GLOBAL REALITIES & POSSIBILITIES 
IN QUEER CONTEXTS

A 2011 CASAE-AERC 
LGBTQ&A PRE-CONFERENCE

Thursday, June 9, 2011
9:00 AM – 4:00 PM
Ontario Institute for Studies in Education
University of Toronto

André P. Grace
Pre-Conference Co-Organizer and Editor of the Proceedings
Robert Mizzi
Pre-Conference Co-Organizer
GLOBAL REALITIES & POSSIBILITIES IN QUEER CONTEXTS: 
A 2011 CASAE-AERC PRE-CONFERENCE 
ONTARIO INSTITUTE FOR STUDIES IN EDUCATION 
UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO

Thursday, June 9, 2011, 9:00 AM – 4:00 PM

BIENVENUE! WELCOME!

Bienvenue, welcome to the 2011 CASAE-AERC LGBTQ&A Pre-Conference hosted by the Institute for Sexual Minority Studies and Services in the Faculty of Education, University of Alberta. This pre-conference is part of and an important prelude to the 52nd annual U. S. Adult Education Research Conference and the 30th annual Conference of the Canadian Association for the Study of Adult Education (Association Canadienne pour l'E'tudes de l'E`ducation des Adultes). The joint conference is sponsored by the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, University of Toronto. Take time to enjoy fantastic Toronto, especially the Church Wellesley Village, the city’s vibrant and largest queer community. For details and a guide to fun, visit http://www.churchwellesleyvillage.ca/

About the Institute for Sexual Minority Studies and Services

The Institute for Sexual Minority Studies and Services (iSMSS pronounced like isthmus) housed in the Faculty of Education, University of Alberta is proud to host this queer pre-conference. We are an interdisciplinary “hub” for scholarly and community work focused on sexual orientation and gender identity. The Institute’s mission is to help enhance possibilities for groundbreaking research, policy development, education, community outreach, and service provision focused on sexual and gender minorities and our issues and concerns. Sexual and gender minorities are those persons who have minority status due to differences in their sexual orientations and/or gender identities. Across sex, sexual, and gender differences, these minorities include lesbians, gay men, bisexuals, transsexuals, intersexuals, transgendered, and Two-Spirit Indigenous persons. Section 15 of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms and Section 3 of the Canadian Human Rights Act protect us against discrimination in Canadian culture and society.

Since most Canadian universities engaged in sexual and gender minority work tend to separate studies functions (research and teaching) from university and community service and outreach functions, iSMSS represents a unique and holistic Canadian model placing sexual and gender minority inclusive studies and services in a dynamic, interdependent relationship. Bringing research, teaching, institutional service, and community outreach together under one umbrella enables iSMSS to intersect its studies and services functions in ways that create opportunities for innovative intellectual work and sustained outreach. Currently, iSMSS runs two major intervention and outreach programs:
• The Youth Intervention and Outreach Worker program, which is a year-round program that provides supports for Edmonton area sexual and gender minority youth and young adults; and
• Camp fYrefly, which is a national leadership camp for sexual and gender minority and allied youth that focuses on individual needs, socialization, health and wellness, and building resiliency.

For more information, visit our websites:

Institute Website: www.iSMSS.ualberta.ca
Camp fYrefly Website: www.fyrefly.ualberta.ca

About the 2011 CASAE-AERC LGBTQ&A Pre-Conference

Within the politics and culture of neoliberalism, sidelining of adult education as social and cultural education is widespread and commonplace. Providing a place to discuss ways to counter this reality, the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, and Allies (LGBTQ&A) Pre-Conference will highlight the space of sexual-minority and gender-variant (SMGV) learners in adult education from transnational perspectives. Speaking to the ignorance, fear, symbolic and physical violence, silence, and exclusion that have usually marked the experiences of SMGV learners in adult education and culture, some pre-conference participants will interrogate the ongoing fiction of adult education as globally inclusive social education, referring to specific examples from local, national, and international contexts. As well, reflecting the eclectic nature of our field of study and practice, other participants will address topics that point to the breadth and depth of what we do.

At this gathering, it is hoped that everyone present will challenge the construction of a limited social as they expose exclusionary forms of adult education that marginalize sexual orientation and gender identity in framing learning in civil, personal, political, and work contexts. We also look forward to hearing how SMGV learners across contexts have engaged in transgressive and often informal kinds of adult education as resistance pedagogy aimed at attaining respect and accommodation for sexual and gender minorities in educational and cultural contexts. Let’s keep the conversation ongoing and lively throughout the day as we interact with old friends and engage and learn from new ones.

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Call For Papers</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Program Schedule</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presentations</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>The Importance of Transnational Visibility of Sexual and Gender Minority Persons and our Human and Civil Rights</em>&lt;br&gt;Hillary Rodham Clinton (Press Release)</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Pedagogical Desires: Community Initiatives Addressing the Transnational Needs of Sexual and Gender Minority Refugees</em>&lt;br&gt;Panel Chair: Robert Mizzi</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>When Queer Enters Early Childhood Teacher Training</em>&lt;br&gt;Zeenat Janmohamed</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Staying in the North? Influences &amp; Challenges for Same Sex Relationships in a Sub-Arctic Region</em>&lt;br&gt;Maureen Simpkins</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Constructing Narratives of Sexual Identity within Religious University Contexts</em>&lt;br&gt;Chana Etengoff</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Bridging Desire: Adult Education as a Forum for Transnational Collaboration Around Sexuality</em>&lt;br&gt;Robert Mizzi</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>LGBT Issues in Human Resource Development: A Review of Existing Research &amp; a Path Forward</em>&lt;br&gt;Steven W. Schmidt, Tonette S. Rocco, Rod P. Githens, &amp; Martin Kormanik</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Call For Papers

GLOBAL REALITIES & POSSIBILITIES IN QUEER CONTEXTS
A 2011 CASAE-AERC LBTQ&A PRE-CONFERENCE
http://www.csse.ca

Pre-Conference Location: Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, University of Toronto

Thursday, June 9, 2011
9:00 am – 4:00 pm

Pre-conference Organizers:

André P. Grace (andre.grace@ualberta.ca)
Robert Mizzi (Robert_Mizzi@edu.york.ca)

PRE-CONFERENCE CALL FOR PAPERS
(Due Date for Proposals: Monday, April 25, 2011)

Within the politics and culture of neoliberalism, sidelining of adult education as social and cultural education is widespread and commonplace. Providing a place to discuss ways to counter this reality, the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, and Allies Pre-Conference will focus on the space of sexual-minority and gender-variant (SMGV) learners in adult education from transnational perspectives. Speaking to the ignorance, fear, symbolic and physical violence, silence, and exclusion that have usually marked the experiences of SMGV learners in adult education and culture, pre-conference participants are asked to interrogate the ongoing fiction of adult education as globally inclusive social education, referring to specific examples from local, national, and international contexts. As well, participants are also free to submit proposals on topics not directly related to the theme.

It is hoped that participants will challenge the construction of a limited social as they expose exclusionary forms of adult education that marginalize sexual orientation and gender identity in framing learning in civil, personal, political, and work contexts. Participants can also highlight how SMGV learners have engaged in transgressive and often informal kinds of adult education as resistance pedagogy aimed at attaining respect and accommodation for sexual and gender minorities in educational and cultural contexts.

SUBMITTING A PRE-CONFERENCE PROPOSAL:

Proposals are to be sent by email to Dr. André P. Grace, Director, Institute for Sexual Minority Studies and Services, Faculty of Education, University of Alberta (andre.grace@ualberta.ca).
To submit a proposal, please send in one file:

- 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.)

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

PRE-CONFERENCE FORMAT:
(1) Guest Panel focusing on queer issues in international contexts (TBA)
(2) Presentations of various types (selected from proposals)

PAPER PRESENTATIONS / ALTERNATIVE FORMATS:

- 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, February 11, 2011.
- A committee will peer review proposals.
- Accepted authors will be notified by Monday, March 7, 2011.
- Criteria for judging proposals will include quality of the submission, and the significance of the topic to expanding our conceptualizations of queer studies in adult education and culture.
- Please send proposals by email, as a WORD file to: Andre P. Grace at andre.grace@ualberta.ca

- Accepted authors must submit (by email to Andre P. Grace) a written paper from three to six pages in length including references, single-spaced, and following APA guidelines, by Monday, May 2, 2011. 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.

There is no cost to attend the pre-Conference. However, there is a charge of $5.00 (Canadian), payable on site, for those who wish to purchase a copy of the Proceedings.
Program Schedule

GLOBAL REALITIES & POSSIBILITIES
IN QUEER CONTEXTS

A 2011 CASAE-AERC PRECONFERENCE

Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, University of Toronto

Thursday, June 9, 2011, 9:00 AM - 4:00 PM

Room 5-150 Ontario Institute for Studies in Education Building

9:00 - 10:15 Welcome: André P Grace

Opening Pre-Conference Panel - Pedagogical Desires: Community Initiatives
Addressing the Transnational Needs of Sexual and Gender Minority Refugees

Opening Panel Chair: Robert Mizzi, York University

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Francisco Corroy-Moral</th>
<th>Independent Media Producer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Arsham Parsi</td>
<td>Iranian Railroad for Queer Refugees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scott Clarke and guest</td>
<td>the 519 Church Street Community Centre</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

10:15 - 10:45 COFFEE BREAK - REFRESHMENTS PROVIDED

10:45 - 12:00 MORNING SESSIONS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Room 5-150 Ontario Institute for Studies in Education Building</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10:45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

12:00 - 1:30 LUNCH (on your own)
### AFTERNOON SESSIONS

**Room 5-150 Ontario Institute for Studies in Education Building**

| 1:30 - 2:00 | Maureen Simpkins  
University College of the North | Staying in the North? Influences & Challenges for Same Sex Relationships in a Sub-Artic Region |
| 2:00 - 2:30 | Robert Mizzi  
York University | Bridging Desire: Adult Education as a Forum for Transnational Collaboration Around Sexuality |

**2:30 - 3:00 COFFEE BREAK - REFRESHMENTS PROVIDED**

**Room 5-150 Ontario Institute for Studies in Education Building**

| 3:00 - 3:45 | Steven W. Schmidt  
East Carolina University  
Tonette S. Rocco  
Florida International University  
Rod P. Githens  
University of Louisville  
Martin Kormanik  
OD Systems | LGBT Issues in Human Resource Development: A Review of Existing Research and a Path Forward |
| 3:45 - 4:00 | Closing Remarks: André P. Grace |
The Importance of Transnational Visibility of Sexual and Gender Minority Persons and our Human and Civil Rights

Hillary Rodham Clinton (Press Release)

For this year’s International Day Against Homophobia and Transphobia, U. S. Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton released this press statement on May 17, 2011. Its words are thematic in describing the focus of our preconference panel with special guests able to provide a transnational perspective on the need for human and civil rights globally for sexual and gender minority persons.

In every part of the world, men and women are persecuted and attacked because of who they are or whom they love. Homophobia, transphobia and the brutal hostility associated with them are often rooted in a lack of understanding of what it actually means to be lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender (LGBT). So to combat this terrible scourge and break the cycle of fear and violence, we must work together to improve education and support those who stand up against laws that criminalize love and promote hate. As we mark the International Day Against Homophobia and Transphobia this May 17, let us resolve to redouble our efforts.

On behalf of President Obama and the people of the United States, I am proud to reaffirm our support for LGBT communities at home and abroad, and to call for an end to discrimination and mistreatment of LGBT persons wherever it occurs. Whether by supporting LGBT advocates marching in Belgrade, leading the effort at the United Nations to affirm the human rights of LGBT persons, or condemning a vile law under consideration in Uganda, we are committed to our friends and allies in every region of the world who are fighting for equality and justice. These are not Western concepts; these are universal human rights.

Despite these gains and hard work, there is more to do to turn the tide of inequality and discrimination against the LGBT community. If you are lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender, know that the United States stands with you and we are unwavering in our commitment to ending this cycle of hate.

Reference

Pedagogical Desires: Community Initiatives Addressing the Transnational Needs of Sexual and Gender Minority Refugees

Panel Chair: Robert Mizzi

Chair:

Robert Mizzi, York University

Panelists:

Francisco Corroy-Moral, Independent Media Producer

Arsham Parsi, Iranian Railroad for Queer Refugees

Scott Clarke and guest, the 519 Church Street Community Centre

About the Panelists

Each of the four panelists has life and/or community experience in working with sexual/gender-minority refugees in Toronto. Francisco Corroy-Moral and Arsham Parsi are originally from Mexico and Iran. Since their arrival into Canada, they have continued the struggle to improve living conditions for their troubled community members back home and here in Canada. Francisco is a media producer for community-based organizations. He has worked within Griffin Centre’s LGBT program implementing an audiovisual project for youth of color that live in the North West area of Toronto, as well as for about 10 independent productions. Arsham is the founder and Executive Director of the Iranian Railroad for Queer Refugees (IRQR) and the coordinator and cultural ambassador for the Stockholm-based International Lesbian and Gay Cultural Network (ILGCN). Aiding in the struggle with individuals like Francisco and Arsham are staff and volunteers from the 519 Church Street Community Centre (Toronto) who assist with sexual/gender-minority refugees transitioning to Canadian society.

Panel Discussion

Sharing experiences and learning from one another is considered a hallmark of adult education. This panel discussion carries on this tradition and explores the challenges that face sexual/gender-minority refugees. As a queer narrative of resistance, we will discuss Toronto-based community initiatives that move beyond raising awareness of relevant issues and includes taking action to confront global violence aimed at queer lives.
Challenging SMGV Policies & Social Media Buzz: A Mixed Methods Research Study &
Critical Thinking Strategy
Kathleen P. King
University of South Florida, Tampa

Keywords: Social media, innovative instruction, instructional technology, heteronormative society, diversity, LGBTQ

Abstract: A mixed-methods study analyzes web-based postings regarding LGBTQ issues as a means of challenging mass and social media perspectives of SMGV. This paper reveals the research and recommendations for future research projects or instructional activities. Real-time data in diversity instructional research provides powerful opportunities.

Introduction
Today in 2011, we are experiencing a continued, tumultuous period of advances and reverses in the elimination of exclusionary policies and practices towards sexual-minority and gender-variant (SMGV) people within and across national borders (Human Rights Campaign, 2011; The National GLBT Taskforce, 2009; Ottoson, 2010). Whether our context is formal or informal learning, academic or workplace, current policies and media opinions fuel discussions about SMGV and diversity issues. However, how prepared are adult learners to critically research and analyze the barrage of information, propaganda, and opinions sent their way by mass communication and social media? This research study analyzes popular media/social media on the topic of SMGV and trends of perspectives of SMGV. In addition, the research format presents an instructional and research vehicle for facilitating transformative dialogue.

My interest in this topic emerges from two major journeys I have traveled over the last 16 years. The first is seeking and losing equal rights as a SMGV person and USA citizen (King, 2010). The second journey encompasses my growing awareness of international conditions, values, and cultures as a SMGV professional traveling with nationals through China, Belize, Mexico, Canada and the Caribbean. Finland has also been part of the array because of extensive discussions about diversity topics with an international colleague. The vast differences in perspectives, beliefs, policies and laws within and between these nations reveal the scope of diverse unchallenged societal constructs (Ottoson, 2010).

Theoretical Background
Adult educators have a powerful means to create instructional environments for learners to challenge their assumptions and prior beliefs (Freire, 1973; Mezirow & Associates, 2000). Since 2006, the use of social media and online posting (blogging and social communities) spread widely in developed countries. As early as 2009, there were several examples of social media (YouTube and Twitter) outpacing mass media in providing fast breaking news (elections, tragedies) (Bell, & Kennedy, 2007). Yet our adult learners are not prepared to sift fact from fallacy as critical thinking skills continue to lag. This study uses free online search and analytical
tools to capture and analyze public postings related to SMGV/LGBTQ issues as it develops a research method and critical thinking skills instructional activity.

In order to understand global and cybercultures’ changing interactions, values and policies for SMGV people, the study’s theoretical foundation include adult development, adult learning (Mezirow & Associates, 2000), and sociology (Barrett, 1992; Bell, 2006; Levy, 1999, 2000). Regarding adult development, Kegan’s landmark work *In Over Our Heads* (1998), articulates the intersection of the complexities of modern life and adult development. The nexus of culture and historical contexts with human development is a cornerstone of this current study.

Closely linked to Kegan’s work, transformative learning illuminates how adults wrestle with the cognitive dissonance (disorienting dilemmas) they encounter across the lifespan. Mezirow delineated a process of adult learning which describes what adults encounter when they question their long held beliefs, values and assumptions, (Mezirow & Associates, 2000). The body of transformative learning research provides understanding that adults are capable of these changes, benefit from cultivating these skills, and how to facilitate them.

Sociology’s study of cybercultures explores understanding global communication in a rapidly changing world of technology. This work extends back to the 1960s, as pioneers sought to understand how electronic communication would change human cultures. The literature traces the rapid development we experienced and discusses issues of real and false anonymity, asynchronous dialogue, and diversity across global spaces (Bell, 2006; Levy, 1999, 2000).

**Research Method**

This mixed methods research study conducts historical research from a phenomenological and hermeneutical vantage point (Creswell, 2003). As described by Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2004), mixed methods “… can be an expansive and creative form of research, not a limiting form of research” (p. 17). Using mixed-methods in this study proves advantageous because it builds a complementary and expansive understanding of the data (Green & Caracelli, 1997). This study examines global changing perspectives and images of SMGV people and issues.

We used social media sources to draw information from, including Tumblr, Google, and Flickr. We collected information across longitudinal specifications as well as using an autobiographical timeline of the LGBTQ political struggle in USA and global travel by using the same keywords to gather data across specific time frames. Both frequencies and qualitative themes were determined from these data. In addition, specialized search engine services further collected and analysed data in graphical formats (Google Wonder Wheel and Spezify.com). Finally, online tools provide timeline depictions of the same terms. The final report will analyse entries in social media within specific timeframes. Figure 1 reveals a schematic of the research.
According to the Sequential Mixed Methods Analysis (SMMA), the study used 5 of the 7 stages of analysis outlined by Onwuegbuzie and Teddlie (2003): data reduction, display, transformation, consolidation, comparison and integration. The specific analysis steps were (1) arrangement of online data via an online timeline, (2) thematic analysis of all textual data, using constant comparison and tracking frequencies (Creswell, 2003), and (3) graphical/image analysis of online data displayed (Greene, 1997) with a specialized online tool using Excel® to track the coding and Transana, an open source software, to organize the coding.

Findings

There are two major findings of this study (1) a sampling of the search and analytical tools used and (2) data from the thematic analysis.

Social Media Search and Analytical Tools

Figure 2 reveals the graphical display of search terms related to “Queer theory” from the Google tool Wonder Wheel. As a user clicks each circle (in Figure 2, “Queer studies”), it becomes the hub of a wheel of its related popular search terms. Therefore, the Wonder Wheel tool provides a rapid and graphical means to comprehend the use of terms in social media by the public for discussion and interpretation. Although Wonder Wheel has been available through the advanced Google search features list since 2009, most people remain unfamiliar with it in 2011.
Spezify.com is a multimedia search tool, which spans search engines (making it also a meta-search engine) and delivers the results in an interactive graphical format. Each item is a live link back to the source; a powerful feature of social media research Figure 3 is a screen shot from the site; notice the postings related to activism, and varied images of gay singles and couples. The Spezify.com tool also provides the user opportunity to select among search engines, “safe search”, orientation of scrolling, etc.

Figure 3 One screen shot from results of “GLBT” search at Spezify.com.

Google Timeline provides a different set of tools and access to social media for the researcher of cybercultures and social media. Figure 4 provides a screenshot of the Timeline results for “Queer Studies” in an unbounded search (in such cases the timeframe defaults to the first entry to current day, 1787-2011). A powerful use of this tool targets different timeframes to see changes in the use of terms and the corresponding recorded historical context. Researchers can also search years surrounding an event to examine public discourse (i.e., Stonewall or March on Washington).
Thematic Analysis

The popular and public lens researched in this study reveals critical topics related to international SMGV conditions and experiences. At this time, there are five trends in the analysis spanning the time period of 1995 to 2011: (1) shifting and confounding political rights in heteronormative societies, (2) complex societal constructions of gender roles, (3) changing public perceptions of gender, (4) changing public perceptions of SMGV and queer identities, and (5) shifts in visual representations of national perceptions of SMGV, queer and gender identities.

Individual results for images and postings by keyword (or phrase) were often very similar. For instance, when searching “same sex marriage” 21 images include 4 of couples kissing; 10 of protest signs and 7 of couples holding hands. However, greater understanding of change in understandings is apparent in Wonder Wheel, which provides alternate, related search terms and Timeline, which chronicles the appearance of the term in online postings.

Given this consistent pattern across terms, several observations arise. First, images may be best used to stimulate discussion of interpretation and representation. That is, in the context of diversity studies, image searches can be a powerful basis to gather real-time, relevant data and facilitate discussion about the selection choices, their meaning and whether they locally and/or globally represent the topic. Second, Wonder Wheel searches provide opportunities to cascade and explore conceptual and representative linkages. Why are specific terms often searched in close proximity (i.e., heteronormative, hegemony)? What are the differences among terms (i.e., heteronormative, heterosexual)? Third, the Timeline data was the most powerful and rapid means
to explore trends and perspectives in context. The ability to zoom in and out of the timeline, made the analysis process swift, convenient and compelling. For example, exploring the term homosexuality from 1860-2010 provides a captivating perspective of history which raises questions regarding changes in beliefs and values, reasons for those changes and why specific items are most prominent. From Ulrich’s “uranism” to Foucault, Freud, and battles across the Church and the courts, the Timeline intersects with the development, use and abuse of the term and people. While additional analysis which explores the nuances of the different search results, sources, contexts and interpretation continues, application of this approach as a research method and instructional activity emerge.

**Conclusion and Significance of the Study**

This study reveals a preliminary analysis of social media perceptions of the SMGV while providing a model research strategy and effective instructional strategy.

**Research Strategy**

This study provides new research strategies to document and study popular public values, beliefs, opinions and mores for SMGV studies and diversity issues in adult education. As researchers, we have abundant resources available to study public perceptions and actions through social media. This research method uses publicly available primary sources and therefore can be replicated (1) for any topic or set of parameters and (2) without IRB limitations. By examining primary source data available online, this study demonstrates the power of social media in communicating societal values and attitudes. In addition, the online tools and research design provide a model to document, reveal and analyze geographic differences and shifts over time. This approach may also apply as an independent research method for faculty and students.

**Instructional Strategy**

Employing this strategy as an instructional method with social media data and tools provides real-time data for learners to explore diversity issues. As with all well-planned constructivist activities, by learners conducting research themselves, motivation, ownership, urgency and relevance of the data escalates (Jonassen, Howland, Moore, & Marra, 2003). As in this case, the “discovery” of changing perspectives, policies, and bias related to SMGV issues yields the ability to question prior assumptions and be invested more in related dialogue. Such opportunities are prime for critical reflection, challenging assumptions, and meaning making with adult learners (Mezirow & Associates, 2000).

In settings where instructors and/or the learning community develop a climate of respect and safety, participants may engage in rich dialogue to cultivate new critical thinking, reasoning and analysis skills (Fink, 2003). Culturally responsive and inclusive facilitation techniques will be important in such activities (Ginsberg, & Wlodkowski, 2009).
References
Abstract: This paper challenges the heteronormative nature of early childhood training programs arguing for a more complex understanding of diversity that includes queer parents and their young children.

The narrative of queer families or queer identity is not common to early childhood research or practice. Nor is it common in professional preparation programs. Although issues of diversity, equity and inclusion have evolved in the early childhood profession, there remains a heavier emphasis on families that are immigrants, children who are raised in families led by one parent, or children who may be adopted or fostered. The narrative of inclusion is often recognized through the individual needs of adult learners, and this also plays a significant role in how early childhood educators discuss diversity and difference.

In an effort to create climates of “inclusion” for parents who may come from other cultures, issues faced by English language learners and the needs of second-generation immigrants have been explored by a variety of scholars. All of this is important and not to be discounted because the reality of immigrants and refugees is critical to the knowledge that educators need to have, as are the needs of children growing up in low-income families. However, my goal is to infuse more complexity to how diversity, equity and inclusion are explored in early childhood education in ways that cuts across modes of differentiation and opens up new possibilities for understanding the multiplicity of diversity and difference. In my study, I use the term “queer” to describe families that identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, transsexual and queer but I also use queer paradigms to describe how I question, create and have a desire to shift early childhood training, research and practice.

Although there is a significant interest in the connections between parent engagement and early learning, research related to the relatively new group of queer parents has been absent. Queer rights are represented by instances where same-sex couples have the right to marry, to adopt children and include the legal rights surrounding the complicated conception and birth arrangements permitted in Canada. Yet the existing literature on the inclusion of queer families with preschool aged children is limited in the Canadian context. Early childhood education is a young profession that has gained the attention of governments and the public in the last decade moving it from a marginal to a regulated sector. With this comes the responsibility to ensure that professional training and practice has currency and embeds a critical view of what works and what needs to change in early childhood practice.

In my study, I explored how early childhood studies prepares educators to establish meaningful relationships with queer parents by analyzing course outlines, core foundational textbooks and readings in courses related to child development and working with families. I explored these materials at four colleges in Ontario located in communities where I conducted my
study. I developed connections between what early childhood educators learn about families and what queer families experience in early childhood programs. In pursuing further research, I was interested in rupturing the dominant discourse of heteronormativity, and the propensity to silence queer identity in early childhood settings. I am interested in moving “queer” from a position of other to one that is more apparent in early childhood affecting educators, parents and children. I see the possibility and necessity to infuse queer perspectives into traditional child development to bridge a gap that could lead to a deeper understanding of inclusion instead of perpetuating research and practice that I believe continues to be responsible for a traditional and monolithic view of childhood development. One of the research questions I addressed in my study included:

**how does the notion of developmentally appropriate practice influence the dominant and heteronormative discourse in early childhood curriculum and practice?**

In this paper, I focus on how the training of early childhood educators prepares them to support queer families, and consider how the dominance of a singular construct in early childhood can be challenged through queer theory. As Jagose (1996, p. 83) suggests, queer theory enables us to understand, “how gender operates as a regulatory construct of heterosexuality”. By extension, Robinson (2005) describes queer pedagogy as enabling educators to, “critically examine the natural order of things” (p. 7). Challenging notions of universality is imperative because, as Battiste (2005) has argued, “universality underpins cultural and cognitive imperialism, which establishes a dominant group’s knowledge, experience, culture and language as the dominant form” (p. 124). With a growing diversity of family composition it is now more critical than ever, that early childhood training programs move away from a, “single way of knowing and make room for multiple perspectives, which in turn influence innovative kinds of teaching decisions and practices” (Blaise 2005, p. 184).

In the process of taking apart the normative discourse of developmentally appropriate practice, and the propensity to embed heteronormative perspectives in the schooling of early childhood educators, I took direction from MacNaughton who suggests that “discourse analysis is critically reflecting on our social beliefs and practices and the contributions of social institutions to beliefs, practices and emotions” (1998, p. 158). I grounded my work in this methodology as I completed a textual analysis of core early childhood textbooks, course outlines and readings to make connections between *developmentally appropriate practice* in early childhood training and its significance in teachers’ capacity to encounter, deconstruct and challenge the normative approach to early childhood teacher training.

I am arguing that the term, “developmentally appropriate” practice plays a significant role in relationships between early childhood educators and parents and by extension establishes a discourse that is dominated by heteronormativity in early learning and care programs. Viruru (2005) demonstrates that despite important scholarly work on the limitations and colonial assumptions underlying developmentally appropriate practice, the dominant discourse of childhood continues to dominate and pervade not only Euro-western practice but also early childhood development in the majority of the world.
Heteronormativity is reified and “embedded in things,” as Warner observed—in ordinary, everyday activities (Adams, p. 16, 2004) and played out in the daily interactions and activities in early childhood settings. Examples include lining children up by gender, ignoring boys engaged in aggressive behaviour, suggesting instead “the boys are just being boys” and selecting children’s books that only depict heterosexual families. The application of a queer and post-structural analysis in early childhood studies and a critical reading of developmentally appropriate practice problematizes a hegemonic perspective but also considers the potential movement of perspectives that are radically different from a universalizing discourse.

The Ontario College of Early Childhood Educators was established to protect public interest, focus on the standards of practice in early childhood, and govern early childhood educators. At the core of the College’s mandate is a commitment to ensure that early childhood educators will deliver an, “inclusive play-based learning and care programs for both pre-school and school aged children” (College of Early Childhood Educators, 2011). This mandate takes a limited view of inclusion often used to describe the inclusion of children with different abilities and sometimes used to describe the inclusion of different cultural practices. The use of language is a powerful tool in communicating core beliefs. The use of a term such as “inclusive” does not resonate with a desire for a more reflective discourse that struggles with injustice, oppression and exclusion.

The recent release of its new Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice is designed to define the professional knowledge required to function as an early childhood educator. The standards seem well intentioned and provide a framework to keep educators accountable for their practice. Some would argue, this standards are intended to regulate and control early childhood practice. Responsibilities of early childhood educators as defined by the College include respecting the uniqueness of the child and the family. In fact, it names the need to, “recognize and respect the diversity of families” (College of ECE, Code of Ethics, 2011, p. 11). The Code of Ethics embeds notions of diversity, equity or inclusion, but does not specify what that means with respect to families. It may have been a useful exercise to embed language from the Ontario Human Rights Act that more explicitly defines different identities.

Early childhood educators are well known for their expertise in child development and their knowledge on how to plan a program for young children. They are also to a certain extent known for their ability to support parents with young children. My interest was in exploring if the professional training that early childhood educators are engaged in provided any knowledge concerning a group of parents that are more visible and are having children in Canada in all kinds of family combinations. What I found was a profound absence of knowledge on the needs of queer families primarily because of an absence of discussion of content related to queer families and their children. One educator who completed her studies in a large urban college said, “we never discussed queer families but we were always encouraged to use inclusive language and to be respectful of diversity. Some professors talked about inclusion but never talked about anything related to same-sex couples” (C. Max, personal communication, December 9, 2010).
Although there is a desire to establish a framework of inclusion that engages parents in their children’s development, there is little awareness of how the parent demographic has changed and the necessity to adapt the early childhood professional preparation program accordingly. Parent engagement is central to early childhood practice and unlike teacher education there is a provincial requirement for a separate course in the professional preparation program on how to involve parents. The principles of parent involvement are grounded in a long history and tradition that active parent involvement in a child’s educational experience leads to improved child outcomes and establishes a pattern of mutual reciprocity between parents and educators (Corter and Pelletier, 2005). However, the nature of parent involvement is often exemplified by invitations to participate in program activities, volunteer in the classroom, assist on field trips and to a certain extent, given the right kind of skills, that a parent may be invited to participate in the governance of a program. I argue for a connection to parents and their children that is more meaningful and attuned to the interests of individual families.

Pushor (2007) argues that despite a historical pattern where educators held authority through their professional knowledge, it is possible to move toward a shared terrain where parent engagement enables exploration of a relationship that is based on shared knowledge and respect that both parents and educators bring to the table. Paying attention to these attributes is critical to moving toward a connectedness between child, parent and educator. There is a growing scholarship on the engagement of parents from diverse backgrounds that challenges the presumptions behind why some “minority” parents do not get involved in early childhood programs (Bernhard, Lefebvre, Kilbride, Chud and Lange, 1998). However, unlike parents who are new to Canada or who may be English language learners, the interests of queer parents are not embedded in early childhood training. This absence heightens the silence but also does not adequately prepare educators for a new reality of parent engagement in early childhood programs.

How families are defined has been transformed from a private entity to one where the state has both direct and indirect involvement. The patriarchal and private historical narrative of the family has shifted to one where, “the family comes to appear not as a special zone isolated from the rest of society, but as an integral part of it, and possibly a microcosm of its inequities and injustices” (Minot, 2000, p. 24). The state in some shape or form defines marriage and divorce laws, adoption rights, custody arrangements, financial obligation of parents and obviously connected to this research, what counts as “family” within an education and rights framework.

Canadians have a long history of challenging the government for additional rights using the legal systems in place particularly the Charter of Rights and Freedoms to ensure a fair and just society for all. The debate on the right to marriage between individuals of the same-sex, access to spousal benefits, the right to partake in health care decisions and the right to parent children within relationships outside the heteronormative construct of family has involved using existing laws to challenge discriminatory practices. The past decade has seen us continue to grapple with gay marriage as a socially and politically contentious issue. According to Statistics Canada (2006), there has been a surge in the number of same-sex couples with children in Canada between 2001 and 2006. About 9% of same-sex couples had children living with them despite the
backlash they often experience. Same-sex families are becoming more socially acceptable, with a majority of Canadians supporting gay marriage (Angus Reid, 2010).

The development of new medical and scientific reproductive technologies has ruptured the dominant biological process and eroded the familiar social arrangements that relied on the traditional biological order. Although, “jurisprudence and legislation regulating the family status of gay and lesbian people, and their children is a relatively new phenomenon in Canada” (Cameron, 2008, p. 103), increasing numbers of lesbian mothers are choosing to give birth and co-parent with their same-sex partners with the assistance of known or unknown sperm donors. Gay fathers are entering into surrogacy agreements with women in order to have and raise children in same-sex relationships. Transgender men are pregnant and calmly providing a family, in seemingly unsurprising ways given the advance of science and its large-scale modifications of what we once felt were immutable elements of biology (Crosbie, 2008). Sexuality and procreation have become uncoupled and making babies has increasingly occurred outside the heterosexual marriage (Cossman & Ryder, 2001).

However, in early childhood studies, notions of developmentally appropriate practice have become completely entangled and familiar in research and policy, as well as in practice. The term is almost intrinsic to early childhood programs but significantly problematic to the complexity of diversity and difference and how queer identity is silenced. In addition to the more commonly understood identities, children with queer parents may be adopted or may have been created with a known or unknown donor. Children may be born through surrogacy or may be part of a previous heterosexual relationship. These queer variations on conventional notions of “family” demand consideration by early childhood educators, again challenging the discourse of normative human development. The silence of queering identities invokes a pathologization as Butler (1993) has suggested.

Queer families and their children are increasingly a growing part of the Canadian landscape and although early childhood educators do not need to become family law experts, they do need to be attuned to the myriad of legal challenges that re-define family and parental rights. Similar to understanding the issues that some immigrant families face, educators should also be aware of challenges that some queer families’ experience. As part of professional practice, maintaining knowledge of new research and information that affects early childhood programs is significant particularly since parent engagement is such a critical component of establishing high quality early childhood professional practice. In addition, being cognizant of the evolution of family law and human rights in Canada influences the policies that are developed in early learning programs, removing potential barriers that queer parents may experience.
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Staying in the North? Influences & Challenges for Same Sex Relationships in a Sub-Arctic Region

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In the past, addressing issues in the area of gender and sexuality was not a priority in a northern town such as Thompson, Manitoba. Are attitudes changing in a positive way? What are some of the challenges and successes for gay, lesbian and Two-Spirited community members who want to live in the north?

North... where the trees get smaller and the distances are great. It is often a 3 or 4 hour drive on a gravel road or a plane ride in a small 12 passenger plane to the communities in northern Manitoba. It is a region where the human landscapes are very much shaped and influenced by the beauty and also the isolation of this sub Arctic region.

As an oral history practitioner and adult educator, my perspectives and approaches are very much informed by the landscapes and the people with whom I’ve had the honour to work. This project came out of listening and observing as a relative newcomer in a northern region. I first came to northern Manitoba 6 years ago from Vancouver Island.

I started doing interviews with gay, lesbian, transgendered, and Two-Spirited community members in northern Manitoba about 2 years ago. The purpose of these interviews is to gather and document a variety of life stories within the gay population in order to inform and guide future research in the area of sexuality and gender in northern Manitoba.

In this paper, I will first describe the cultural and economic landscapes of northern Manitoba. Then I will describe the project itself and some of the themes that have been emerging from the interviews in terms of the interviewees’ experiences and challenges living in a northern location as a gay, lesbian, or Two-Spirited person.

The University College of the North is situated in northern Cree territory which is also called Mushkego or Swampy Cree territory. The northern most region of Manitoba is the territory of the Dene people. There are a few Inuit families that still live in the Churchill area and there are a few Oji-Cree communities southeast of Thompson. The Aboriginal population are the majority population north of the 53rd parallel. I use the term “Aboriginal” to include all those with Aboriginal ancestry including treaty/ non-treaty, status/non-status, Inuit, and Metis peoples.

Today, the minority population are the non-Aboriginals who have come north to work in the nickel, zinc, and copper mines; the pulp and paper industry; the ever-expanding hydro projects; and the corresponding service industries. Towns in northern Manitoba have had a long reputation for rampant racist and homophobic attitudes (Aboriginal Justice Implementation Commission, 1999; Nelson, 2007, p.1), so it didn’t surprise me when I heard stories about the
difficulties of being out and gay or transgendered, but it did surprise me that so many gay, lesbian, Two Spirited, and transgendered people were choosing to live in this fairly isolated area.

The term “Two-Spirited” is increasingly being used by gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered Aboriginal people in Canada. “The term acknowledges the interconnectedness of all aspects of identity therefore including gender, sexuality, community, culture and spirituality” (Wilson, 1996). This term was coined at the Third International (Two-Spirit) Gathering in Winnipeg in 1990 (Meyer-Cook & Labelle, 2004, p.31; Roscoe, 1998, p. 109). The project itself began with some broad research questions such as:

• How will these life histories inform understandings of historical and social issues in northern Manitoba?
• How does culture, religion, and the history of the region shape gender identity and decisions about where to live?
• What are the needs and issues of concern to the gay, transgendered, and Two-Spirited population in northern Manitoba?

There are a number of reasons why I chose to pursue this area of research. Over the past six years I have been told a number of stories relating to the difficulties of being “out” and/or identified as a gay, lesbian, transgendered, or Two-Spirited person in northern Manitoba. For example, I was told how a young woman set out to get pregnant so that community members would not suspect that she was gay. I also heard stories about whole communities who would not attend the funeral of a community member who had died of AIDS. Yet it is also clear that gay and Two-Spirited community members are often returning or staying in northern Manitoba. While there has been little research conducted with the gay and Two-Spirited population in the context of northern Manitoba, a preliminary review of the literature shows research done in more southerly regions. One of the most recent studies, “Aboriginal Two-Spirit and LGBTQ Migration, Mobility and Health Research Project” (2010) concentrates on health related issues. This study outlines issues of forced mobility such as leaving to attend residential schools or being adopted out of the north (Ristock & Zoccole, pp 9-10). In terms of mobility and the LGBTQ population, Teengs and Travers (2006) cite homophobia and lack of access to health services as motivating factors for the migration from northern communities to more urban centres. Few studies mention that many LGBTQ community members stay or come back north for the same reasons as anyone else, which is often to find work and have the support of family.

A study done in 2000 by a group of McGill University social work professors came to the conclusion that not only do Two-Spirited people face health hazards because they are Aboriginal, but also because of their marginal status as Two-Spirited. Isolation, exclusion, and rejection by families, communities, and society have a substantial negative impact upon gay and Two-Spirited people’s sense of self, their ability to come out and self-affirm, their health, and their capacity to locate appropriate and relevant health and social services. For this study, five focus groups were conducted in three communities: a large city, a mid-sized city and in a rural location in eastern Canada (Brotman, Ryan, Jalbert, & Rowe, 2000, p. 69). One of the recommendations
made in this study was that further “research needs to be developed that documents the lives and experiences of Two-Spirited people, their relationship to their communities, and to health and well-being. This research must include an analysis of the historic and current impact of colonization on Aboriginal communities” (Brotman et al., 2002, p. 84).

Studies in the area of depression and teen suicide have come to the conclusion that there are elevated rates of suicidal behaviors in gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgendered youth, particularly in gay males (Taylor, 2006, p.1). There is reason to believe that these rates are underestimated due to the fact that coroners rarely cite persecution, or struggling with sexual orientation or gender identity, as factors in their report (Bagley & Tremblay, 2000, p. 111, 116).

A number of studies related to the experience of gay and Two-Spirited peoples acknowledge that they are based in urban settings and may not be representative of the experiences of rural and northern people (Adams & Phillips, 2006; Taylor, 2006). There is a definite need to document the experiences of gay, lesbian, and Two-Spirited northerners. Negotiating the cultural and physical landscapes is ongoing. There is a need to be sensitive to the specific needs and wishes of the participants, such as wanting anonymity, particularly when they are from communities that are influenced by fundamentalist churches. People come and go out of the north quite often and travel is often dependent on the weather and the condition of the roads. All of these factors make it difficult to meet with people at times.

The interviews are carried out with sensitivity to the uniqueness of each participant in terms of life experience, history, often multiple locations of identity, and emphasis on voice (Adams & Phillips, 2006, p.275). In other words, it is important not to create categories or lump certain experiences together, as each person has differing experiences, which may be due to other sources of identity such as being a mother, ethnic identity and culture, family, and community situation.

A life story approach was chosen for flexibility and to give the interviewee the choice of narrative, how they want to tell their own stories, and what they want to focus on as significant topics in their lives. Life story narratives often intersect with public issues and can be presented aschronologies or told as stories (Kirby, Greaves, & Reid, 2006, pp. 157-158). This approach is also appropriate within the cultural contexts of northern Manitoba where many cultures are based in oral tradition. As a starting point, the framework for the interviews has been loosely based on three chronological periods: 1) the physical and cultural location of birth and growing up; 2) experience of “coming out” and the response of family, friends and community; 3) how this experience has affected their decision about where to live, work, and settle.

There are several themes emerging from these interviews. The three themes that this paper will describe are: 1) the fear of being identified as gay, lesbian, Two-Spirited; 2) the influence of religion on homophobic attitudes; and, 3) the difficulty of finding a partner or gay friends in the north. Those interviewed typically migrate between an urban center, such as Winnipeg or
Brandon, and their northern community. Most are drawn back to be around family and friends or for employment. While everyone talks about being drawn back to the north and their love of the north, there were also a number of challenges described by interviewees.

The first challenge was the difficulty of being identified as gay or lesbian. This was discussed and described in various ways. While on the surface it may look like attitudes toward same sex relationships are more positive now than they were 10 years ago, the interviewees felt it still was not safe to be “too” out. One interviewee describes what she called a “forced assimilation” into mainstream Thompson attitudes in order to be safe. When she used the term “safe” it meant both from verbal and physical attacks and insensitivity. She said that she felt that to be “safe” she needed to blend in:

“I find myself monitoring myself... I mean Thompson is about 10 years behind Toronto. That was something I had to do when I moved back here. I actually had to change my appearance. (shows me a picture of herself several years ago with very short hair) It was definitely the first thing I did when I came back was to look more feminine.... a safety thing.”

Similarly another interviewee, a young gay male from a reserve community, felt that as long as he didn’t talk about being gay in the community people treated him well. This is another form of “blending in”, yet he deals with this by regularly migrating between city and reserve because of the need to be open and “out”.

Another challenge that is often discussed is the influence of fundamentalist religions upon attitudes towards gays and lesbians in the north. While Christianity has been a part of northern communities for a long time in northern Manitoba, the introduction of more fundamentalist religions, particularly in more isolated fly-in communities, is more recent and has created another level of intolerance. This may be one of the biggest challenges faced by gay, lesbian and Two-spirited northerners. I was told that in some of the smaller fly-in communities, family members would organize for someone to be “married off” if they showed any signs of homosexuality. Typically gay community members leave the community and migrate to Thompson, Winnipeg, or Brandon. One of the interviewees told me that her mother was very accepting initially when she came out as a lesbian, then several years later became a “born-again” Christian and kicked her out of the house. Unfortunately this is not uncommon.

Another challenge is simply that it is difficult to find other gay northerners as friends or partners. It became clear through these interviews that there is not a gay “community” as such. There is no particular place that is identified as gay friendly and, as mentioned earlier, many have tried to blend in to a certain extent. Finding other gays or lesbians is often based on hearsay, such as asking around about a particular person. Also because there is no identifiable community, there is the need to reach out to others who may be gay. One interviewee talked about how she used Facebook to look for clues as to whether someone might be gay. All the inter-
viewees talked about internet dating as a way to find others outside of Thompson, usually from Winnipeg. One of the interviewees said:

“A lot of us have resorted to the internet. I’ve always been on the internet since I was seventeen. I don’t meet people in Thompson. I meet them in Winnipeg. You have to put up with that long distance and you don’t get the time to really get to know them and you rush the relationship.”

This is just a brief summary of some of the challenges faced by gay, lesbian, and Two-spirited northerners. The significance of listening to and documenting these stories is that it will be a starting point for dialogue and education about the misconceptions and stereotypes that remain regarding the gay and Two-Spirited population. There has been little research done with this population in northern Manitoba. The act of carrying out an oral history project is also an initiative to honor and acknowledge the voices of the gay and Two-Spirited population. It is an opportunity to begin to look at the intersections between local history, the diversity of cultures and the political and religious influences on attitudes and behaviours towards the gay and Two-Spirited population in a northern region.

After discussing this project with a respected Cree Elder in the region, she said to me “it’s time for these stories to be told” (Elder Stella Neff, personal communication, August 30, 2007).

References


Constructing Narratives of Sexual Identity within Religious University Contexts

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Abstract: This research study explores how gay individuals address conflicting cultural values within the context of an American religious university setting. This study analyzes the archival narratives of three gay men that participated in a public panel held at a private university regarding being gay within the Orthodox Jewish community.

General introduction

In this paper, I discuss individual development around issues of sexual identity disclosure and its aftermath within the mediated activity systems of an American religious university setting. By using an Orthodox Jewish university as a case study, I explain how social interactions, religious ceremonies and services, and the university setting are implicated in students’ experiences relating to their sexual identities, social relationships, and resultant development. I also argue that the study of the impact of religious university settings is best understood within the framework of Cultural Historical-Activity Theory (Vygotsky, 1934/1978). After a brief review of Cultural Historical-Activity Theory (Vygotsky, 1934/1978), I offer examples to show how the participants’ sexual and religious identities were co-constructed and mediated within the context of daily life and university activity systems.

Theory

Due to the unique socio-religious context of an Orthodox Jewish university setting which prohibits homosexuality on both moral and cultural grounds, it was necessary to approach this study from a theoretical framework that views individuals and their socio-religious contexts as reciprocal agents of construction. Therefore, the theoretical grounding of this study is based on Vygotsky’s (1934/1978) Cultural Historical Activity Theory which posits that daily life activities and social interactions are reciprocal experiences that are used as tools to create meaning and contribute to identity formation. Cultural Historical Activity Theory (Vygotsky, 1934/1978) provides a lens for studying the development of individuals in society by focusing upon social-relational dynamics as well as individual subjectivities and capacities as the context of human development and behavior (Daiute, 2006). Within this framework, human development is viewed as an activity that is influenced by and influences cultural tools and artifacts (e.g., religious texts and rituals), cultural and individual history (e.g., sexual and religious identity development within a socio-historical context), and multiple activity systems (e.g., university and religious). Thus, in an effort to address the multicultural nature of the participants’ experience, this study applies theory to both the research design and analysis, thereby creating a case example on theory.
Research terms

For the purposes of this study, mediated activity systems are defined by the mutually interacting daily life practices, experiences, and scripts of the religious university community and the constructed narrative of religious identity for gay students within this context. In addition, activity systems involve meaning-making about the relation and possible conflict between practices, experiences, constructed identities, and cultural scripts (Daiute, 2010). Cultural and community scripts will be operationalized as a pattern of social interactions, discourse, and values which are characteristic of a particular cultural group (Triandis et al., 1982). In addition, they will be viewed as possible vehicles of transformative mediational strategies that are utilized by individuals to modify the discourse of conflicting activity systems. Furthermore, identity in this case is defined as a proactive connection to a specific community system (e.g., religious and/or gay) via an ongoing engagement in the associated cultural activities, values, and practices. Within this framework identity is operationalized as an agentive activity-based process that is subject to change in association with the demands of socio-relational contexts.

Research questions

Utilizing this conceptual framework, the following research questions are addressed: 1) How does sexual identity mediate religious identity (e.g., religious activities and metaphysical reflections) and daily life (e.g., social and institutional interactions) within a religious university context? 2) How does daily community life on a religious university campus mediate sexual activity and sexual identity disclosure? In an effort to answer these research questions, this study focuses upon the participants’ presentations of the different conflicts that emerged for them on the interpersonal, intrapersonal, metaphysical (e.g., between God/morality and man), and intersystem contexts and activity systems, and the cultural tools that they used to mediate and/or resolve those conflicts.

Participants & data collection

This study analyzes the archival narratives of three gay men (Caucasian, ages 20-35) that participated in a public panel held at a private university regarding being gay within the Orthodox Jewish world. In an effort to respect the participants involved and to meet IRB criteria the panelists’ names (Aaron, Asher, David) and their specific identifying details have been changed or omitted.

An Orthodox Jewish university was specifically selected for analysis as research has shown that more highly religious groups may encounter more difficulty reconciling religion and homosexuality than less religiously fundamental groups (e.g., Kirby & Michaelson, 2008; Schnoor, 2003). Therefore, the aim of studying how gay individuals’ development and university experience interacts with conflicting cultural values is best met when focusing on populations that view the interaction between sexual and religious identity as a meaningful issue to be negotiated (mediated).

Narratives were transcribed for analysis from publically available video recordings of the public panel. The lengths of the narratives ranged from between 12 to 21 minutes and were not in response to any specific question other than the title of the panel, “Being Gay in the Orthodox
Analysis procedure & results

The three panel participants’ narratives were studied utilizing a theory-based process of analysis that focuses on the reciprocal mediation processes between the individual and the university (Daiute, 2010). Analyses consistently indicated that the institutionalized forms of discrimination encountered on campus impacted the sexual and religious identity development of the panelists in a variety of ways. The following sections will analyze the participants’ diverse discussions of how their daily community life, socio-religious scripts and activity systems were mediated by and mediated each other.

Daily community life

Each of the panelists referenced different facets of their daily community life (e.g., social and institutional interactions) that were mediated by their sexual identity and disclosure process. Although all participants included a discussion of how their daily community life was affected by their sexual identity status, these narratives focused upon a variety of institutional, religious, and community experiences.

For example, Asher briefly shared his dilemma as to whether he could receive the synagogue honor of reading the Bible during prayer sessions. David discussed the embarrassment of being kicked out of a number of formal and informal religious educational settings from middle school to post-high school settings due to his sexual orientation. He then disclosed how these earlier experiences of discrimination lead to his decision not to disclose his true sexual identity to himself or others when attending a religious university:

“When I went to X University I still wasn’t ready to call myself gay. I knew how many doors that closed and I didn’t think anyone wanted to hear it and I needed to hold on to a dream. And I thought sexuality is fluid, all right. So I called myself bisexual, pansexual (at the time it was a very hip term.) I needed that at the time. I knew even though I called myself that, that when it comes to actual sexuality, sexual fantasy- I can love a woman, think she’s pretty, but didn’t feel the same way about a woman that I felt about a guy. But it doesn’t matter. A good Brisker (a school of thought that promotes logical and intellectualized forms of religious observance and study) method is the head guides the heart. Doesn’t matter what I feel- this is the road. This is the right road.”

Alternatively, Aaron disclosed his sexual identity to his classmates and now regularly encounters verbal homophobia within the context of a religious university setting:

“…So I am out. A gay Jew in X University. All right. Scandalous. (laughter) Truth is, I guess I’m a little bit ambivalent about my experience here- not with the school. The rabbis, most have been completely caring and sympathetic. The administration has been as ___(muffled) they can be. The reality is that I face homophobia all the time. Sometimes it’s deliberate when people write ‘fag’ on X’s campaign signs or when people ask my
roommate if they are afraid of me coming on to him at night. Or when people liken me to adulterers or people who commit bestiality or incest. Or in Sociology when people raise their hands and say, “I’m not homophobic; I just wouldn’t let my kids near gay people.”

Aaron’s ambivalence is of no surprise as although the administration attempted to be supportive and assisted in the organization of the gay awareness panel, many homophobic sentiments still remain amongst the student body. Though, it should be noted that Aaron reported that there was some improvement amongst the student body since he established the “Tolerance Club” in 2009 on campus.

**Socio-religious scripts & activity systems**

A diverse set of socio-religious scripts and activity systems mediated the participants’ sexual identity and disclosure experience at university. For example, David focused on the stifling cultural silence regarding homosexuality and his resultant invisibility on campus:

“It’s the silence…the feeling that you want to say something, something that is obviously the issue but you won’t and then it becomes you can’t and you shouldn’t and then it just lives inside of you and burns and you start feeling, gosh, there’s something wrong. There’s something evil.”

Alternatively, Asher spoke about the guilt he encountered during the High Holiday services when reading aloud the prayers of repentance regarding homosexuality. Asher additionally highlighted the alienating experience of hearing his friends “othering” gay people by discussing a “them” rather than an “us” at a Sabbath dinner. Contrastingly, despite Aaron’s many encounters with homophobia on campus, he spoke warmly of his friends who have adopted the religious struggle alongside him:

“I have made such amazing friends at University who accept my differences and make me happy, empathize with where I am coming from. The pasuk (biblical passage) ‘a man shall not lie with another man because it is an abomination’ is not just my problem because I am gay, but their own challenge.”

Each of these encounters directly impacted the panelists’ educational and identity development experiences by assisting in the construction or deconstruction of the university’s culture of institutionalized homophobia.

**Mediation strategies**

Three different mediational strategies were presented by the participants regarding the processes of engaging their religious and sexual identities within the often hostile settings of the religious university and the greater Orthodox Jewish community. For example, utilizing the analytic lens of mediation, David’s narrative tells a story in which his sexual identity constructed an alternative religious identity within the larger context of moral values:
“…it [being gay and Orthodox] made another kind of sense- in my neshama (soul). What I knew was morally right and fit into the mold of yahadus (Jewish cultural and traditional thought). I need to find, I need to be true, I need to look at the metzius (reality) in my life and learn how to make the mundane holy. But you can’t change the metzius (reality).”

Whereas, Asher reported a mediational strategy that was focused on cultural activity systems and the process of accepting contradicting activities:

“[I] feel more comfortable putting on tefillin (phylacteries) and tzitzis (a fringed religious garment) and davening (praying) three times a day now that I’ve just accepted that sometimes life will be full of contradictions and this is the part of the person that I am.”

Alternatively, Aaron’s narrative can be understood as presenting an ongoing metaphysical struggle that he hoped would become a shared community burden:

“How could a religion that is supposed to be so compassionate, how could it put an individual through so much suffering? Hashem (God), you know, made me so that the only way I can ever feel loved, happy, and whole is to be with another man, and then He tells me to abstain from it…Just hope that after telling you my experiences and my stories, that you will be able to, that we will be able to, universalize the struggle and share in it, because I just can’t carry it alone any longer.”

The salient meditational strategies that emerged from the three panel participants’ narratives were the strategies of constructing an alternative religious identity, engaging in a process of accepting activity contradictions, and exploring the domain focused metaphysical struggle as a shared community burden. Despite the panelists’ efforts to engage both their sexual and religious identities on campus, their narratives suggest that this struggle was often accompanied by social isolation and institutionalized exclusions from campus activities.

**Limitations and future directions**

Clearly, the diversity of contexts and systems that are referenced by the participants regarding the mediational relationship of sexual and religious identity, highlights the complex nature of interconnected activity systems and how this interrelationship impacts and is impacted by mediational strategies. It is therefore important that future research approaches the experience of being gay within the religious world as a composite of dialectical and dialogical interpersonal, intrapersonal, intersystem (e.g., religious institutions and structures), and metaphysical encounters and activities that shape and are shaped by each other.

However, it should be noted that the content of the participants’ narratives was possibly limited by the public context in which they were presented. In addition, the panelists were moderated by both a psychologist and a rabbi who stated that the purpose of the panel was not to dis-
cuss psychological theory relating to homosexuality or to discuss the parameters of religious law. It is possible that alternative mediational strategies and themes would have been presented if the content of the narratives was not limited in this way. Therefore, future research should focus on collecting narratives from gay university students within private as well as public contexts.

**Conclusion**

In this paper, I hope to have shown how the experience of being gay within a religious university setting is not just encountered on an intrapersonal level of identity construction, but should rather be viewed as a composite of interpersonal, intrapersonal, intersystem (e.g., religious institutions and structures), and metaphysical encounters and activities that shape and are shaped by each other. I have argued that educational settings contribute to and are affected by a larger cultural context of LGBT discrimination. In addition, I have discussed a wide range of mediational strategies that can be used at the individual level to address the difficulty of encountering conflicting values systems. For these reasons, those who work with gay university students should focus upon inviting them to critically reflect upon the conflicting values, activity systems, and scripts that they may encounter. Students should then be encouraged to explore specific ways in which this conflict could possibly be mediated (i.e., establishing an alternate religious identity; accepting the reality of engaging in conflicting activities; sharing the conflict with others in the university campus community).

**References**


Bridging Desire: Adult Education as a Forum for Transnational Collaboration Around Sexuality

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Abstract: Based on the experience of Queer Peace International, I argue for sensitivity when foreign adult educators cross borders to collaborate with partners situated in the global South over sexuality matters. Pointedly, Freire’s concept of “dialogue” may be useful to deconstruct Western hegemony over sexuality and to support difference.

This paper introduces the work of Queer Peace International (QPI) and highlights its connections to adult education. After a short introduction to the mandate and aims of the organization, this paper will reflect on my experience as the founder of QPI. More specifically, I will examine some of the possibilities, preclusions and politics that QPI experienced when trying to use adult education, under the umbrella of “international development,” to address discourses of heteronormativity and homophobia in the global South. I will suggest that sexuality within international development circles is locked within a Western articulation of sexual identity (e.g., “LGBT”) and ignores cultural sensitivity surrounding sexuality. While this critique has been long suggested in the literature, I call on adult educators to critically examine how their involvement could provide an opportunity to facilitate a more equitable approach to collaboration and curtail Western hegemonic practices around sexuality. Examples of adult education through a sexuality lens could mean working alongside a local partner to address important social and organizational needs, such as co-facilitating skills-building workshops, creating spaces for mutual mentorship and safe social gatherings to take place and/or hosting online dialogues on particular subject matter. Through a reflective analysis of QPI’s practices, I ultimately argue for a queer critical focus where adult educators examine their positionalities and in relation to issues of ethics, justice, and freedom (Grace, 2001; Hill, 2004), especially when it comes to matters relating transnational collaborations around sexuality. The question that ultimately drives this discussion is: Based on the experience of Queer Peace International, what kinds of concerns and challenges surface when conceptualizing how adult education could address issues of inequity and injustice among sexual minorities in the global South?

Case Study: Queer Peace International

QPI is a grassroots non-governmental organization based in Toronto, Canada that works with sexual-minority organizations situated in the global South to provide assistance through adult education. As written in its mission statement, QPI “facilitates networking between sexual and gender minority organizations, individuals and their allies. We are committed to working across the global North/South divide to build capacities, share skills, develop transformative practices, and to guide – and intervene in – international development programming” (QPI, 2011, n.p.). Since its creation in 2004, QPI has continued the fight to:
a) include consideration of sexual minorities within Canada’s international development programme both through informal (e.g., meeting with ally politicians) and formal (e.g., delivering workshops) ways,

b) raise awareness of challenges facing sexual minorities based in the global South within Canada’s queer communities, and

c) receive funding support from Western-based donor agencies and people so that QPI can continue its collaboration with its partners in the global South.

d) develop its own organizational identity and sustainability as an emerging international queer agency.

QPI’s work in the global South has been significantly hampered by recursive institutional and social challenges embedded in each of these goals. Despite, its focus on the education of adults, and the unique strategies that QPI employs when working with members of the global South, set it philosophically and practically apart from most non-governmental agencies. For example, instead of using complex application forms and time-sensitive deadlines, QPI uses a simple and open-ended “contact us” form on its website to welcome proposals, an exchange of ideas, and questions about its mandate and capabilities in three languages. This simple, but important, step brings us closer to the people we serve by encouraging dialogue. In addition, this small step distances us from the hegemonic practices that aid agencies use to create an atmosphere of hierarchy and dependency in their dealings with the global South. A closer look at international development reveals the different forms of marginalization that surface in its practices. One such form is the pervasiveness of heteronormative discourses.

Colonizing Desires

Facilitating projects as a form of international development reflects a practice that is deeply entrenched in world history. Loomba (2005), who writes in the area of postcolonialism, describes Western nations as having colonized non-Western nations for the purposes of “development” dating as far back as the fifteenth Century. She adds that these “development” practices resulted in Western nations marginalizing, occupying, and destroying cultures as an exercise of superiority and dominant power (Loomba, 2005). Reading from Loomba (2005), it is possible to suggest that when a Western agency intervenes in the daily work of people within a “development” context, such an intervention is riddled with Western and non-Western power differentials. International development has also been critiqued as a heteronormative discourse and consequences of this discourse can be found among the turbulent experiences of sexual-minority aid recipients (Correa & Jolly, 2006) and aid facilitators (Mizzi, 2009; Wright, 2000). For example, members of QPI’s board of directors have enjoyed some privilege by way of openly meeting with and presenting informative seminars to officials from the Canadian International Development Agency and other non-governmental agencies to discuss the inclusion of sexual minorities within their development assistance programmes. Despite this privilege, the fact that these conversations have not led to any kind of successful intervention or policy change indicates that international development remains steadfast in its commitment to silence and oppress differences.
around sexuality. Part of the problem lies in the terminology that has driven a “gay rights” movement in Western contexts.

The term “LGBT” largely is a Western invention to name and categorize a “sexual identity.” Typically, this term can be found in many forms of social policy that are meant to include and address “LGBT” issues and concerns. However, creating policy that includes social realities outside of Canada and, concomitantly, maintains allegiance to Canadian values causes the term “LGBT” to morph from an identity politic to a form of neo-colonialism. Neo-colonialism is a term used by some postcolonial scholars (for example, Loomba, 2005) to reconfigure and rearticulate power relations over time (historical to the contemporary) and space (Western/non-Western) as a result of the various forms of globalization, such as international development. A Western articulation of sexual rights-organizing, and the very nature of organizing around sexual rights, impedes itself in the (same-sex) sexual practices of a culture that interprets sexual desire through an entirely different lens (Massad, 2002). Significantly, non-Western civilizations now must tend with an imperialistic presence around “gay rights” and “LGBT issues” that could prove to be destructive to people who pursue same-sex desires. For example, in an Islamic context, Islam only considers heterosexual marriage, and the act of reproducing children within that marriage, as the only acceptable type of relationship that gains currency in social relations and status. Sexual minorities must adhere to religious expectations and, at the same time, develop subjectivity as a person with same-sex desires (Boellstorff, 2005). Within a QPI context, the avoidance of the use of identity in our programming and the encouragement of people to describe themselves and their situations however they see fit has become a useful strategy to building respectful relationships. Given the frontline nature that makes up much of adult education, understanding the contextual realities that structure daily lives should remain paramount for adult educators who cross borders.

**Dialogue as Adult Education**

Typically, adult educators are no strangers to the politics that emerge when crossing cultural borders (e.g., see Grace, 1996) and come equipped with sensitive strategies that propel meaningful discussions along equitable lines. However, adult education can also be a controversial approach because what is considered “relevant” curriculum is quite often crafted by the foreign adult educator. To circumvent this, QPI has a practice of encouraging local partners to co-create the curriculum that is needed to be taught. That being said, adult education, like having a LGBT identity, can still be considered a very foreign concept and a colonizing discourse. Dialogue, taken within a Freirean sense, could provide a useful strategy here. Effectively, through dialogue, knowledge about each other’s social realities is exchanged from one person to another in hopes of transforming and liberating human lives from oppression (Freire, 1970/2008). Freire (1970/2008) asserts that love for the world and humanity, humility, and faith in people to create, trust, hope, and critically think all contribute to a type of “authentic dialogue” that learners and educators can collaboratively engage with in order to transform unjust and unequal power relations. An adult educator can provide opportunities to open up dialogue about the differences that make up each other’s backgrounds, interpretations, practices and values and, responsively, adapt curriculum to these differences.
For example, local adult educators and learners are quite familiar with the political context that could threaten efforts for social change through adult education. Trying to organize a safe space where teaching and learning can take place remains a challenge because participants are afraid that their open participation could result in being “caught” by hostile individuals and agencies that oppose such meetings. Oppression of sexual difference runs deep and sometimes it takes a great deal of encouragement from local community members to address anxieties around coming together. A responsive foreign educator would need to address and include this anxiety within her/his pedagogical approaches. Indeed, this inclusion is no easy task, but one that relies heavily on dialogue with local stakeholders.

Dialogue opens up more windows than just a discussion around the contextual realities that structure sexual relations. Dialogue provides an opportunity to re-construct the very nature of adult education and some of its foreign qualities. With this comment I do not mean to downplay the effectiveness and presence of adult education in the global South. In fact, adult education is rife throughout much of the globe and has had some tremendous success. What I mean here is that Western articulations of adult education often arrives in the form of “seminars”, “workshops” and other forms of structured learning within international development (Gelpi, 1996). In my experience with QPI, since we were more open to a fluid understanding of sexuality, we became more open to the fluid nature of meaningful learning, curriculum, and collaboration. Indeed, some of my most compelling discussions with adult learners as a foreign, adult educator have taken place in coffee shops, social parties, and long walks and away from the sterile environments of PowerPoint projections and worksheets. Perhaps there is something here about the fluidity of learning that raises awareness to the consequences of engaging with a form of adult education that promotes cultural disconnection. Simply put, if adult educators are only using classroom-based teaching methods as a way to facilitate knowledge production, then how is that style of instruction silencing cultural difference?

**Sexuality, International Development and Adult Education: A Successful Ménage à Trois?**

Given the challenges that QPI has had since its creation in 2004, could there be a meaningful relationship between sexuality, international development and adult education? Certainly, the long battle towards equity within Canada’s international development programmes points towards the international development part of this relationship as not being ready to commit to discussions about sexuality. And yet, recent developments in the fields of transnational sexuality studies and adult education (e.g., see Mizzi, 2008) point towards a possible connection worthy of further exploration. This collaboration may mean a disposal of traditional adult educator/learner rules and roles and an assertion of a particular sharing process that respects social histories, realities and practices. Some suggestions, as illustrated by QPI practices, could be to encourage ownership of projects by local partners, maintain an open dialogue about sexuality differences and, more generally, differences around learning, and keep sensitive around the use of terminologies that define and classify a person’s sense of self. All of these suggestions point toward a decolonizing practice, but given the complexity of the issues that face the global South, challenges and problems continue to persist with QPI’s approach. One challenge herein lies whether this form of...
collaboration remains unshakeable under the dominant shadow of Western hegemonic practices that considers homosexuality as a type of “otherness.” In light of the challenges I mentioned earlier, QPI, although based in Canada, has not been unaffected to these hegemonic practices.

Concluding Reflections

Bridging desire is about building those crucial connections that expand our awareness around same-sex sexualities. Queer Peace International is one agency that provides a practical and theoretical space to build bridges through adult education and transnational sexuality. Although the presence of Western organizations like QPI certainly cannot escape criticisms of neo-colonialism within queer contexts, the actual methods of building the collaborative work seeks to inspire critical thinking into the kinds of development practices taking place in the global South.

More specifically, how do we work together as global citizens that support “developmental” change when it comes to same-sex sexualities? And what does change do to the people directly involved, and what do people do to change? These questions are meant to signal that discussions of this nature are certainly not over. Rather, I believe that we are just on the tip of the iceberg when it comes to examining what kind of opportunities for learning could surface when a respectful relationship among sexual minorities from various socio-economic backgrounds opens up. The fact that there is no easy recipe for successful adult education around sexuality in global contexts should not be mistaken as a shortcoming; rather, as a possibility to creatively and critically collaborate across difference.

References


LGBT Issues in Human Resource Development: A Review of Existing Research & a Path Forward

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Abstract: The purpose of this paper is to review existing literature on LGBT issues in HRD. Based on literature review findings, themes will be presented and gaps in the research will be discussed. Recommendations for future research on LGBT issues in HRD will also be presented.

Introduction
Hill (2006) posits that “organizations are places where human sexuality also intersects with technologies, culture, and society” (p. 7). As is the case with all social rights movements, the workplace has been affected by the LGBT rights movement. Nearly 60% (286) of Fortune 500 companies now offer domestic partner health benefits for same-sex partners of employees (Human Rights Campaign Foundation, 2010). Workplace rights, organizational climate, and career development issues are being considered from the standpoint of LGBT employees, and employee resource and networking groups have brought together LGBT employees and allies in the workplace (Schmidt, Githens, Rocco & Kormanik, 2011). The Human Rights Campaign (HRC) Foundation Corporate Equality Index measures an employer’s “commitment to equal treatment of employees, consumers, and investors, irrespective of [an employee’s] sexual orientation or gender identity and expression” (HRC Corporate Equality Index, 2010, p. 6) using a scale of 0-100 percent. The 2010 report noted that 305 businesses received a perfect 100 percent rating. That number was a 45 percent increase over the previous year, and those 305 businesses represent over 9.3 million full-time employees (HRC Corporate Equality Index, 2010). In 2002, the year of the first HRC Corporate Equality Index, only 13 companies scored 100 percent.

These changes in the workplace have provided researchers in the field of HRD with plenty of opportunities to branch out and investigate issues and situations that have previously been non-existent. However, Schmidt, et al. (2011) pointing to a very few number of studies on any aspect of LGBT issues and HRD, note that the field has been slow to consider these issues. Is the lack of research on LGBT issues in HRD related to lack of interest or perceived importance on the part of researchers, lack of acceptance by the HRD community, lack of topical knowledge on the part of either or both entities, or some combination thereof?

This paper is a review existing literature on LGBT issues in HRD. The authors have conducted an integrative literature review on this topic, and results of that literature review will be presented. Based on literature review findings, themes will be presented and gaps in the research will be discussed. Recommendations for future research on LGBT issues in HRD will also be presented.

Research Method
Because HRD is an interdisciplinary field (Chalofsky, 2007; Jacobs, 1990; Kuchinke, 2003), this review includes research from the field of adult education in addition to the HRD lit-
erature. Search terms used were: sexual orientation, gay and lesbian, gender identity, sexual minority, queer, bisexual, transex*, transgen*. Searches were done using databases and by hand.

Resources searched include the following: Adult Education Research Conference proceedings from 1994-2009; New Directions in Adult and Continuing Education (NDACE), a monograph series in the field of adult education, from 1994-2009; and The Academy of Human Resource Development Conference proceedings from 2000-2009. Additionally, four major HRD-related publications: Advances in Developing Human Resources (ADHR); Human Resource Development International (HRDI), Human Resource Development Quarterly (HRDQ) and Human Resource Development Review (HRDR) were reviewed for content related to LGBT issues in HRD.

Research Issues and Gaps

Using the above search criteria, a total of 31 articles on LGBT-related issues in HRD were found. The majority of articles (n=10) were AHRD conference proceedings. Eight articles appeared in ADHR and one in HRDI. Four articles were AERC conference proceedings, and six appeared in NDACE. It is important to note that all six NDACE articles appeared in a single edition of NDACE. That edition, edited by Hill (2006), was dedicated to sexual minority issues.

After identifying and reading the abstracts of the papers related to LGBT issues, the authors held discussions by phone and e-mail to create an inductively-developed categorization scheme. Topics related to HRD were categorized as follows: organizational change, advocacy and change, LGBT-focused diversity initiatives, compensation and benefits, career development, and workplace education. Additionally, all literature was categorized by research method employed in the work. Overall findings and gaps related to each HRD-related sub-topic, along with findings and gaps related to research methodologies, are discussed individually.

Research Methods

Overall, the literature on LGBT issues in HRD is heavier on conceptual papers than empirical studies and literature reviews. Of the 12 AHRD conference papers dealing with LGBT issues in HRD, only three were empirical studies. Three of the 12 conference presentation proceedings were innovative, or discussion-type sessions, and one was a preconference on LGBT issues and HRD. The remaining five presentation proceedings were conceptual pieces, including reviews of literature. Nine of the 12 articles presented in the four HRD-related journals were conceptual pieces or literature reviews. One was qualitative, one was mixed methods, and the other was an editorial.

A review of methods indicates a complete lack of articles reporting quantitative empirical findings. The authors of this work are either LGBT or dedicated allies. This raises the issue of why sexual orientation is not regularly included as a variable considered in diversity studies or any studies where race and gender are seen as important variables. Heterocentric bias is at play when scholars design studies determining what experiences are important and which are not.

Areas of research that could be investigated using quantitative, qualitative or mixed methods are the use of work life benefits, relationships with supervisors, and the relationship of productivity to inclusive workplace efforts. Other issues we raise are the effect of an employee
being out at work on his or her productivity, the productivity of colleagues, and the work environment.

**Organizational Change**

Organizational change initiatives are often about changes in culture. A major thrust in changes in organizational culture have been diversity initiatives. Organizations have approached civil rights legislation and social pressure to diversify workforces from different perspectives ranging from hostile, compliant, inquiry, inclusion, and advocacy (Rocco, Landorf, Delgado, 2009). Organizational change initiatives under each perspective differ.

Valuing diversity “was originally conceived without reference to sexual identity, gender identity, or gender expression” (Hill, 2006, p. 9). Hill (2006) continues, “Missing in most organizational formulations is the notion that organizations are places where human sexuality also intersects with technologies, culture, and society” (p. 7). This intersection is key in discussions on LGBT issues and organizational change. Hornsby (2006) suggests that organizational policy changes that include sexual minorities through inclusive language and particular attention to sexual minority issues can drive organizational change. To drive organizational change, harassment policies must be enforced, domestic partner benefits established, preparations made to address resistance, and commitment from leaders must be visible (Munoz & Thomas, 2006). These observations by Kormanik (2009) and recommendations by Hornsby (2006) are prime examples of gaps in the research on LGBT issues and organizational change. Empirical studies on these topics are necessary, as is research on specific organizational change initiatives that are directly related to LGBT employees.

**Advocacy and Change**

LGBT employees and allies have sought changes through workplace advocacy efforts because of the need for organizational changes in policies, practices, and individual attitudes. These efforts occur through the informal efforts of individuals and groups, employer-sponsored groups for LGBT people and allies (sometimes known as Employee Resource Groups, Affinity Groups, or Employee Networks), outside workplace groups affiliated with unions or other workplace-oriented organizations (sometimes known as LGBT Caucuses), and more subversive groups that exist outside of traditional organizational structures (Githens & Aragon, 2009).

Advocates for LGBT workplace changes often do so for personal, professional, and political reasons (Humphrey, 1999). Gedro (2007a) examined the learning of attendees at a national LGBT workplace conference using transformative learning theory (Mezirow, 1997) and Friere’s emancipatory theory of transformation (Friere, 1970). HR departments were often identified by participants as ineffective in addressing LGBT issues; the conference emboldened these participants to make changes in their organizations that HR did not (Gedro, 2007a). The conference provided participants with ideas for strategizing and making the case for more inclusive workplaces, despite the structural and personal obstacles they might encounter.

The role of allies has been a salient theme in studies examining advocacy within workplaces. Brooks and Edwards (2009) found that LGBT employees want allies who foster emotionally inclusive environments for LGBT colleagues, who provide uncompromising support for the
safety of LGBT colleagues by combating homophobia, and who advocate to others for equity and inclusion in policies and practices. In a case study of a long-term change effort within one organization, Githens (2009b) found that while initial enthusiasm from allies could help in moving a workplace advocacy effort forward at critical points, the LGBT employees’ perseverance brought changes to fruition. Brooks and Edwards’ study found that allies range from those who are interpersonally supportive of LGBT individuals to those who quietly advocate in their own immediate circles of influence to one ally-activist who started a national movement of allies working for LGBT equity. Future research might examine the factors that predict long-term motivation and persistence by allies. Additional future research could examine which types of advocacy efforts are most effective in various types of organizations.

**LGBT-Focused Diversity Initiatives**

Workforce diversity initiatives differ in their inclusiveness of sexual minority issues, in their perceived value by non-minority employees, and in the operationalization of their implementation. Workforce diversity programs most often focus on four areas: increasing workplace representation of traditionally underrepresented groups, eliminating discrimination, preventing harassment, and promoting inclusion. In each of these goal areas, the focus has been primarily race and gender (Maxwell, 2005). Gender diversity programming has minimally covered the broader spectrum of sexuality. Only recently have organizations put sexual orientation into their non-discrimination policies, with an even smaller number adding gender identity (see Heller, 2006; Human Rights Campaign Foundation [HRCF], 2006). Without a need for compliance, discussion of sexual orientation and gender identity is omitted from diversity initiatives.

Gaps in this research are related to basic education on LGBT issues in the workplace and on initiatives designed to raise awareness among all employees. Additionally, research should focus on coalition building as a way to improve workplace culture and climate.

**Compensation and Benefits**

Issues related to compensation and benefits persist as some of the most tangible measures of an organization’s level of support for LGBT people. Research related to these issues addresses ways in which organizations address policies and practices related to wages, insurance, leaves of absences, and work/life balance.

Much of the effort to bring LGBT-friendly organizational changes over the last 10 years has focused on persuading employers to adopt benefits for same-sex partners of employees (Githens, 2008; Githens, 2009a; Muñoz & Thomas, 2006). Benefits have likely been at the center of attention due to the clear inequities that have presented themselves between LGBT and heterosexual employees. Work-life benefits consider employees’ needs outside of the workplace. Benefits receiving the most attention include provisions that allow for caring for children through on-site daycare, parental leave for mothers and fathers, and flextime arrangements.

Promising areas for research relate to the implementation of work-life benefits that allow for leaves of absence and flextime. Although domestic partner benefits have seen widespread adoption among large, publicly traded companies, research among small employers could be
fruitful in helping HRD professionals and activists understand the antecedents present in small organizations that offer benefits.

**Career Development**

Career development includes segmented processes of choice, establishment, advancement, maintenance, and work/life issues (Super, 1990). It is often seen as one of the three core areas of HRD practice, along with employee training and organization development. However, it is the least addressed core area in the literature (Swanson & Holton, 2001).

For LGBT employees, career development is challenging due to the dilemma of whether to hide or disclose their identity in a multitude of work-related interactions. These dilemmas around identity and openness are an aspect of identity management (Gedro, 2009). Identity has to be managed for LGBT people at the same time individuals are developing their identities as LGBT. Because of heterosexism or straight privilege children learn to repress their same sex desires, which can delay LGBT identity formation until well into adulthood.

Gaps in research on career development and LGBT employees are many, and include research on LGBT employees’ career development and mobility in different types of occupations and careers. Research that specifically focuses on the experiences of gay men, lesbians, bisexuals and transgender employees in the workplace is also needed.

**Workplace Education**

It is important to note that in this paper, workplace education initiatives are examined separate from general diversity initiatives and general diversity training. The distinction is related to course content. In diversity related training and initiatives, LGBT issues are one of many dimensions of diversity pulled together and studied as parts of the whole concept. Workplace education issues look at the relationship between LGBT employees and different aspects of educational processes in the workplace.

There is a small body of research on LGBT issues in workplace education. Thus far in the literature, much discussion revolves around the development of curriculum to support LGBT inclusion in the workplace, including the degree to which training materials and workplace trainers acknowledge LGBT employees and issues in training programs. This concept, also known as queering the curriculum (Chapman & Gedro, 2007) has been researched in multiple educational settings, including the workplace. In general, research has yet to take off in this area, and opportunities abound for future research on workplace education and LGBT issues such as cultural competence on LGBT issues for workplace trainers, and the development of curriculum that supports LGBT inclusion in the workplace.

**HRD Implications**

Despite growing attention paid to sexual minorities in workplaces, research in AHRD publications has paid comparatively little attention to this issue (Bierema & Cseh, 2003). This article provides a summary of a small core of research from which to build and provides several fruitful areas for future research. The overarching theme from this body of work is that while many HR professionals are sincere and want to address these issues, they have often reacted or failed to act rather than provide proactive leadership on LGBT issues. Repeated calls for HR to...
have a “seat at the table” illustrate the desire of members of this profession to have a strategic voice in their organizations. This issue provides an example of an area where the evidence seems to point away from HR providing leadership. Additional research can provide evidence for how HRD professionals might more effectively grapple with these issues.

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