White Paper Fall 2013

The Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender (GLBT) Issues Knowledge Community (KC) of NASPA (www.naspa.org/kc/glbt) provides avenues for both social and professional involvement. Knowledge Community activities allow for personal and professional growth, increased awareness and acceptance of gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender professionals and students, and promote understanding of gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender professional and student needs.

The KC produces white papers, which are compilations of current and cutting-edge research summaries and briefs. The goal of the white paper is to share knowledge and information about issues related to the status of the GLBT community in higher education that will prompt discussion, further research and showcase scholarship being conducted by students and professionals in the field. Higher education and student affairs professionals can consider these recent findings/results when tailoring programmatic and pedagogical efforts on their campus. All scholars, researchers and professionals are welcome to submit summaries or briefs about their scholarship to the whitepaper; membership in NASPA is not a prerequisite. For more information about the submission guidelines, contact the KC leadership at glbtkc@gmail.com

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How Gay Men Become Socialized Into Gay Discourses

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Introduction and Research Questions

Language and literacy have been studied from a variety of angles and theoretical perspectives. Two important theories in the understanding of language and literacy come from James Gee and Deborah Brandt. Gee has created a model of "big D Discourse" which integrates ways "of behaving, interacting, valuing, thinking, believing, speaking, and often reading and writing" (Gee, 1996, p. viii) into a single idea of performative identity. Brandt (1998) has proposed a model of literacy sponsorship which explores the way literacy (and secondary Discourse) is taught, transferred, and sponsored.

Both of these theories, however, can become problematic when considering the issue of Queer Discourse and Gay Languages. The concept of Gay Languages, as will be demonstrated to a greater degree within the paper, has been established in the field of Linguistics through a number of research projects and publications. I will make the claim that this research has established Gay Languages as specific Queer Discourses under the theoretical model of Gee. Little research, however, has been done regarding how Queer Discourses are developed and shared among a community, and why people take on this secondary Discourse. I therefore make a second claim that Queer Discourse provides something to Queer communities that other Discourses do not, setting up an experience where sponsorship, under the theoretical model of Brandt, can occur.

This project will connect to the overarching question of how and why Queer Discourses are shared amid and between generations. Specifically, this study will be exploratory research into:

- how gay men in the United States describe the "gay community";
- how these men utilize Gay Discourses within their interactions in the gay community;
- how these men become socialized into Gay Discourse.

My focus on gay men is not to be interpreted as lessening the need for research on other identities, such as lesbians, transgender communities, bisexuals, or international queer communities. However, as a nascent researcher and graduate student, it is important to focus and limit the breadth of my research, and as a gay man I have access to that community and the ability to navigate my way to and garner trust from potential participants. It is also important to acknowledge that research on the queer community often "whitewashes" everyone where either whiteness is the unspoken norm, or the identities and experiences of non-white queer people are silenced or ignored. My goal is to include perspectives from a diverse sample population to see if experiences differ across racial identities, acknowledging that much of the research already published may be operating from this white-normative, or hegemonic, viewpoint.

Methodology

In order to gather data trying to address these questions, interviews were conducted with a small but diverse group of gay men. Despite coming from a variety of backgrounds, these men held a common bond of being participants in a local Bay Area choral group. This exploratory research, therefore, represents the elements of a particular Gay Discourse(s) used by this particular gay community.

The Interview Guide, along with gathering basic demographic data, included the following general questions:

- Where and when did you come out?

- Describe to me what comes to mind when you think about the "gay community".
- Recall your experiences with the "gay community" – think especially of the people that were involved. Tell me a story about when you felt a part of the community?
- Tell me a story about when you felt excluded from the community?
- Some researchers have suggested that gay men have their own unique way of communication. Describe to me how you communicate when within the "gay community".
- How is that different from the ways you communicated outside the "gay community"?
- Why do you think you communicate in that way?
- How do you think you learned to speak or act that way?

Participants were solicited through a variety of social networks I have access to and were interviewed on a self-selecting, voluntary basis. Again, participants were solicited specifically through a common bond of a local Bay Area chorale group, and some represented only one of a variety of possible gay communities. Of the 15 responses to interview requests, 4 individuals were selected and interviewed due to their cross-section of representation across a variety of races and age groups. Further demographic information revealed that although, ideally, there would have been a diversity of socio-economic statues and education level, all the participants ended up being generally middle class and college educated. The solicited group consisted of one participant under 30, one participant in their 30s, one participant in their 40s, and one participant in their 50s, and half of the participants were people of color. Interviews were conducted during March and April of 2012 in the Santa Cruz, San Jose, and San Francisco area. Interviews were tape recorded for transcription purposes, and lasted about an hour each.

Conclusion and Implications

As exploratory research, it's difficult to making wide-sweeping conclusions. However, a few tentative conclusions and implications can still be drawn. Themes of sponsorship – often referred to by the participant as "mentorship" relationships – did emerge from the data, although not in the way that I was expecting. Rather than being inter-generational, connections were instead made with individuals perceived as being more experienced or "out" for longer than the participants. Multiple mentorship relationships could also be established throughout a lifetime for a variety of reasons and via different means. All the relationships, however, did have some sort of pathway which led the participant to actively seek out a situation where the sponsorship bond could develop. These pathway stories all seemed to occur post-"Coming Out", complicating Plummer's (1995) construction of the Coming Out narrative by elaborating on how individuals move from resolving their "moment of tension or problems" (p. 83) – the first experience of "Coming Out" – to interaction with other queer people and developing a sense of self identity. Finally, the importance of shared experiences were highlighted as a key feature of the participants' Gay Discourse. Often highlighted by media and ideas of "gay culture", sharing experiences with other gay men gave them both a Discourse and a sense of community, which often reciprocally led back to feeling more empowered to socialize and create new shared experiences and discourse opportunities. Much like how Gee (1989) states that "we acquire [secondary Discourses] fluently to the extent that we are given access to [non-home-based social] institutions and are allowed apprenticeships within them" (p. 527), these men were given apprenticeships (through their mentors or sponsors) into the community and were allowed to experience, as Peter puts it, "this whole secret world" (4/14/12). Just as Brandt (1998) theorizes, while sponsors "lend their resources or credibility to the sponsored [they] also stand to gain benefits from their success" (p. 557). By having a mentor able to "show them gay culture" (as Jeffrey puts it) or "teach them things" (as Peter puts it), these people lent their credibility within the community and the resources of their gay experiences to the sponsee, but also stood to benefit themselves by creating friendships, continuing the community, and eliciting pleasure and humor. Many of the stories of

mentorship highlighted themes of responsibility – mentors who felt protective of their charges and who wanted to draw them into the community.

The themes regarding mentorship and shared experience imply that spaces should be made available for social gatherings outside of the Coming Out experience, in order for men who are already out but not yet part of the "gay community" to become integrated. Just as Plummer (1995) suggests that "'coming out' now becomes the central narrative of positive gay experience" (p. 84), many LGBT organizations may focus on coming out as the pinnacle of a young gay man's life. However, my research suggests that there's a key element between Coming Out and community development, since each of my participants indexed a non-Coming Out situation as their first experience with community. Without these spaces for community building and to develop their own Gay Discourse, these men may not have the same positive, affirming view of "gay community" they currently possess. It's also important to be reminded that while issues of mentorship did appear within the interviews, they were not generationally situated, per se, but had much more to do with the perception of "outness" and time spent within the community. Creating situations where both newly out and "experienced" gay men can gather together was instrumental for my participants to become a part of the community and learn the Discourse.

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Myths and Barriers: An Introduction to Intimate Partner Violence in LGBTQIA* Communities

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Intimate partner violence (IPV) is a prevalent and real issue for college students in the United States. Often, and for many reasons, IPV is discussed through the context of gender binaries and a heteronormative lens. Many studies have shown that women experience sexual assault and IPV at higher rates than men; other studies show that perpetrators are predominantly men (Halpern et. al., 2001). However, these studies often overlook or ignore lesbian, gay, bisexual*, trans*, queer, intersex, and asexual (LGBTQIA*) communities. Further, the studies and analyses that focus on LGBTQIA* IPV typically center on one identity and do not represent the full spectrum and depth of these experiences (Anderson, 2005; Burke & Follingstad, 1999; Halpern et. al., 2004). This omission creates misconceptions and perpetuates myths that IPV does not exist or is not an issue for people who identify with the LGBTQIA* community (Burke & Follingstad, 1999).

Myths

A series of internal or external myths block access to many resources for LGBTQIA* survivors of intimate partner violence (Burke & Follingstad, 1999). It is indeed the case that in any one instance or experience of intimate partner violence, many of these myths may not apply or that other myths which we will not discuss do, in fact, apply. Therefore, this brief treatment of myths and their eventual conclusions should not be seen as exhaustive, all inclusive, or applying to every LGBTQIA* person.

The larger myth is rooted in the assumption that the LGBTQIA* community is somehow inherently different than the heterosexual and cissexual community. According to the myth that difference is manifested in a greater amount of relational tranquility and significantly lower amount of violence within relationships. Perhaps this myth extends most strongly from the idea that in a same-gender relationship disagreements would arise less often, after all men get along with men and women get along with women.

Many gendered myths and assumptions impact LGBTQIA* survivors of IPV (Burke & Follingstad, 1999). In U.S. society, men are seen to be aggressive, while women are seen to be passive. Therefore, when IPV occurs in gay male relationships it is dismissed as fighting, which is assumed to be an inherently masculine trait. One study of IPV among gay men found that nearly 39.2% reported some form of IPV in a five-year span (Greenwood et al., 2002). Survivors of IPV who identify as men suffer a double dismissal, as the man who “loses” a fight is seen to be weak and therefore his abuser is held to a higher regard, expressing his virility by attacking his partner.

On the other hand, being seen largely as passive, the myth continues that women cannot be aggressors or can only be the aggressor when provoked. Ergo, their partner must have in some way been at fault because a woman would never be violent towards her partner, otherwise. Based on these myths, the attacker is seen to be bigger, stronger, butch, or more masculine than the smaller, weaker, femme, or feminine survivor (Anderson, 2005). However, such distinctions in people and their conformity to gender and IPV stereotypes are especially fluid within the LGBTQIA* community. This creates perhaps the greatest barrier to accessing resources for people experiencing IPV because

it puts the truth of their individual experiences in direct conflict with the assumed norms that others have regarding what IPV looks like, who can be a perpetrator, and who can be a survivor.

Each of these myths, no matter how they are applied to a person or situation, form a strong foundation upon which insurmountable barriers are built. What is not a myth is the person's truth and lived experience, which are the only things that matter in a situation of IPV.

Barriers

The aforementioned myths, along with systemic oppression, create many barriers, blocking survivors' access to resources and support services. Often, survivors worry they are betraying the LGBTQIA* community through contradicting the assumption of a safe family structure, free of violence. Additionally, LGBTQIA* communities are typically small, which isolates survivors, who may share friend circles with their abuser. Guilt and self-blame lead survivors to questioning their identities and self-doubt about the abuse.

The threat of being outed to friends, family, coworkers, and other members of the survivors community can be overwhelming and lead to an even more unsafe environment (Freedner et. al., 2002). A batterer may engage in heterosexist manipulation, threatening to out a survivor's sexual orientation or gender identity to friends, family, coworkers, or a landlord (Ard & Makadon, 2011). In addition to this, existing services may require individuals to expose their sexual orientation identities against their will.

The fear of not being believed by police, friends, and families runs deep in LGBTQIA* communities, as they are often questioned and widely misunderstood and misrepresented due to scarce or nonexistent resources that support them or discuss these barriers (Goodmark, 2013).This fear also manifests through a worry that a friend or mutual friend will want to choose sides in the conflict. LGBTQIA* people often feel victimized multiple times: initially by their partners, by services/institutions that are supposed to be there to help, and by the lack of positive response in their communities.

Many of the existing services for survivors of intimate partner violence are not inclusive of LGBTQIA* people. Furthermore, a batterer may pose as a victim in order to gain entrance into a shelter or to their victim residing there. When reporting abuse, survivors face the risk of losing their children to third parties, a reality which is greater for LGBTQIA* couples when domestic violence is involved.

Additionally, many LGBTQIA* people experience discrimination due to sexist, heterosexist, homophobic, biphobic, transphobic, acephobic, polyphobic, and racist biases, among others (McDonald, 2012; Serano, 2007). These are areas that require deeper research and attention, as they pose additional barriers for these marginalized communities. However, in order to do justice to the lived experiences of countless survivors we believe that these areas require more attention than we can offer in this space.

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Authentic Leadership: An Engaged Discussion on LGBTQ Work as Culturally Relevant

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Book Summary

Authentic Leadership: An Engaged Discussion on LGBTQ Work as Culturally Relevant provides new insights about the roles in which LGBTQ educators contribute in society and on their campuses in various roles. The literature is divided into two sections. Section one includes three chapters from student affairs, higher education administrators, faculty and community activists. The chapters share personal narratives describing the life experiences of those who are often marginalized within academia. Each chapter provides personal and professional aspects of the authors' lives. Section two includes four chapters which share voices of people whom are normally excluded from research. Each author's identity is shared as an aspect of their research.

The authors present a broad range of issues, challenges and concerns, supported by prior literature, organized around several broad topical areas and intended to fill the gaps in our knowledge about how LGBTQ educational leadership is engaged across multiple types of institutions and how the experiences affect the quality of life for LGBTQ individuals throughout the academic community. The book includes a diversity of topics addressing LGBTQ educators. Joshua Moon Johnson discusses "Identity and fluidity: Processing sexuality, race and religion." Shae Miller discusses "Transcending Boundaries and Transforming Knowledge: Transgender leadership as a college student, mentor and educator." Raja Bhattar discusses "Crossroads and Complexities: Experiences of a Queer, Desi, Hindu Man in Student Affairs." Toni Tollerud shares her research discussing "The Knowledgeable Counselor: Helping youth to deal with LGBTQ issues." Daryl Holloman and Stanley Ellis share their research discussing "Faculty Speak: The influence of sexual orientation and spirituality on the social integration of Black scholars." Additionally, the editors, Lemuel Watson and Joshua Moon Johnson conclude the book by discussing the implications of this work and the applications institutions of higher education should implement to ensure their LGBTQ educators are being supported.

LGBTQ educators still feel shut out, marginalized, and polarized within the education system. There are many times they are the only "ones" in the room or at the table for discussion; moreover, those from multiple marginalized populations are faced with oppression from multiple communities. Authentic Leadership is meant to expand a cursory of topics in order to shed light on the diversity of issues and depth that LGBTQ administrators and faculty members face on a daily basis. Understanding the LGBTQ experience from a holistic viewpoint is essential to our society. Academic and student affairs administrators are vital roles of campus communities, and they serve as mentors to the diversity of students present on campus; however, little is known about the marginality and oppression these administrators face based on their lived experiences as gender and sexual minorities. In order for students to have well-balanced mentors, campuses must ensure that faculty and administrators' identities are supported and understood.

The LGBTQ experience is a unique story that has been told in various unique ways by interesting and unique people. However, the stories that are not told are from the scholar or practitioner viewpoint and such perspectives should be represented in the leadership literature. The

perceptions of their roles are so narrowly defined and need to be challenged and broaden. However,

Authentic Leadership is not just about LGBTQ experiences, it is also about the need to view their experiences through the socio-cultural and socio-political nexus of sexuality, gender identities, gender expression, responsibility, and leadership.

As some faculty and administrators choose to identify as transgender and genderqueer they risk not only rejection from their families, friends, and communities, but also severe social and professional challenges within the work place. The social "rules" these individuals break can have extremely negative consequences on a college campus. Additionally, there are challenges related to physical navigation of a campus, such as using restrooms and locker rooms; and challenges related to policies, such as medical benefits and legally changing names. The purpose of Authentic Leadership is to bring an open and honest discussion about the many faces of LGBTQ educators. Through this dialogue, the reader might reflect on the vast array of diversity that exists within the gender identities, sexual identities, spiritual identities, and professional identities of LGBTQ faculty and administrators.

About the Editors

Lemuel W. Watson

Dr. Lemuel W. Watson is currently Professor and Dean at the University of South Carolina. He completed his graduate work at Indiana University in Bloomington, Indiana. His career spans across various divisions in higher education, faculty, and administration, and he has numerous experiences in all types of institutions including two year colleges and four year institutions, public and private. His research interests include examining educational organizations and how their structures, practices, leaders, and policies affect learning, development, and outcomes of individuals and communities, especially historically underrepresented groups. He is a Fulbright Scholar and has written articles, books, and served as editor for several volumes related to educational leadership and administration, human development and higher education.

Lemuel W. Watson has a commitment to leave the world better than how he has found it. He has a genuine love for those he meets and is curious to get to know them in a real way. His South Carolina roots are deep and wide, yet he has a passionate love for the Midwest and other parts of the world that has helped shape his perspective on life. He moves about the world as an educator, advocate, and collaborator with a variety of individuals, groups, and professionals. He believes there is no separating life into compartments but that each day and experience helps one to become fully awake.

Joshua Moon Johnson

Dr. Joshua Moon Johnson is an educator, author, editor, and activist focused on social justice in education. He began to pay attention to identity as a young multiracial, queer, non-gender-conforming boy growing up in Mississippi. Joshua is currently the Director of the Resource Center for Sexual & Gender Diversity/Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Services and the Non-traditional Student Resource Center at the University of California, Santa Barbara.

Joshua has published two book and numerous articles related to religion and sexuality, multiracial student support, and queer Asian Pacific Islander men as leaders in higher education. Joshua's first book, Beyond Surviving: From Religious Oppression to Queer Activism was a recent #1 Bestseller on Amazon.com, and he recently published a co-edited volume about LGBTQ leaders in higher education titled Authentic Leadership: An Engaged Discussion of LGBTQ Work as Culturally Relevant. Joshua is a series editor with Information Age Publishing for Contemporary Perspectives on LGBTQ Advocacy in Societies. Joshua serves as the National Association of Student Personnel Administrators (NASPA) co-chair for the MultiRacial Knowledge Community and

previously served as the Asian Pacific Islander KC representative for Regions IV E and Regions VI SoCal.

Joshua is an instructor of Popular Culture and Identity and Communications at Brooks Institute of Art in Santa Barbara, California. Joshua is an alumnus of the Social Justice Training Institute and served as a core group facilitator at the Student Social Justice Training Institute. Joshua has presented regionally, nationally, and internationally on topics such as media and marginality, queer people of color, multiracial student identity, intersections of religion and sexuality, and facilitating dialogues on diversity

Book Excerpts

"I live at the cross-roads of my identities. As a South Asian/Desi, Queer man from a working class, orthodox Hindu-Brahmin family and being the first in my family to complete undergraduate and graduate degrees, I often find myself in spaces where I do not quite fit in." - Raja Bhattar, Director, UCLA LGBT Resource Center

"Including the topics of leadership, LGBT issues, spirituality and race in one book is a miracle into itself." - Lemuel W. Watson, Dean, University of South Carolina College of Education

"My authority has been challenged in the classroom; as a queer/gender queer person I chose not to heed warnings that I should not come out to my classes" - Shae Milller, PhD student and instructor, University of California Santa Barbara

"Being non-heterosexual in student affairs can leave administrators feeling marginalized and lonely despite the inclusive mission statements, diversity philosophies, ally trainings, and mottos they espouse." - Joshua Moon Johnson, Director, UCSB LGBT Services

"The first thing I remember missing when I arrived on campus was the presence of other gender queer or transgender people." - Shae Miller, PhD student and instructor, University of California Santa Barbara

"Many educators who serve within social justice roles put their own well-being aside in order to best serve students. Educators can only withstand a certain level of institutional, cultural, and individual oppression before they face burn-out and lose hope." - Joshua Moon Johnson, Director, UCSB LGBT Services