (23.6% vs. 42.0%).

### Curriculum.

LGBTQ students who reported that LGBTQ matters were addressed in one or more of their courses were significantly more likely to feel “like a real part of my school” (60.9% *versus* 53% for LGBTQ students who had not experienced LGBTQ-inclusive curriculum), to feel “I can be myself at school” (60.9% *versus* 51.3%), to feel “proud of belonging to my school” (61.9% *versus* 50.5%), to feel “I am treated with as much respect as other students” (69.0% *versus* 61.7%), and to have “at least one adult I can talk to in my school” (75.6% *versus* 64.9%). They were much more likely to feel their school communities were supportive of LGBTQ people (41.0% *versus* 28.7%) and to feel that their school climates were less homophobic than in past years (71.8% to 61.5%).

## Conclusions and Recommendations

This study has confirmed what LGBTQ students and their allies have known for some time about the realities of life in Homophobia High. Consider the situation in many schools:

- LGBTQ students are exposed to language that insults their dignity as part of everyday school experience.
- LGBTQ students experience much higher levels of verbal, physical, and other forms of harassment than other students.
- Many LGBTQ students do not feel safe at school.

- The situation is worse on all counts for trans students.
- Many schools have a well-developed human rights curriculum that espouses respect for every identity group protected in the Canadian Charter of Rights except LGBTQ people.

The study has also demonstrated that the less directly students are affected by homophobia and transphobia, the less aware they are of it. This finding has implications for the adult world as well: how many educators are underestimating the extent of homophobia and transphobia in their school cultures and the damage being done to the students in their care?

Our analysis found that large numbers of LGBTQ students often feel unsafe at school but that large numbers of Straight students also see many places at school as unsafe for their LGBTQ peers. However, courageous LGBTQ students across the country have decided not to let their fear or anyone else's stop them. They have started GSAs, organized consciousness-raising events, and asked their teachers and principals to get on board. They find schools that have well-known school- or division-level anti-homophobia policies much safer than ones that do not.

One of the most striking and encouraging findings of this national study has been that most non-LGBTQ students find homophobic comments upsetting. Some might be distressed because they are among the many Straight students who are themselves victims of homophobic and transphobic harassment. (In fact, since they outnumber LGBTQ students by approximately ten to one, there are more non-LGBTQ victims of such harassment than LGBTQ victims in most schools.) Other non-LGBTQ students are likely distressed by participating in an abusive culture, particularly if they empathize with LGBTQ students but do nothing to support them. Their solidarity may be passive, and they may be prepared to tolerate the abusive atmosphere created by homophobic and transphobic comments, but they, too, have told us they are distressed by the situation. One of the challenges of the adult world is to discover how to support students in finding the courage to move from being distressed bystanders to allies who intervene in abusive situations. Inclusive safe schools policies are not the entire solution; we did not find that 100% of students reported hearing no homophobic comments, or that their teachers always intervened, for example. There is much room for improvement on the school climate for LGBTQ students beyond policy development. However, this survey has identified big differences between schools with, and schools without, inclusive policies. We therefore strongly recommend the following:

#### *Policy development*

1. Provincial Ministries of Education require the inclusion of homophobia and transphobia in safe schools policies and programs, along with steps for the effective implementation of these policies in order to provide support and motivation to divisional and school staff, and a requirement that school divisions provide auditable evidence of meaningful implementation.
2. School divisions develop anti-homophobia and anti-transphobia policies to provide institutional authority and leadership for schools.
3. Schools implement anti-homophobia and anti-transphobia policies and make these well known to students, parents, administration, and all staff as a positive part of their commitment to making schools safe.
4. Efforts begin with professional development workshops for all school staff on the impact of homophobic and transphobic language and how to address it in classrooms and other encounters with students.

#### *Teacher Preparation*

5. Faculties of Education integrate LGBTQ-inclusive teaching into compulsory courses in their Bachelor of Education programs so that teachers have reasonable opportunity to develop competence before entering the field.

#### *Gay-Straight Alliances*

6. Schools strongly support the efforts of students to start GSAs or similar clubs, and that, in schools where students have not come forward, administration should ask teachers to offer to work with students to start such clubs. It is not safe to assume that LGBTQ students would prefer to go through high school isolated from their peers and teachers.

### *Vulnerable Groups*

7. Particular attention be paid to supporting the safety and wellbeing of female LGBTQ and transgender students in all of the above, along with the needs of students with LGBTQ parents.

### *Appropriate Consultation*

8. Individuals and organizations with established expertise in LGBTQ-inclusive education be consulted in all of the above. Such expertise exists among educators in every region of Canada.

Participants in the First National Climate Survey on Homophobia and Transphobia in Canadian Schools have provided ample evidence of hostile climate and institutional inaction that reflects poorly on this country's commitment to its promises of equality. It is time for educators across the country to take up the challenge of including LGBTQ students in Canada's twenty-first century schools.

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## A Queer Circle of Friends, Indeed! The School Social as Intervention or as Movement

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*(Please note that this is the first section of a larger paper, this section well sets up the premise of the entire presentation)*

### Introducing the School Social

Much anticipated and perhaps as much despised, the school prom - the ultimate school social, is not merely a one-time June event, but lasts all year, indeed throughout secondary school. Success at the prom in many ways represents mastery/indoctrination of the hidden curriculum - or parts thereof at least. Marginalized students are so-defined based at least partly upon their social capital and social competencies. The purpose of this article is to contrast two *approaches* intended to support the social lives of those typically on the borders of school life. The first of which is Circles of Friends (CoFs), initially designed to assist students labelled with disabilities in such realms; the second are Gay-Straight Alliances (GSAs) which were created to address primarily the needs of students who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, two-spirited (gay/lesbian/bisexual First Nations peoples), queer and/or those questioning their sexual identity (LGBTQQ). By laying out CoFs and GSAs alongside each other, there may be more than a little pull to essentialize students along a single identity (that is *either* a student identifies as queer *or* they are labelled as disabled) - a pull that may obscure queer persons labelled with disabilities (Thompson, 2007), to give but one example. The intention here is to compare and contrast how these social supports *operate* in order to explore the kinds of identificatory possibilities each procures, the kinds of passive or agentive pedagogies they engender, etc. To reiterate, although there is a risk of categorical authentication in presenting CoFs and GSAs alongside each other, such an interpretation runs counter to the present aim.

### Purpose

Again, the intention here is to articulate how CoFs and GSAs operate, how they function, and in so doing expose the kinds of identificatory possibilities and pedagogies within each. The more applied purpose is to explore what GSAs may offer CoFs, although for reasons that will ideally become clear, reciprocal synergy is limited; that is CoFs may have little to inform GSA construction. To make this argument, the following provisions will be unpacked for both CoFs and GSAs: their respective (concise) histories and construction, their pedagogies and identificatory limits, and as a result, some enabling implications are presented that may impact inclusive/special education.

### Meeting Circles of Friends: A Brief History

The phrase, circle of friends (CoF), perhaps quite obviously connotes friendship, companionship, comradeship, etc., although the initial special education researchers/ practitioners understood it somewhat differently. The social component was indeed there, but more significantly, there was an advocacy element. Perske (1988) and Snow and Forest (1987) chronicled what has generally become known as the original CoF in the inclusive/special education literature. Judith Snow, a person in a wheelchair with only the use of her right thumb, co-created a support network for herself. She “was the sixth member... encouraged by the others to take control of her own support system” (Perske, 1988, p. 18). Dubbed the Joshua Committee, Judith’s circle functioned mostly to advocate with her for appropriate housing, education and employment; the impact was profound: Judith’s “friends circle[d] to save her life” (Perske, 1988, p. 18). The Joshua committee sought to make changes in Judith’s living and working circumstances - not to make changes in Judith (or her social skills, or her life skills, or her etc.). Gold (1994, p. 436) summarized “the formation of a circle of friends [then], involved inviting or recruiting typical citizens, often but not always same age peers, who may be classmates, co-workers, neighbours, friends, advocates, and family members to a circle meeting to discuss the future of the person with a disability”. In short, the original CoF had as much - perhaps more - to do with advocacy as it did friendship, relationship.

## CoF in Schools

Marsha Forest was a member of Judith's circle and - probably due to its noteworthy success - attempted to implement CoFs into schools as "a network that allows the genuine involvement of children in a friendship, caring, and support role with their peers" (Forest & Lusthaus, 1989, p. 47). Her work is likely well-known to teachers as inclusive/special education 'standard' practice has come to include conducting sociograms as part of individualized planning processes for students labelled with disabilities, such as MAPS (McGill Action Planning System) or IEP (Individual Education Plan) (Forest & Lusthaus, 1989). Forest had lofty goals: "building circles of friends and involving children means sharing power or decision making with them and giving up the authoritarian and patriarchal system so inherent in most schools. It means permitting children [with disabilities] to help decide what is needed for themselves and their peers" (Forest & Lusthaus, 1989, p. 47). Alas in retrospect, such goals appeared to have been the classic well-intentioned plans, since promises were non-delivered. In practice, typically, educators counted the numbers of people in inner circle relationships (family members, best friends, etc.) and progressively outer circle relationships, (good friends, more distant familial connections, acquaintances, paid staff, etc.). "The idea was ridiculously simple, all one had to do to improve a person's life was to fill up the inner circles" (Forest & Pearpoint, 1992, p. 80). One can imagine how schools generally took up CoFs, the social justice piece - the political edge was made impotent: the process typically became one of finding "buddies" for "the" student labelled with a disability. School-based CoFs, perhaps the second phase of CoFs, *shifted* the advocacy/friendship equilibrium substantively to the friendship side - or more cheekily, the 'let's-find-friends-for-little-Johnny' side. However radical this vision began in the late 1980's, it seems to have been ill-fated as the political sensibility of CoFs became more and more dulled.

Currently there are few CoF researchers that remain focused on friendship, on filling the inner circles (although, see D'Haem, 2008), there are considerably less that take up CoFs as sites of political contestation against ableism: much of the present school-based research departs drastically from its predecessors. More contemporary investigators now conceptualize CoFs almost exclusively as an *intervention* - a way to impart skills lacking in children with disabilities, while simultaneously engendering the empathy of classmates (Frederickson & Turner, 2003; Frederickson, Warren & Turner 2005; Kalyva & Avramidis, 2005; Whitaker, Barratt, Joy, Potter & Thomas, 1998). Interventionist researchers, such as Whitaker et al., (1998), suggest that a CoF may "offer a context for working directly on... impairments, particularly the impairment of a lack of social interaction" (p. 61). In this third incarnation of CoF, "despite the somewhat misleading term, circles of friends are *not created with the explicit intention of establishing friendships*...although it [is] hoped that closer relationships might be fostered during extended contacts" (Whitaker et al., 1998, p.62). So, a circle of friends is no longer about friends - nor is it about social justice or equality; CoF, the school social, is an intervention. A quick review of some terms in recent CoF article titles cited here seems too easily to make the case that CoF *is* (or should be) about friendship, such as, peer group, best friends, social needs, lonely, etc.

This brief heritage of CoF documents a range of practitioner/researcher intents. At the risk of over-simplification, the Joshua circle began CoFs with advocacy as their primary objective, then educators implemented CoFs in schools by using sociogram tools to create friendships, and finally, many current researchers see CoF as social skills intervention - from advocacy, to friendship, to intervention.

### Meeting Gay-Straight Alliances: A Brief History

An 'alliance' nuances differently than does a 'circle.' Although an alliance implies a sense of kinship, it also connotes a political umbrage—a sense of a common and important interest. This is a most imperative point, and one that will be variously revisited: Gay-Straight Alliance (GSA) advocates, practitioners, supporters *and participants* tend to see GSAs serving at least two significant goals, social support *and* social justice. CoF personnel limit their purpose to social intervention (as stated, most notably in recent educational practice), and schools have never really embraced the political nature of the early CoFs. In contrast, "the role of a Gay-Straight Alliance [*is*] a force for social justice, as well as for [*social*] support in a school community" (Friedman-Nimz, Altman, Cain, Korn, Karger, Witsch, Muffly & Weiss, 2006, p. 258). Lee (2002) states it thusly: "GSA's can play a major role in the daily lives of LGTB youth by creating a safe arena within which students can develop positive relationships with their peers and build relationships with understanding adult mentors" (p. 14). Savin-Williams (2005) noted that "GSAs

have proliferated at an accelerating pace (p. 19)” - prodigious propagation indeed; however, as Macgillivray (2007) pointed out, they remain “a North American phenomenon” as he was “unable to find information on or confirm the existence of GSAs in other countries” (pp. 43-44).

Friedman-Nimz et al. (2006) remarked that though the “trend of GSAs [is] proliferating, especially during the past 5 years...each GSA needs to develop a structure and agenda based on community standards and related needs” (p. 263). Mayberry (2007) described probably one of the most contentious GSA beginnings, although certainly not unique and chosen here because of its regrettable resonance with other GSA creation stories. Rather than allow a GSA into a school, “the Salt Lake City School Board imposed a ban on all non-curricular clubs in the district” (p. 20). The students of the banned GSA were supported by *Citizens Alliance for Hate Free Schools* and the *Utah Human Rights Coalition*. After much polarizing rancour that played out in local and US media, the GSA survived. The point to underscore here is that the GSA movement grew out of a need to mitigate intolerance - GSAs are inherently political, and as I argue, by and large they have retained this impulse, necessity. However, there is variation among GSAs, and a few that sanitize political agency. Some schools compel an alliance to succumb to community intolerance - that is, they are co-opted. Describing the emergence of the first GSA in Mexico, for example, Macgillivray (2007) recalled that:

a group of about 10 conservative parents and the Mormon principal from the middle school began complaining... It was inappropriate, they asserted, for the school to sponsor a student club that contained the word “gay” in its title... Their reasoning: The club was discriminating against people who are uncomfortable with the word “gay” and who would otherwise join the club. (p. 37)

Although not at all novel, this is truly an absurd example of how homophobia and heterosexism work: coercing changes in a GSA to better discriminate against its very members, since those who coerce/oppress/discriminate against queer students are apparently victims of discrimination. In fact, some GSAs do have names without the word *gay* in their title, such as *Coexist* or *Spectrum*. Such alliances may well be attempting to appeal to broader membership. I do contend however, that their political edge may be blunted through seemingly (de-)politicized correctness - a strategy that may be rife with homophobic and heterosexist intent.

Britzman (1995) refers to queer knowledge as fugitive knowledge - to repeat: forming/participating in GSAs are often highly political acts. Perhaps due to such great emotional stakes involved in creating and maintaining a GSA, participants often align themselves with local and national gay, lesbian and bisexual liberation (pride) movements - even a cursory internet perusal locates many GSAs marching in pride parades, for example. Further, many in GSAs find allies in other GSAs through the GLSEN (Gay, Lesbian and Straight Educators Network). Developing out of political action, networking with local, national and sometimes even international equality-oriented organizations, marching in pride parades, it is clear that GSAs are connected to the wider queer/pride movements, whereas CoFs tend to be, at least currently, an intervention; a one-student, one-classroom, one-school, intervention.

*The remainder of this presentation will focus upon the outcomes and implications of disabling pedagogies and identities vs. queer pedagogies and identities.*

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## GRIS: 15 Years of Research and Education in Québec Schools

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**Abstract:** *The Groupe de Recherche et d'Intervention Sociale-Montréal is a community group who has been working to demystify homosexuality and bisexuality through research and education in Québec since 1994. This presentation will provide a brief historical overview of this community organization; discuss its main educational activities, and present data that have been collected in Québec schools since April 2004.*

### Introduction

The *Groupe de Recherche et d'Intervention Sociale* is a local community group that has been working to demystify homosexuality through research and education in Québec since 1994. GRIS started in 1988 as a small working group of the youth support organization *Jeunesse Lambda* when participants identified a lack of accurate information about homosexuality amongst adolescents. After being established in Montréal, additional chapters spread throughout the Province of Québec. Since that time, GRIS has targeted three main objectives: demystify homosexuality and bisexuality in society in general, complete research projects connected to educational activities, and provide referrals to individuals who are interested in getting connected to other resources in the gay and lesbian community (GRIS, 2006). This presentation will address the work completed under the first two objectives by describing its in-school intervention programs and the results of the data that are collected during these workshops.

### Educational Activities

As a community organization, GRIS is composed primarily of adult volunteers who complete an extensive training and mentorship program in order to visit schools and speak about their personal lives and experiences as gay men, lesbians, and bisexual men and women. The four main objectives guiding these interventions are:

1. To promote self-esteem for youth questioning and exploring their identities by cultivating a positive attitude in their social networks.
2. To develop educational and facilitation skills so as to better impact the educational settings we visit
3. To help professionals (particularly school-based) develop a theoretical understanding of homosexuality and bisexuality to support the development of new approaches and interventions regarding gay men, lesbians, bisexuals and the general population.
4. To disseminate the expertise at GRIS throughout public support networks (GRIS, 2006, p. 7).

The in-school workshops (*interventions*) take place primarily in secondary schools, CEGEPs, and youth centres in and around Montréal. The main content of these workshops include personal narratives told by trained facilitators who then respond to questions from the students. Most workshops are led by two volunteers and they typically include one gay man and one lesbian. Recently, GRIS has introduced the topic of bisexuality into its workshops whereas previously the emphasis was exclusively on the lives and experiences of gay men and lesbians. This format allows youth to understand issues on a more individual level and provides them a safe space in which to ask questions and challenge preconceived notions. These presentations avoid engaging in debates or listing statistics and theories. This approach is intended to help students recognize the personal impacts of homophobia and rethink stereotypes after this interaction. During the 2001-2002 school year, GRIS conducted 296 workshops, had 50 trained facilitators and came into contact with approximately 7500 students in the Montréal area. GRIS has continued to grow and evolve and in the 2007-2008 school year GRIS offered 862 workshops, had 131 trained facilitators, and met with over 19,000 students in the Montréal area (GRIS, 2006, pp. 8-9). This year GRIS anticipates exceeding their goal of 1000 workshops.

In 2003, GRIS-Montréal also published a teaching guide to provide K-11 classroom teachers with background information, lesson plans and resources that can help them integrate information to reduce homophobia and increase appreciation for diversity related to sexual orientation into their own teaching (Demczuk & GRIS-Montréal, 2003). Since June 2008, GRIS-Montréal provided 140 copies of this teaching guide to the CSQ (teachers union) and an additional 180 copies to educational organizations in Europe. This guide is currently being revised since the first run is now out of print and no longer available due to its popularity. In addition to providing these free and low-cost educational resources to schools, GRIS has been surveying students about their knowledge of and attitudes towards homosexuality before and after these workshops. These data form the foundation of the knowledge generated by this organization.

### Research

During each educational workshop, participants are asked to complete a questionnaire that asks them questions about their knowledge of and attitudes towards gay men and lesbians. Sample questions include: “In your own words, how would you describe homosexuality?” as well as a series of questions related to their comfort level in various situations such as: “I’m doing group work with a lesbian girl, I feel: very comfortable, comfortable, uncomfortable, very uncomfortable.” This scale is used to measure a series of questions about gay men and lesbians in situations ranging from class work, to sports teams, friendship groups, and family life. These questions are answered prior to the start of the workshop and again immediately following the presentation. The analysis of these findings indicate that the workshops have a positive impact on the attitudes of students towards gay men and lesbians. A complete copy of the questionnaire is attached as Appendix A.

In general, our findings indicate that youth feel more comfortable with members of the opposite sex who identify as gay men or lesbians. For example, boys are more likely to report feeling “very comfortable” or “comfortable” if their best friend said they were lesbian (81% before, 87% after), than if their best friend said they were gay (40% before, 58% after). However, there are improvements in students’ self-reported levels of comfort after having listened to the presentations of the GRIS volunteers. As represented in Figure 1, 18% more male students’ report feeling “very comfortable” or “comfortable” if their best friend was gay after the workshop.

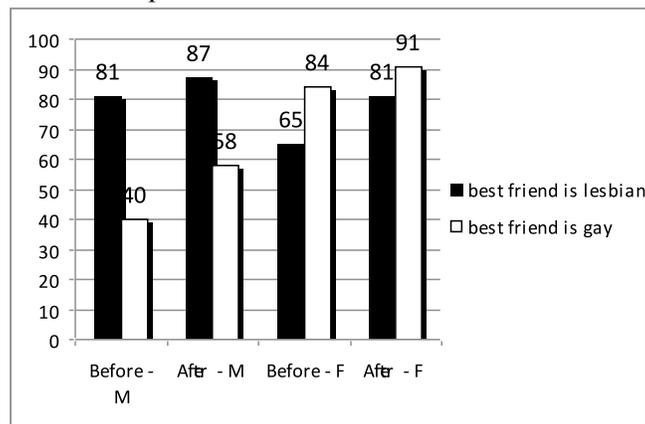


Figure 1: Percentage of students reporting feeling “very comfortable” or “comfortable” if their best friend told them they were gay or lesbian

A second theme that is explored in these questionnaires is students’ level of comfort engaging in an athletic activity with gays and lesbians. Again, it is clear that students are generally more comfortable with members of the opposite sex who identify as homosexual. 93% of boys are “very comfortable” or “comfortable” with engaging in athletic activities with lesbians and 83% of girls are “very comfortable” or “comfortable” engaging in athletic activities with gay men. There are very small changes in this area since students report higher levels of comfort at the start of the workshop. It is important to note, how-

ever, that male students do show an noticeable improvement in comfort levels with gay men in sport after the workshop: a 14% difference (Figure 2).

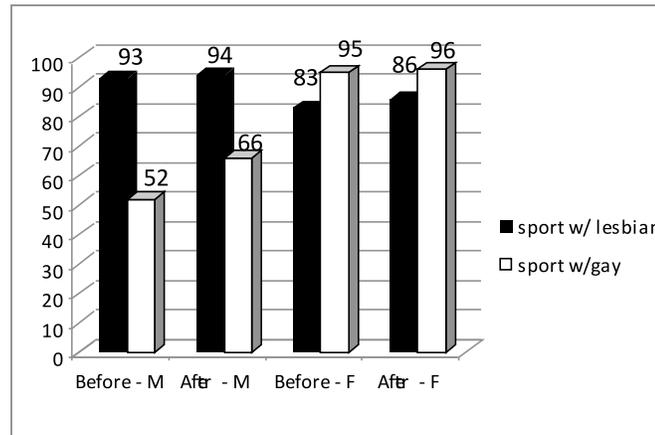


Figure 2: Percentage of students reporting feeling “very comfortable” or “comfortable” participating in an athletic activity with a gay man or lesbian.

The third set of questions that we analyzed were those that asked about students’ comfort levels regarding public displays of affection (such as hand-holding and kissing) between two women or two men. This was the area where the fewest number of participants reported feeling “very comfortable” or “comfortable.” It is clear that even after the workshops, the appearance of two women expressing affection is more acceptable to both males (85%) and females (74%) than two men expressing affection (51% males, 58% females). However, this was also the area the showed the greatest change pre/post intervention, particularly for males. 20% more males reported feeling “very comfortable” or “comfortable” following the presentation.

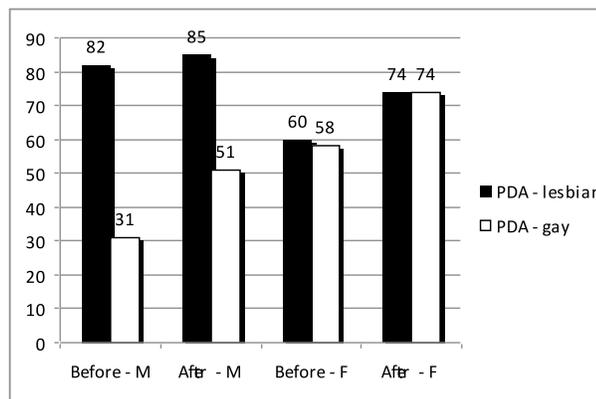


Figure 3: Percentage of students reporting feeling “very comfortable” or “comfortable” witnessing public displays of affection such as hand-holding or kissing between two women or two men.

The findings presented here represent surveys collected between April 2004 and December 2009 (n=11, 236) during 476 workshops presented in 149 institutions. These institutions were mostly in the Montréal metropolitan area (38% on the island, 39% South Shore, 17% North Shore, 14% other regions) and indicate general trends in youths’ attitudes towards same-sex behaviours and gay- and lesbian-identified individuals. These data have not been tested for significance and are intended to offer this community organization descriptive statistics and feedback on how youth respond to the information presented in the educational workshops.

## Conclusion

The lessons learned as a result of the continued success of the projects of this organization may interest other researchers and community educators who aim to provide similar support to educational initiatives regarding sexual diversity in their schools and communities. The structure and focus of GRIS-Montréal is unique in Canada and by sharing the work of our community organization with participants at this conference, we hope to be a part of the larger national conversation around reducing homophobia in Canadian schools.

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## Appendix A: Questionnaire du GRIS-Montréal



**1<sup>ère</sup> Partie**

Questionnaire du GRIS – Montréal Page 1

Nous aimerions que tu répondes au questionnaire suivant. **Les renseignements obtenus demeureront confidentiels.** Tu restes libres de répondre ou non au questionnaire. Cependant, chaque questionnaire répondu nous aide à améliorer nos activités et à mieux connaître l'ensemble des élèves. Indique, s'il te plaît, la réponse qui exprime le mieux ce que tu ressens face aux situations présentées. N'aie pas peur d'être honnête, c'est ce que nous désirons ! Les informations obtenues demeureront confidentielles.

N'inscris pas ton nom sur le questionnaire

version : octobre 2008

1 Dans tes mots, comment décrirais-tu l'homosexualité?

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Comment te sentrais-tu dans les situations suivantes ? <small>Coche la réponse sur l'échelle de 1 à 4, qui correspond le mieux à ce que tu ressens.</small>	Très à l'aise	À l'aise	Mal à l'aise	Très mal à l'aise
2 Je fais un travail d'équipe avec une fille lesbienne, je me sens :	1	2	3	4
3 Je fais un travail d'équipe avec un gars gai, je me sens :	1	2	3	4
4 Je participe à une activité sportive avec une fille lesbienne, je me sens :	1	2	3	4
5 Je participe à une activité sportive avec un gars gai, je me sens :	1	2	3	4
6 J'apprends que ma meilleure amie est lesbienne, je me sens :	1	2	3	4
7 J'apprends que mon meilleur ami est gai, je me sens :	1	2	3	4
8 J'apprends que ma sœur est lesbienne, je me sens :	1	2	3	4
9 J'apprends que mon frère est gai, je me sens :	1	2	3	4
10 Je vois deux femmes se donner des signes d'affection en public comme se tenir la main et s'embrasser, je me sens :	1	2	3	4
11 Je vois deux hommes se donner des signes d'affection en public comme se tenir la main et s'embrasser, je me sens :	1	2	3	4

Que penses-tu des situations suivantes ? <small>Coche la réponse sur l'échelle de 1 à 3, qui correspond le mieux à ce que tu penses.</small>	D'accord	Indifférent-e	Pas d'accord
12 Les couples homosexuels ont les mêmes droits et obligations que les couples hétérosexuels, je suis :	1	2	3
13 Les couples de femmes lesbiennes ont le droit d'adopter des enfants, je suis :	1	2	3
14 Les couples d'hommes gais ont le droit d'adopter des enfants, je suis :	1	2	3

Questionnaire du GRIS – Montréal Page 3

Nous te demandons de bien vouloir répondre à ces questions complémentaires. Elles sont importantes pour connaître l'ensemble des élèves et offrir de meilleurs services et activités. **Les informations obtenues demeureront confidentielles.** Personne de ton école ou d'ailleurs ne pourra savoir qui a donné ces réponses.

Merci pour ta collaboration!

3 Quel est ton âge? \_ans Quel est ton sexe?  Femme  Homme

2 Quelle est ta religion?   pratiquant  non-pratiquant

je n'ai aucune religion

3 Connais-tu au moins un gai ou une lesbienne dans ton entourage?  Oui  Non

4 Si oui, quel est ton lien avec cette personne?

<input type="checkbox"/> A Parent (père ou mère)	<input type="checkbox"/> E Ami ou amie
<input type="checkbox"/> B Frère ou sœur	<input type="checkbox"/> F Voisin ou voisine
<input type="checkbox"/> C Cousin ou cousine	<input type="checkbox"/> G Collègue de travail
<input type="checkbox"/> D Oncle ou tante	<input type="checkbox"/> H Connaissance
	<input type="checkbox"/> I Autre

5 Es-tu attiré-e par :

<input type="checkbox"/> A Les hommes	<input type="checkbox"/> C Les hommes et les femmes
<input type="checkbox"/> B Les femmes	<input type="checkbox"/> D Ne sais pas

Nous t'invitons à nous faire part de tes commentaires et suggestions concernant la rencontre, les sujets que nous avons abordés et ceux que tu aurais aimé voir aborder.

Ton opinion est importante et nous permet de nous améliorer.

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## “...and some of the people who use it”: LGBT Representation in Professional Architectural Publications

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**Abstract:** *LGBT architecture – that is architecture purpose built for queer clients or users – has rarely been represented as such in professional architecture and design publications. This paper discusses queer visibility in the architectural world and the potential of “queer architecture” as a building type through the example of the San Francisco LGBT Community Center.*

LGBT architecture – understood as an architecture purpose built for queer clients or users – has rarely been represented as such in professional architecture and design publications. There is, however, a belief shared by some that the issue is of interest: the topic has surfaced irregularly since the early 1990s in both professional and academic publications. Why then does LGBT-oriented architecture and LGBT designers have such a low visibility in architectural publications? Is it representative of a “closeted” conservative profession or is it that sexuality is not considered a valid criterion to approach architecture?

This paper questions the visibility of queer architects and architecture through a discussion of the representation, both visual and textual, of the San Francisco Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender Community Center. Designed by Cee/Pfau Collaborative following an architectural competition that attracted thirty-one teams, it opened in 2002 with claims of being “the world’s first building built from the ground up by gay money, political influence, and organizational strength” (Ward, 2002, p. 73). It has since been followed by other purpose-built LGBT community centres, but it remains the only public LGBT building to have graced the cover of a major architectural magazine. Originally published in 1997 in the *Competitions* journal, it was featured again upon completion in the April 2002 “queer space” issue of the professional magazine *Architecture*. It thus offers a window on a conservative profession which has long been sitting uncomfortably between the “masculine” professional assurance expected of architects and the “feminine” qualities associated with (interior) design. This paper is an attempt to reflect on *Architecture*’s doubts about the potential of a “queer building” typology by discussing identity, visibility and users as elements described by the magazine to define the Center’s architectural specificity.

### “...and some of the people who use it”: Representing an LGBT Center

*Architecture*’s feature on the San Francisco LGBT Community Center was surprisingly important for a community centre. Although it diverged from *Architecture*’s usual features and even more so from other mainstream architectural magazines, it fitted then editor-in-chief Reed Kroloff’s editorial agenda. Published from 1944 to 2006, *Architecture* was one of the major American architectural trade magazines of the twentieth century and the American Institute of Architects’ official journal until 1997. After gaining its independence and under the editorship of Kroloff, “the magazine tried to map the intersection of architecture and design with culture, technology, and business” (Ward, 2010). A practicing and teaching architect, Kroloff (1998, p. 11) insisted on his desire to take risks and to use the periodical’s “new-found status as the profession’s only independent voice” to show that there is no other profession more vital than architecture. Characteristic of this period was the regular use of cover images representing social elements or contexts instead of typical photographs of buildings. These covers illustrated issues organized around social or cultural themes, a contrasting approach to its competitor *Architectural Record* typological and monographic approach. After Kroloff’s departure in June 2002, “*Architecture*, which [...] had attempted to engage topics - exemplified by the April 2002 “queer space” issue - beyond star coverage and “how to” articles, has become more “product oriented” and therefore, more like its main competitor.” (Willis, 2003, p. 65). Typical of the magazine’s broad and diverse coverage at the time, Jacob Ward, author of the LGBT Center feature, does not have a background in architecture. His article clearly exemplifies his belief that journalists should write in architectural magazines instead of critics, because “reporters who don’t often write about design are best able to bring a fresh perspective to the subject [...]. [*Architecture*’s] stories focused on architecture as a symptom of society” (Ward, 2010).

### **Looking at the Center... and its Users**

Apart from the article itself, the Center is visually present throughout the issue (cover, table of contents, feature page, article). More than the Center itself as a building, readers are, however, showed a diverse image of its users. The Center is introduced through the magazine's cover image showing what looks like a generic room where two men are sitting, waiting between square dancing sets. The only visible signs of a connection with the LGBT community are rainbow-coloured balloons and the headline announcing the feature. This seemingly generic image of the Center, far removed from usual architectural photographs focussing on details proclaiming a building's specificity, puts the emphasis on the users and clearly positions the Center's identity in relation to the community members' self- or perceived identification.

Inside the magazine, the first encounter with the Center appears as a background for the table of contents. A photograph of the Center's history room shows two signs labelled with the words "gay" and "lesbian" sitting in otherwise empty display cases. This image underlines some of the problematic aspects linked to the LGBT Center's representation. If the original display might have been trying to question assumptions about identity and identification, its uncontextualized position as a background image on the contrary reaffirms the need for the magazine to clearly "name" its subject, to identify the specificity of its users before any discussion about the specificity of its architecture. Before the reader reaches the article, a thematic introductory page continues the cover image. Instead of the gay cowboys, the chairs are this time occupied by a Sister of Perpetual Indulgence and a pile of tutus. The introductory text on this page also continues the editorial by questioning what differentiates a "queer" building from a typical office building: "Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender Community Center, or Office Building?" (Ward, 2002, p. 71) Here, the "display" in a generic room of an easily identifiable member of an "othered" community, at least for most readers, seems to suggest an answer.

The article's title page shows an androgynous teenager in front of a drawing board covered with the question "What does "community" mean to you?" This focus on users continues throughout the article: four of the ten pages present photographs of a visibly diversified (in age, gender, and race) group of users in place of the glossy pictures of the building that readers would normally expect. The building appears across the third and fourth pages of the article, after almost half of the text. The reader has thus seen nine faces and read much about the community and the project's history before he gets to an image of the building. Although some of the pictures show people in relation to spaces, most of them blur or crop the context, rendering the relation to the Center secondary. The unusual importance of users representation somewhat undermines the role of the images and drawings of the building. The plans appear fairly straightforward, while no section is presented. Photographs of the building focus mostly on the relations between interior and exterior. Visually, the building is constructed as an almost generic space, certainly not as important as the people using it or those seeing them using it.

### **Discussing the Center... and its Community**

The LGBT Center's uniqueness as an LGBT-oriented building creates an ambiguous situation. It is the only article on the topic, but the issue is presented as a thematic issue focussing on queer space. In addition to the visual treatment of the Center throughout the magazine, Kroloff's editorial discusses the idea of a queer building. Although he questions the idea of queer space, he appropriates it and broadens the discussion through the hypothesis that the LGBT Center, and potentially queer spaces, charges space socially and politically. He therefore notes that "the process of queering doesn't end with building's opening. It begins" (Kroloff, 2002, p. 17). Kroloff rightfully notes the importance of temporality in queer space and similarly links the queering of space with the use of the building. The features' heavy reliance on images of users thus continues in the textual analysis.

If the visual presentation of the Center focuses on users, the text similarly concentrates on community. Ward begins his article with a short anecdote involving one of the project's architects, Jane Cee. "Cee realized she had been on the balcony of the building the day before, giving a tour to a group of women, and that her sexual identity had been spotlit as a result. 'At that moment,' she said, 'I realized I'd been outed by my own building'" (Ward, 2002, p. 73). By doing so, however, Ward similarly outs the architect and emphasizes the perceived importance of the architect's sexual orientation to the design of the

Center. But could he have done otherwise? Both his article and Dana Van Gorder's presentation of the competition in *Competitions* fall 2007 issue use the building as an entry point to describe at length the communities served by the Center. Van Gorder (1997, p. 19) underlines the presence of numerous gay and lesbian architects and designers entering the competition and viewing the project as a "once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to serve their community." In a profession known for its conservatism and where designers mostly have to subordinate their personal identity to their client's, it is certainly an opportunity that few would have missed. It also offered a rare occasion to bring the issue of sexuality to the forefront of architectural discussion.

### **Building Out of the Closet: What is a Queer Building?**

"Queer originally meant, and still can mean, different, distinct, something other than the norm. [...] In a manner of speaking, we are a nation of queers. Architecture is certainly a queer profession: Neither art nor business nor science, yet all three at once, architecture is indeterminate, something in-between" (Kroloff, 2002, p. 17).

Kroloff's editorial attempts to contextualize the "queer space" issue with a discussion of some of the difficulties associated with this concept. His short introduction only points to some of the questions; a review of different approaches to the relations between space/architecture and the concept of "queer" presents many more tensions and unresolved issues. Kroloff's description of architecture as a queer profession typically represents one of the difficulties linked to all-encompassing vision of queer theory's potential for architecture. It also mirrors the fairly limited architectural discussions of queer space, especially in comparison to geographers' take on the issue. Kroloff (2002, p. 17) also questions the notion of "queer building." "It's not every day someone invents a building type. Moreover, what is it, exactly, that makes a building queer?" In his article, Ward (2010) cites the architects' references to identity and visibility issues as making the LGBT Center a queer building. Can this be reconciled with other interpretations of queer space?

### **Architecture Embodying Identity?**

LGBT-oriented architecture is certainly not the only one to deal with issues of identity. Public buildings in general often have to negotiate complex ideas about how a culture or subculture should be represented in built form and who gets to decide and design how this will be done, as discussions surrounding recent designs for embassies or anthropological and cultural museums have shown. In the case of the San Francisco LGBT Center, Ward (2002, p. 78) notes that "the center's design most directly embodies the complications of sexual identity in its two new facades [...]. The curtain wall makes those who choose to enter through its doors visible to an outside observer as they wend their way through the building. [...] The red facade allows a sequential entry, invisible and private, to those who wish to visit the center but don't wish to make their presence an evident part of the building's symbolism." It is worth pointing out how Ward reduces sexual identity to the "closet", to being identified or not with a sexual orientation. Whereas someone would usually describe how a building refers to various elements of a culture, the Center is said to embody sexual identity by allowing others to discover if someone belongs to this community or not. Although it can seem reductive, this approach allows bypassing the problem of who should be represented and of how to represent the diverse elements composing the LGBT communities.

Understanding the Center in terms of varying degrees of "outness" recalls Henry Urbach's discussion of the architectural significance of the "closet" metaphor, at once hiding and revealing. Urbach (1996, p. 72) is particularly interested by what he calls the *ante-closet*, the space before the closet, the space of changing: "the ante-closet is an effect of reappropriations and resignifications without end. It resists the violence of fixed identities by allowing spaces to fold, unfold, and fold again." Is the Center such a space? Although its possibility to be both public and private and its location between LGBT-oriented neighbourhoods and non-LGBT spaces share a similarity with the ante-closet, it does not offer space for reappropriations and resignifications. It fixes the parameters of identity – in or out – instead of sustaining possibilities.

### **Architecture Embodying Visibility?**

The *Architecture* article further emphasises the importance of visibility by discussing it separately from sexual identity. Ward notes the presence of a balcony where occupants can watch one another, both inside and outside the building. “The closer one sits to the west, the better chance one has of being visible to passersby” (Ward, 2002, p. 78). This insistence on the users’ visibility and public identification is expressed in both the architecture and the location. The first words of Ward’s (2002, p. 73) article, “Standing on Market Street, San Francisco’s main thoroughfare”, emphasizes the site’s importance. But even more so, it relies once again on the users’ experience of the building to define its links to sexuality. Problematic is, however, the assumption that all users share a similar relation to visibility. Although the Center offers two different sequences of entry, it does not question how these different visibilities affect users and intersect with other identifications.

### **Queer Users and Architecture**

According to Ward, identity and visibility are embodied by the Center’s architecture. In their built form, these attributes refer to how users occupy and interact with the building. As such, the LGBT Center seems to be identified with sexuality through its users more than through its architecture. The article presents these users as the most important aspect of the LGBT Community Center: it is presented as queer through visual traces of its users, understood as queer because of the people occupying it. As with the visual representation, this suggests an answer to the initial question of whether the Center is different than a regular office building: it is who uses them what makes the difference. The important place taken by users’ photographs in the magazine also objectifies these users, however, and puts them in a place of otherness to the reader, similar to how a building would usually be presented.

### **“LGBT Architecture” as a Building Type?**

Kroloff (2002, p. 17) rightly points out in his editorial that “its owners and architects [insist] they’ve built the world’s first “queer” building. That claim demands attention: It’s not every day someone invents a building type. Moreover, what is it, exactly, that makes a building queer?” Building types are usually defined by function through which their architectural features are understood. In this case, understanding “queer” as a building type seems to refer to users more than function, and as such, more to the building as a lived experience than to any built features. Although a discussion of queer building as a typology might appear useless from a stylistic or programmatic point of view, it is useful I believe as an entry point to investigate forgotten or overlooked minorities’ contributions to the built landscape and their representation. It could also offer ideas on identity as a vector for design. When combined with broader understandings of queer space more interested in the political consequences of space, thinking of a queer architecture gains a powerful potential.

### **Conclusion**

The almost unique presence of the San Francisco LGBT Community Center in a mainstream architecture magazine is representative of the very limited acknowledgement of queers in the architectural profession. Although the social climate has evolved, discussions of the importance of sexuality in architecture are still rare. It should be noted, however, that neither is discussed how other bodily identities (race, gender, age) relate to space and architecture.

Designing a centre for LGBT communities in San Francisco presented a perfect occasion for architects to think about embodiment of identities in built form. Cee/Pfau used the project to create a language and organisation that could reflect some of the ambiguities associated with this command. The LGBT Center’s representation in *Architecture*, however, clearly exemplifies the difficulties still associated with the intersection of architecture and sexuality. Its focus on users’ representation in both visual and written discussion objectifies the communities served by the Center. In parallel, it also constructs the Center as what Ricco calls a “minor architecture”, an architecture that resides inside a “major architecture” and uses its tropes to express its otherness (Ricco, 2002). It thus gains a political effect through its publication in a “major” mode of expression, exploiting the queerness that is usually recognized only by those in the know.

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## Alterity: Queering the Monadic Self

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**Abstract:** *This paper presents an analysis of how one type of human difference - alterity, the experience of multiple distinct consciousnesses or “alters” by one person - is pathologized in popular and psychological culture. In doing so, the notion of the modernist subject or Self as a linear, cohesive, unitary consciousness is challenged and deconstructed as a method of suppressing difference and protecting the cultural and economic status quo, and alternative language is proposed for talking about the Self. If an individual experiences a single Self, that Self can be referred to as Monadic. Such a Monadic Self is presumed to be unitary, linear, and coherent. In contrast, those who experience alterity can be said to experience polyvalent selves. If the Monadic Self is commonplace, then polyvalent selves are queer, unusual, different, and worthy of study because such difference represents a creative and dynamic uncertainty that cannot be easily suppressed, explained or interpreted away by modernist institutions and theories.*

### Why and How Alterity Is Constructed as Illness

Haraway (1988) posited that dominant cultural discourses frequently deploy the “god trick” to obfuscate power relations and insure that certain subjectivities remain subordinate and unacknowledged. When the god trick is deployed, “things seem already fixed and distant” (p. 589) and thus unchangeable or natural. In dominant discourses, and especially psychological and psychiatric discourse, one “god trick” begins with the humanist subject or Self. Thus, even as poststructuralist writers like St. Pierre (2000) argue that “Poststructural critiques require a rethinking of all taken-for-granted, explanatory fictions that humanism has produced...[and so] humanism’s inscription of the individual, the subject, must give way once the meaning of language, discourse, rationality, power, resistance, freedom, knowledge, and truth...” (p. 500), the truth projects created by that criticism too often replicate the structure of the original. Rather than rethinking the totalizing subject, that coherent speaker with a single clear history and identity, that individual is “liberated” to become something not quite new - perhaps a feminist subject, perhaps a less rational subject, perhaps a subject with multiple identity markers and changes, but nonetheless an identifiable, coherent Self which can be spoken and given a particular voice. “Linking voice, experience, and meaning, [some] feminist researchers are involved in recovery [of the Self], liberatory projects which seek to empower all women who are involved in the research - participants, readers, and researchers” (Jackson, 2003, p. 698). Unfortunately, even the most radical of these knowledge-making projects, such as queer theory, too often succumb to the cultural imperative that the Self be made knowable and unified, even if that unity is paradoxically comprised only of an essential indeterminacy. “By accepting representational and transformational premises as fundamental to its purposes, queer research participates in producing the subjects on which liberalism (and neoliberalism) depends” (Talbot & Rasmussen, 2010, p. 7).

This paper challenges such truth projects, and not simply on the methodological grounds presented by postmodernism’s “incredulity towards metanarratives” (Lyotard, 1984, p. xxiv). It does so by asking simple questions: how is having more than one Self pathologized by the dominant culture as an illness? That is, why does North American medical and psychological culture assume that a person always has a single consciousness and that evidence of alternate and discontinuous identities qualifies that person as disordered or mentally ill? What are the implications for adult learning when and if an individual experiences the following:

- A. The presence of two or more distinct identities or personalities or personality states (each with its own relatively enduring pattern of perceiving, relating to and thinking about the environment and self).
- B. At least two of these identities or personality states recurrently take control of the person’s behaviour.
- C. Inability to recall important personal information that is too extensive to be explained by ordinary forgetfulness.

- D. The disturbance is not due to the direct physiological effects of a substance (e.g., blackouts or chaotic behaviour during Alcohol Intoxication) or a general medical condition (e.g., complex partial seizures). Note: In children the symptoms are not attributable to imaginary playmates or other fantasy play (American Psychiatric Association, 1994).

It should be obvious that, in North American and much of Western culture, this person has been declared, by medical fiat, mentally ill. This quote is the definition of Dissociative Identity Disorder (DID) found in the American Psychiatric Association's *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (4<sup>th</sup> ed.)*, or, as it is commonly called, the DSM-IV. Interestingly, just as "homosexuals" were once declared mentally ill based upon their status as subjects desiring members of the same sex, there is no requirement that hosting multiple selves must cause the person who experiences it some distress. The distress, and the diseased condition, is presumed.

Further, while the name of this "disorder" has been changed, from "multiple personality disorder" (in the DSM III) to "dissociative identity disorder" (in the DSM IV), this change was made not to humanize the condition but to conform the diagnosis more closely to that of other mental illnesses and to assert that alters were not personalities, but rather fragments of personalities (Hacking, 1995). This further linguistic limitation on those experiencing alterity - this positing that alterity was the experience of fragments, rather than whole, Selves - is a discursive position which functions to further subordinate the human experience of alterity to that of illness, by denying these "fragments" their personhood. Thus, Hacking (1995) ironically notes that "An emphasis on fragments as opposed to whole personalities is having its effects" (p. 18) - even after lamenting, in the preceding paragraph referencing a priest teaching one patient's alters about religious matters, that "Although there is no inconsistency, it is hard to think in terms of giving religious instruction to a mere fragment" (p. 18). Indeed, the experience of alterity continues to be presented as always and already a diseased state:

A person with the illness is consciously aware of one aspect of his or her personality or self while being totally unaware of, or dissociated from, other aspects of it. This is a key feature of the disorder. It only takes two distinct identities or personality states to qualify as DID but there have been cases in which 100 distinct alternative personalities, or alters, were reported. Fifty percent of DID patients harbor fewer than 11 identities. (Gale Encyclopedia of Mental Disorders, 2003, p. 329)

Thus, if a person has one or more distinct states of consciousness, or identities, they are ill and qualify for the "patient" status. The more identity states, the more ill the patient.

No one asks the dissociative (the person defined by this illness) whether their difference is something that brings meaning and happiness to their lives. It is assumed that one who experiences such discontinuities in experience could never be happy. Like the queer man or woman before the Stonewall Revolution, such persons are expected to feel shame about, and to hide from others, their difference. Indeed, one dominant discourse on this "illness" posits that Dissociative Identity Disorder (DID) is so unthinkable that it must have been caused by trauma (Barlow & Durand, 2002). The reasoning behind this theory appears to be that, if having a Self is a natural state, then having a fractured Self, or multiple selves, could only be caused by horrible acts of abuse, usually inflicted in childhood, which must be remembered in order for the patient to be cured. An industry of counselors has developed with a treatment model that subjects patients with Dissociative Identity Disorder to hypnotic techniques and regressions designed to help them recover forgotten instances of abuse. This industry continues its work despite evidence, contrary to their model, that memories cannot be so repressed and recovered (Clancy, 2009; Loftus & Ketcham, 1994); that they may be doing real damage to both their patients and the family systems those patients inhabit (Ofshe & Watters, 1994); and that this model even led to widespread witch hunts in which innocent folk were accused of the most heinous sorts of Satanic ritual abuse (Nathan & Snedeker, 2001). Little attention is paid to the absence of any clear causal link, which may be predicated on a vague and unarticulated sort of Freudianism (Ofshe & Watters, 1994), between remembering abuse and suddenly becoming "cured" of this human difference.

## Language as Resistance

This project began with the critical observation that, if the subject can be plural rather than singular, much of the apparatus of marketing, of consumerism, of love and marriage, and of industries such as psychometric testing - not to mention the therapeutic industry designed to “cure” DID patients of their perceived illness by “integrating” their alters - is called into question. Indeed, the presumed Self is a source of authority, and perhaps a shorthand for authority, in much adult education discourse. Arguably, such scholars are merely following a messianic Rogers (1979), who utilized a fundamentalist humanism to posit that learners would prosper and grow if allowed to develop their presumed individual Selves naturally and appropriately. For example, Tennant (2000) articulated several versions of assumptions regarding the Self before settling on his own version, “the self as a narrative or story” (p. 92). Rather than discussing emotional learning as something which adults do, Dirkx (2008) and those he edited in an entire volume of *New Directions* posited that emotions must be attached to an Emotional Self - as if the validity of emotional learning within adult education must somehow be tied back to this rationalist overlay on human experience, the Monadic Self. Newman (2008), even while raising doubts about the Self, accused those who argue for postmodernist or fractured readings of the Self of moral failure, as he takes issues with the postmodern view of the decentred self “because of the amorality of the self it presents” (p. 293). In a church-dominated Europe, challenging Medieval notions that the sun orbited the earth was once deemed heresy; similarly, today failure to conform to pre-established notions that each individual must have a single, linear, coherent, and unitary Self is theoretical heresy. Just as well-meaning heterosexuals who never interrogate their straight privilege (Rocco & Gallagher, 2006) are unaware of the oppression they work on queer folk, scholars like Rogers, Dirkx and Newman have positioned themselves as allies of the medical/industrial complex that is prepared to intervene to extinguish this human difference without regard to whether the “patients” are experiencing distress.

## New Definitions

Language can be a type of resistance, and linguistic resistance is important. Those involved in the long struggle for queer equality will recall how we long ago made the linguistic move from being “homosexual,” a noun which referred to a certain type of patient and a person defined by a condition, to being “gay.” For the queer rights social movement, this linguistic resistance arguably made possible the “transition from homosexual (secret) to gay (public) [and] also signific[d] a transformation of gay social and cultural concerns to a larger, even global arena” (Herdt, 1992, p. 11). Because I believe, with Hill (2009), that difference is a fundamental human right, and because the terms used to discuss these differences are loaded with psychological and therapeutic baggage, I begin this project by presenting definitions:

### Alter

An alter is a consciousness that regularly inhabits a body, often with its own particular name, mannerisms, likes, dislikes, identity markers, and memories, which may or may not be congruent with the history of the person as a whole. In *The United States of Tara* (Cody & Kaplow, 2009), for example, the protagonist is alternately a teenage girl (“T”), a 1950’s housewife who compulsively cleans (“Alice”), a straight man obsessed with guns, cigarettes, booze, and women (“Buck”), and a rather somber and demure wife and mother (“Tara”) who is presumably the main or primary alter, or even perhaps the “real” Tara. To qualify as an alter, there must of course be more than one such consciousness in a person’s body - otherwise an alter is just a Self.

### Alterity

The second definition is for individuals who experience the discontinuity of other personalities or “alters”, as experiencing *alterity*. This is my own word for what the psychological/psychiatric industry refers to as “Dissociative Identity Disorder” (American Psychiatric Association, 1994), formerly known as “Multiple Personality Disorder” (American Psychiatric Association, 1980). I am deploying this word as an alternative to the language used in psychiatric texts to create a type of patient, the “multiple” or “dissociative,” and to define instead a class of people who experience alterity but are not defined by that

experience - just as one can be a gay person, rather than a homosexual, the signifier is intended to be adjectival. One can experience alterity without becoming defined by a presumed mental illness.

### **Monadic Self or Self**

I describe those extraordinary (and perhaps hypothetical) individuals who experience themselves as single consciousnesses, moving forward linearly in time, as experiencing *monadic consciousness*, or themselves as each having a single *Monadic Self*. Like the term “straight” or “heterosexual,” this Self is a residual term reserved for the privileged majority. Because of its God-like privilege in academic discourse, I refer to the Monadic Self in capital letters. This Self is an often untested axiom of experience, a presumed autonomous, rational and coherent consciousness with a specific history and an identifiable set of fixed attributes, tastes, and orientations. A given Monadic Self is a sort of essence presumed to harbour its own distinct essential attributes, however these are assigned, reported, or otherwise identified. Finally, the Monadic Self has been the obsessive concern of much of Western psychological and adult educational discourse, as it is the theoretical construct underlying such cultural artifacts as psychometric testing for personality traits and various other technologies and theories for self transformation, self awareness, and so forth.

### **Polyvalent selves**

As a manner of speaking, if the language of the self must be deployed, a person who experiences alterity can be said to experience polyvalent selves, or the presence of multiple, interconnected, selves which are each to some degree stable and enduring and which have some degree of internal communication or awareness. At least some of these selves will have different histories, attributes, orientations, and tastes from the other selves within that individual’s polyvalent matrix.

### **Conclusion and Implications for Future Research**

This paper is a beginning point, an initial challenge to a dominant regime of truth which subordinates as pathological a particular type of human difference, the experience of alterity. The intent of this paper is not to directly engage with the therapeutic discursive formations regarding the care and treatment of alterity as an illness. It is to lay groundwork for my further work, which is to queer the modernist notions of Self as coherent, stable, and linear by reviewing how images in popular culture depict those experiencing alterity. My observation is that, just as early depictions of gay men and lesbians in film and on television employed predictable motifs to criminalize queer folk as suicidal, drug addicted monsters, images of those experiencing alterity will similarly produce disordered persons within clearly defined, and negative, cultural stereotypes.

With this short paper on language as a beginning, my unfolding research will seek to queer the Monadic Self by showing how alterity is constructed, regulated, and ultimately repressed. If the Self is a god trick, maybe it is time to ask: is it possible that some of those who experienced alterity are mentally ill only if or because they are asked to hide their differences and conform to the absurd and limiting strictures of monadic consciousness? Why and how is alterity such a threat to dominant regimes of truth? And is it possible that a model of polyvalent selves, with inherent creative uncertainty and adaptability, is more congruent to much of human experience than are the simplistic platitudes about the Self that underlie so much of psychological and educational theory?

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## Gay-Straight Alliances: Trends and Analysis

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**Abstract:** *This article offers an analysis of research trends in the study of K-12 gay-straight student alliances in North America. Through my review of literature, I explore the rise of GSAs, their roles in schools, and the emergence of GSAs as spaces for both recoupment and resistance to the heterosexual matrix. I conclude by outlining seven moments or phases in GSA-related research and highlight key implications for future research within the field.*

### Introduction

This article examines available research literature and synthesizes evident trends into research “moments” or phases in the evolution of gay-straight student alliances (GSAs) in K-12 schools in North America. Sexual minority and gender variant youth continue to experience discrimination, prejudice, and abuse within school systems designed to provide for their care and education (Egale Canada, 2009; Kosciw, Diaz, & Greytak, 2008). However, these youth have also attempted to “fight back” to challenge and change these hostile hallways by creating GSAs as spaces for both recoupment and resistance to institutional homophobia and heteronormativity (Grace & Wells, 2009).

As Russell and associates (2009) suggest, a preponderance of research on sexual minority youth has been focused on the impact of stigmatization and associated negative health and educational outcomes (i.e. risk factors). This important, yet myopic focus has obscured research involving those youth who thrive despite negative or hostile home, school, or family environments. Continually positioning sexual minority youth as victims can serve to pathologize these youth as “at-risk”, which, in turn, denies them agency to not only resist, but also to transform heteronormative educational environments (Marshall, 2010; Rasmussen, Rofes, & Talburt, 2004; Russell, 2005). These deficit discourses continue to position sexual minority youth as vulnerable and in need of saving from themselves (i.e. suicide and drug and alcohol abuse) and saving from others (i.e. homophobic bullying). Correspondingly, for many youth, GSAs serve as critical support systems that help them to make a transition from feeling at-risk to a place where they can be supported to grow into resilience. Accordingly, research on GSAs represents an important focus on helping to understand the processes of sexual minority youth identity development and the role consciousness-raising, individual agency, and coalition building strategies can play in advocating for personal, social, and institutional change.

### The Emergence of GSAs in K-12 Schools

The first formal high school-based support group for gay and lesbian youth was formed in 1984, by Dr. Virginia Uribe, in Los Angeles, California. Project 10, as it would later be known, was designed to not only support students struggling with their sexual orientation, but also was intended to provide school-based workshops to counter pervasive heterosexism and homophobia found within the school system (Valenti & Campbell, 2009). From its conception, the very first “gay-student support group” was about personal, social, and cultural change. Today, building upon this legacy of support, over 4,000 GSAs are present in about 1 in 10 high schools in the United States (Cloud, 2005; GSA Network, 2010). This surge of GSAs has been the direct result of strong and vocal advocacy support received from the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU). The ACLU, citing Equal Access and First Amendment laws, will intervene on behalf of any student who has been denied the right to form a GSA, denied attendance at a graduation prom with a same-sex date, or has been limited in their pro-gay free speech (Mercier, 2009; Whittaker, 2009). Unfortunately, no such powerful legal or influential lobbyist group exists to support sexual minority youth in Canada. As a result, the uptake of GSAs in Canada has been much slower. It is estimated that less than 100 GSAs exist in Canada, which is also due in part to the lack of a national GSA organizational body and differing legal frameworks from those used successfully in the United States. For example, while the ACLU has launched case after case of successful court challenges in support of a student’s right to create a GSA (mostly within conservative US states), there have been no similar legal challenges in Canada. In Canada, the most logical place to appeal the denial of creating a GSA would be to a

provincial or territorial human rights commission on the grounds of sexual orientation discrimination. Mercier argues that litigation through the legal system in the United States has been critical in helping to heighten the visibility of sexual minority students and their needs and concerns. In one American example, opposition groups formed to support the ban of GSAs and demonstrated with protest signs such as “Grades Not Aids” at school board meetings. Protest actions like these draw considerable media attention, and, as Mercier suggests, paradoxically demonstrate to the public the very purpose of GSAs: to fight ignorance, combat stereotypes, and promote tolerance.

### Typology and Roles of GSAs

Griffin and associates (2003) in their pioneering research on early-stage GSAs identified a typology of GSAs, which are classified by the four major roles they have traditionally played in K-12 schools.

(1) *GSAs for counseling and support* place a focus on providing individual support to students who are deemed to be at-risk for bullying, discrimination, and/or self-harm. These groups tend to be counselor-led and have a low profile within their school.

(2) *GSAs that provide safe spaces* are officially sanctioned school-based groups that include heterosexual allies and teacher supporters. These groups focus on fitting into, rather than disrupting the mainstream school environment and often take an assimilationist approach by arguing for inclusion and acceptance based upon their commonalities to, rather than differences from mainstream school culture.

(3) *GSAs that raise visibility and awareness* focus on establishing a vocal and visible school-wide presence. These groups, which are student-led and teacher-supported, focus their attention on social, educational, and political activities designed to reveal the heterosexist and heteronormative nature of schooling. The majority of GSA activities focus on raising understanding and building tolerance amongst the school population.

(4) *GSAs that promote educational and social change* tend to focus their efforts on building coalitions with different student groups. They also work actively to liaise with their school administration and parent groups. Activities are focused on cultural change through outreach initiatives such as staff training, inclusive curriculum development, and diversity day or anti-homophobia school-wide assemblies. These groups tend to operate using an anti-oppression framework in which issues of power and privilege are interwoven into their educational mandate. Activities and coalition-building strategies are centered on moving beyond notions of tolerance to an appreciation and celebration of diversity and difference in all of its many forms.

Russell and associates (2009) suggest that unlike earlier stage GSAs, which focused on educators providing supports to individual youth, these later stage GSAs represent a unique focus as they “offer an opportunity to understand youth engagement in activities that directly challenge or resist hegemonic structures that characterize adolescent’s lives – the gender and sexual order of their schools” (p. 893). Fetner and Kush (2008) similarly argue, “high schools, which have significant power to organize and regulate student’s lives, can be uniquely conducive to activism or can be harsh repressors” (p. 128). Fetner and Kush posit that GSAs mark a pivotal moment in LGBTQ history as “young people are stepping forward to claim support for lesbian and gay rights on their own terms” (p. 118). Concomitantly, GSAs represent a new and creative form of LGBTQ activism that embraces the fluidity and complexity of sexual and gendered identities by reaching outward in building coalitions with allies, rather than old LGBTQ activist tendencies, which tended to essentialize identities and have a predominantly inward reaching focus. This new form of activism can transform the ways in which sexual minority youth are made intelligible as they challenge the rigidity of the heterosexual/homosexual binary and embrace queerness not as an essentialized sexual identity, but as an orientation to being, becoming, belonging, and acting in the world. These GSAs seek to challenge a deficit model where by queer youth are no longer passive victims in need of safe spaces for their very survival. As part of the evolution of GSAs, a new focus is placed on utilizing GSAs as a critical space for recoupment from the daily onslaught of compulsory heterosexuality, and as an inclusive space to develop strategies for resistance to heteronormativity. In Freireian (2004) terms, these GSAs provide students from all sexual orientation and gendered identities an opportunity to learn to develop critical literacies to name the word and read the world around them in an effort to denounce conditions of oppression and announce new possibilities for social change. As Marshall (2010) suggests, “through their resistant reading[s] these young people embody and enact an important part of the every-

day work of social change” (p. 77).

### **GSA Trends and Analysis**

As GSAs increase their visibility within K-12 public schools across North America, distinct research perspectives have also emerged in relation to the study of the development, evolution, and impact of GSAs. These trends or “research moments” are historically and culturally located, however, each moment should not be viewed as static, but rather understood as having a fluid and continuing influence on the development and roles of current and future GSAs. Each moment identifies and highlights perspectives and questions that have become increasingly important to the field of GSA and sexual minority youth research. These moments are identified as seven distinct phases, which are summarized in Table 1.1.

*Table 1.1 The seven moments in GSA-related research and practice*

<b>First Moment</b>	<p><b>School-Based Support Groups</b> Explores the need for dedicated educational supports and mental health services for lesbian and gay youth. Focus on youth as at-risk for negative psychological, health, and educational outcomes (Unks, 1995; Uribe, 1993/94).</p>
<b>Second Moment</b>	<p><b>Ferment and Formation</b> GSAs are established by concerned teachers who are committed to providing school-based supports to address pressing issues of isolation, alienation, and homophobic bullying. The first official GSA is started in 1998 in Concord, Massachusetts (Blumenfeld, 1995).</p>
<b>Third Moment</b>	<p><b>The Rise and Roles of GSAs</b> Researchers begin to investigate the differing roles of GSAs and their benefits to sexual minority students and the role of teacher advisors and school administrators (Griffin &amp; Ouellett, 2002; Griffin, et al., 2003; Lee, 2002; Miceli, 2005; Perrotti &amp; Westheimer, 2001; Szalacha, 2003; Valenti &amp; Campbell, 2009). GSA guidebooks and websites begin to emerge to help support youth and teachers change their hostile schools from the inside out (Egale Canada, 2010; GSA Network, 2010; MacGillivray, 2007; Miceli, 2005; Wells, 2006).</p>
<b>Fourth Moment</b>	<p><b>Legal Contestations</b> GSAs become part of the “culture wars” as students assert their right to be vocal, visible, and protected within their schools. Youth sexuality moves from a private to public concern with the strong support of the American Civil Liberties Union. GSAs become part of a wave of litigation across the United States and provide a newfound visibility for sexual minority youth. Research explores the legal, legislative, and educational policy frameworks used to support the creation of GSAs (Mercier, 2009; Mayberry, 2007; Whittaker, 2009).</p>
<b>Fifth Moment</b>	<p><b>GSAs, Heterosexual Allies, and Homonormativity</b> Research examines the benefits of GSAs to both sexual minority and heterosexual students through the creation of spaces that open up and support conversations surrounding diversity and difference in public schools (Goodenow, Szalacha, &amp; Westheimer, 2006; Walls, Kane, &amp; Wisnesk, 2010). Research demonstrates how many GSAs become safe spaces for any youth who are deemed to be outsiders in their school. Research also begins to question how GSAs can inadvertently become homonormative spaces, which struggle to include and serve ethnocultural sexual minority youth, two-spirited youth, and trans youth (McCready, 2003).</p>

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**Sixth Moment**      **GSA, Youth Activism, and Coalition Building Strategies**  
GSAs begin to build alliances with other student-oriented social justice groups. These coalition-building strategies strive to link together the “isms” (i.e. racism, sexism, and heterosexism). Research begins to examine GSAs as new forms of LGBTQ activism focused on youth empowerment. Rather than simply providing safe spaces, GSAs embrace the complexity of multiple and shifting identities with a concerted focus on education for personal and social change (Fetner & Kush, 2008; Russell, et al., 2009).

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**Seventh Moment**      **Queering the Future**  
Based on the emergence of GSAs and more than a decade’s worth of research, several critical questions and key themes are expected to become increasingly important to the field of GSA and sexual minority youth research. Some of these questions include:

- How does a student’s participation in a GSA impact their relationships with parents, guardians, or caregivers?
- How do GSAs contribute to individual empowerment and a sense of personal agency?
- With GSAs now being created in junior high schools, what impact will long-term participation in a GSA have on student health, safety, identity development, and educational outcomes? Longitudinal and control group studies comparing students attending schools with GSAs and those attending schools without GSAs are needed.
- What role(s) do GSAs play within religious-based schools? How are issues of sexual orientation and gender identity understood within these faith-based contexts? What are the challenges in creating GSAs within faith-based schools?
- What are the challenges and opportunities for the creation of GSAs in rural, northern, and cross-cultural school-based environments? How do these GSAs respond to localized needs and cultural concerns?
- Are GSAs becoming increasingly homonormative, or do they work to expand rather than limit identity expression? For example, how do GSAs work to embrace trans, two-spirit, and ethnocultural minority youth?
- What roles do adults play in the creation, support, and sustainability of GSAs? What are the risks to and opportunities for these adults?
- How do GSAs contribute to new forms of LGBTQ activism?

### **Concluding Perspective**

The seven moments identified in this article are influenced by the evolution of educational research, GSA activism, and inclusive educational policy development. The benefits of these research perspectives will be to enrich our understanding of GSAs as important catalysts for youth identity-formation, parent-student relationships, coalition-building, and understanding sexual minority youth as active agents for individual and social change. Each of the seven moments presented reflects situated educational practice and diverse thinking on the role and relationship of GSAs to formal schooling. The diversity of these moments represents a wide-variety of approaches; just as no two-school cultures are the same, so are no two GSAs.

Gay-Straight Alliances are a complex and lived experience for their participants. The research moments presented, rather than being viewed as exclusive stages, are designed to help develop frameworks for understanding the contributions that GSAs provide in challenging and changing heteronormative educational environments and the diverse contributions GSA-related research can bring to the field of LGBTQ studies.

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