University of Alberta

Sex, Sexual, and Gender Differences in Canadian K-12 Schools: Theoretical and Empirical Perspectives on Identity, Policy, and Practice

by

Kristopher Wells

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

in

Theoretical, Cultural, and International Studies in Education

Department of Educational Policy Studies

© Kristopher Wells

Spring 2011
Edmonton, Alberta

Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to the generations of sexual minority and gender variant educators and students who have fought so tirelessly in the pursuit of freedom, democracy, and social justice for all. Your stories of hope, struggles for justice, and surivial in the face of heteronormativity demonstrate how the courage of love can shatter any closet door. Not only have you given us hope for the future, but you also have taught us how to love ourselves.

Abstract

The research in this dissertation develops a multiperspective theoretical framework, which I describe as *queer criticality*, to guide the examination of discursive practices, educational policies, and public discourses that undergird heteronormativity and disproportionately impact the personal safety and professional wellbeing of sexual minority and gender variant (SMGV) teachers and students in Canadian K-12 schools. Queer criticality, as a theoretical construct, seeks to bring together and investigate aspects of critical theory, critical pedagogy, poststructuralism, and queer theory. My aim is not to attempt to reconcile these competing theories to produce a grand narrative or proscriptive way of theorizing; rather, I investigate the productive tensions that a notion of queer criticality can prompt for self-reflexive researchers when these theoretical perspectives are placed in dynamic relationship with one another. Accordingly, this collection of interwoven essays examine critically how research has positioned SMGV youth as both victims and, more recently, resilient survivors who experience a daily onslaught of homophobic, transphobic, and heterosexist violence in their schools, classrooms, and communities; it also explores interpretative frameworks and mobilization strategies used to politicize or privatize SMGV identities and concerns through educational policy and practice; and it utilizes empirical research to interrogate the lived effects of these heteronormative discourses and discursive practices on sexual minority teachers working for inclusive educational and social change; and transsexual teachers searching for a valued space and place for recognition of their personal and professional identities in their public schools. Ultimately, through these connected essays, this poststructural assemblage seeks to open up spaces for difference to be exposed and interrogated within

K-12 public schools. It also works to help provide discursive materiality to sexual minority and gender variant identities by demonstrating how heteronormalizing discourses impact and shape the lived experiences of all teachers and students in Canadian schools. Ultimately, this research asks whose lives are deemed intelligible and, thus, liveable in our public schools.

Table of Contents

Introductory Chapter
Sex, Sexual, and Gender Differences in Canadian K-12 Schools:
Theoretical and Empirical Perspectives on Identity, Policy, and Practice

Within concerns about human and civil rights and social justice for Canada's

minority groups, sex, sexual, and gender differences have become a complex, significant

issue for many citizens. In particular, educational stakeholders and policy communities

are seeking ways to ensure the development of safe, caring, inclusive, and welcoming

learning and working environments for sexual minority and gender variant students and

teachers (Grace & Wells, 2004, 2005, 2009). Contemporary educational research clearly

demonstrates that heterosexism, homophobia, and transphobia, in conjunction with other

forms of discrimination and assaults on human dignity and being in the world, function to

reinforce and reproduce specific forms of identity, power, and privilege that define and

regulate the heteronormative status quo in schools (DePalma & Atkinson, 2009; Epstein

& Johnson, 1998; Friend, 1998; Grace & Wells, 2005, 2007, 2009; Kusmashiro, 2001;

Sears, 2005). In the Canadian K-12 educational system, this regulatory discourse

reinforces discrimination and tolerated hatred of teachers and students who self-identify

as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ), or as sexual minority and

gender variant (SMGV), which are umbrella categories for these constellations of

identities (Grace & Wells, 2001 & 2006; McNinch & Cronin, 2004; Wells, 2008a). In

this exclusionary and dangerous school milieu, the personal safety and emotional

wellbeing of sexual minority and gender variant teachers and students are threatened.

Research Questions

The research in this dissertation develops a multiperspective theoretical framework, which I describe as *queer criticality*, to guide the examination of discursive practices, educational policies, and public discourses that impact the personal safety of SMGV students and teachers who, as workers, also have to worry about professional security in Canadian K-12 schools. In pursuit of this research I focus on three central, yet interrelated questions:

1. What discourses and (re)presentations of SMGV role models, images, identities, and affirming messages are evident or absent in school curricula, policy, pedagogy, and practices in Canadian K-12 educational contexts?

2. How are heterosexism, homophobia, transphobia, and harassment, in intersections with racism, ethnocentrism, sexism, and other abuses of power, manifested, (re)produced, and resisted in relation to the (mis)treatment of sex, sexual, and gender differences?

3. What are some transformative, possible directions for the development of educational theory and practice that would connect existing critical, queer, and postfoundational research on sexual orientation and gender identity to the discourses of schooling?

Situating the Researcher

As a once closeted gay male teacher who worked for five years in the public-school system in Alberta, I have personally come to understand the tremendous impact that exclusionary policies and practices have on the personal welfare and professional work of SMGV educators. As Frank (1996) indicates, many SMGV teachers often feel they have to "work to hide and hide to work" simply to survive in their school and community settings (p. 1). These feelings of marginalization and isolation became so intense that I left teaching in 1999 (Wells, 2003a, 2006, & 2007a). After a year of working with youth in the local LGBTQ community, I finally began to feel like I could be a proud and authentic teacher. Working with these youth prompted me to pursue graduate studies, with a focus on helping educators and policymakers to create safe, caring, and inclusive schools, especially for marginalized SMGV and questioning youth.

My master's thesis entitled *Understanding Difference Differently: Sex-and-Gender Outlaws in Alberta Schools* explored my personal autoethnography: the intersection of the personal and professional me in the context of school and community cultures. It employed a polyphonic research design that included open-ended interviews, narrative inquiry techniques, and visual (photographic) research strategies (Wells, 2003b). This research examined how formal secondary and postsecondary educational environments in Alberta socially, culturally, politically, and pedagogically construct (and thus marginalize) sexual minority youth as abnormal or deviant. My master's research also investigated how sexual minority students create subaltern social and cultural spaces and languages of resistance to challenge their experiences of homophobia, transphobia, and heterosexism in schools.

My current doctoral research builds upon findings documented in my master's thesis. In pursuing doctoral studies, I have worked with Dr. André P. Grace, my supervisor, on his SSHRC-funded national research study that explored welfare-and-work issues of everyday importance to Canadian LGBTQ K-12 educators. Under his guidance, my dissertation data were collected as a subset of this larger research project. Collectively, we developed and conducted a national investigation of educational polices and practices that address issues of SMGV diversity, equity, and human and civil rights with the goal of impacting the safety and security of SMGV teachers, students, and straight allies in Canadian schools. To identify how effectively policy translates into everyday practice, we interviewed 53 SMGV and allied educators from each province and territory in Canada. Interviews with 7 of these educators comprise the empirical data used in this dissertation research.

Queer Criticality: Developing a Multiperspective Theoretical Framework

Throughout my research investigation, I have been interested in the processes of subjectification and how SMGV teachers and students make meaning and sense of, become complicit with, or resist identity formations, social categories, and normalizing practices found within their formal and non-formal educational environments. This line of inquiry is coupled with the poststructural and queer belief that social identities are never totalizing, immutable, or fixed. Rather, multiple, changeable, and textured identities can be found, for example, within the subject positions of teachers and students who occupy spaces across the complex array of sex, sexual, and gender differences. As a corollary, because of the intricacies of this array, there can never be total inter-group coherence or fixity in categories. By focusing on processes of subjectification that

position SMGV and allied teachers and students in schools, heteronormative discourses – which undergird unitary identity categories – can be challenged and queerly and critically explored. Resistance strategies to the regimes of the "normal" can also be advocated and nurtured, and agency can be revealed and re-deployed in an effort to take back and respect historically defiled SMGV identities and challenge the intricate workings of power, privilege, and oppression that operate within educational and other social and cultural environments.

To recognize and mediate the complex fluidity of subjectivities impacting identity formation as a social and political project, multiperspective theorizing becomes central in my research methodology. This multifaceted methodology focuses on historicity, relationality, and performativity, rather than on fixity, closure, or the boundedness in heteronormative terms that mark traditional forms of ethnographic and sociological research on sex, sexual, and gender differences. The queer criticality that I develop and explore as a theoretical construct seeks to bring together and investigate aspects of critical theory, critical pedagogy, poststructuralism, and queer theory. My aim is not to attempt to reconcile these competing theories to produce a grand narrative or proscriptive way of theorizing; rather, I intend to investigate the productive tensions that a notion of queer criticality can prompt for self-reflexive researchers when these theoretical perspectives are placed in dynamic relationship with one another (St. Pierre & Pillow, 2000). Judith Halberstam (1998) describes this queered approach to theorizing research practice as a "scavenger methodology" (p. 9) that refuses traditional loyalty to disciplinary methods (Plummer, 2005).

Why Queer Criticality?

Contemporary research tends not to focus on what queer theory is, but rather on what it can do (Jagose, 1996; Hall, 2003; Sullivan, 2003). In this sense, queer theory is utilized as an analytic lens to examine how dominant discourses and discursive practices function in particular ways to define regimes of the "normal," consequently reducing nonconforming sex, sexual, and gender differences to the realm of the abnormal. From this perspective, Filax, Sumara, Davis, and Shogan (2005) suggest that queer theory shares a commitment "to revealing the usually-not-perceived relationships between experiences of human sociality and culture, and expressions and experiences of sexuality" (p. 84). In general, these researchers maintain that queer theory is guided by four overlapping principles: (1) destabilizing identity categories, (2) problematizing heteronormativity, (3) opening up possibilities of ways of living and thinking differently, and (4) embracing theoretical postfoundational commitments drawn from Foucauldian discourse analysis, poststructural deconstruction, and psychoanalysis.

Within this broader understanding of queer theory that takes queer beyond simply being some kind of identity marker, I employ queer as a positionality or standpoint that can be taken up by anyone who identifies as non-normative. For example, queer perspectives can be used by anyone who wishes to interrogate the tangled web of power found within heteronormative discourse. Warner (2005) describes how heteronormative culture is "a constellation of practices that everywhere disperses heterosexual privilege as a tacit but central organizing index of social membership…. Heterosexual culture cannot recognize, validate, sustain, incorporate, or remember much of what people know and experience about the cruelty of normal culture even to people who identify with it" (p.

195). Therefore the workings of this heteronormative culture must be interrogated critically in an effort to realize new possibilities for living outside the heterosexual matrix that undergirds social relations and the production of regulatory power and knowledge.

When queer is used solely as an identity category to name sex, sexual, and gender differences, it loses much of its explanatory power and risks becoming a marker of perceived abnormality for regulatory heteronormative regimes that seek to delimit and police boundaries and membership. As Filax and her colleagues (2005) suggest, "Because queer theory is primarily interested in how particular orderings of sexuality and gendering have been given primacy over others, the questions that guide research focus both on the constructions of and the experience of personal and collective identities" (p. 84). Accordingly, queer, as a theoretical orientation, is a deconstructive practice that is iterative and recursive. It is about (de)construction of identities as possibly reductionistic social categories rather than fixing identity formations. Queer theory is employed to help reveal a new horizon of possibility to make lives visible and livable. As such, "queer defines a strategy, an attitude… [and] a radical questioning of social and cultural norms, notions of gender, reproductive sexuality, and the family," rather than only being understood as a label for an outsider identity (Smith as cited in Sullivan, 2003, p. 201).

One important focus of my research is to problematize heterosexuality as the primary set of relations for understanding the complex matrix that sex, sexuality, and gender plays within public schooling. Accordingly, this research project attempts to bring queer perspectives to bear on how SMGV youth have become constructed as both victims and resilient survivors who transgress heteronormativity; the privatization of queer identity within educational policy and practice; the experiences of sexual minority

teachers seeking to become change agents for queer inclusion in their schools; and the lived experiences of transsexual teachers who are searching for personhood and public recognition in their school environments.

By interrogating these topics and issues, this research works to reveal the ruptures and discontinuities produced by dominant yet limiting heterosexualizing discourses in education. It will be conducted within a politics of hope that brings critical theory and critical pedagogy into a dynamic intersection with queer theory in order to create possibilities for a more just, ethical, and inclusive educational practice. Ultimately then, this research focuses on queer critical resistance to the regimes of what is perceived and categorized as "normal." I utilize multiperspective theorizing to juxtapose aspects of critical theory and queer theory to help me explore the pedagogical silences and educational absences that have rendered SMGV persons invisible and unintelligible in K-12 educational contexts. To counter this history of exclusion, I explore critically queer strategies of subversion, performativity, and resistance to help make SMGV lives not only visible, but also livable in the K-12 school context. The ultimate goal of this queer criticality is to challenge the compulsory heterosexuality embedded in mainstream understandings of schooling in an effort to imagine different ways of being, acting, and becoming as sexual and gendered subjects and citizens.

The questions and tensions that I am interested in exploring comprise an investigation into how we can move beyond critical pedagogy's stance on identity-based politics to explore queer theory's call to recognize and accommodate our fluid, fractured, and multiple selves. For example, how might notions of queer criticality challenge public schooling to move beyond the mere tolerance of SMGV student and teacher identities

and their presence in heteronormalized school culture? Where are the potential spaces in educational policymaking in which critically queer analysis and work can be done? As DePalma and Atkinson (2009) posit, how do we work within heteronormative school environments to raise new questions filled with ambiguity and uncertainty when traditionally "questions are usually raised only to be resolved as efficiently as possible" (p. 15)?

To explore these complex questions, I strive to theorize queer criticality because both queer theory and critical theory have measured resistance and transformation in incremental ways to expose social injustice and reveal hegemonic discourses, subjectivities, and power relationships that may not have been previously considered and interrogated, especially within formal educational and other institutional environments. Sullivan (2003) defines queer "as a radical potentiality that is sometimes realized and sometimes not" (p. 201). This radical potentiality also marks critical theory (Grace, 2007a). From this parallel, the radical potential of queer criticality is found in engagement with the structures, processes, values, and beliefs that are "inextricably bound up with heteronormativity" (Sullivan, 2003, p. 202).

Queer theory informs queer criticality in diverse ways. It helps us interrogate how particular experiences and understandings of subjectivity with regard to sexuality and gender are deemed "normal." Engaging with queer theory involves a critical exploration of the ways in which meaning, identity, and intelligibility are (re)produced. In this multifaceted exploration, queer theory has engaged textual analysis, cultural studies, audience reception theories, performativity, and political activism as its objects of inquiry (Sullivan, 2003). In his critique of this research, Green (2002) suggests that much of

queer theory has constructed "an undersocialized 'queer' subject with little connection to the empirical world and the sociohistorical forces that shape sexual practice and identity" (p. 522). By rejecting identity categories, Green posits that queer theory has obscured the ways in which sexual identities are produced, regulated, and embodied within social institutions. He maintains that the anti-identity politics of queer theory has limited any historical and empirically grounded research with emancipatory intents. Ultimately, as he sees it, queer theory's preoccupation with radical deconstruction and radical subversion has failed to focus adequately on how the social produces and shapes the sexual.

Plummer (2005) also offers a sharp rebuke to queer theory when he elucidates several major controversies that have plagued it ever since its rockstar-like emergence onto the theoretical scene in academe. These critiques are identified as:

1. Queer theory's dilemma: This dilemma suggests that there is an emergent and critical need for a unitary public identity around which activism can be developed versus the belief that essentialized identities represent the grounds for the workings of power, oppression, and normalization.

2. Erasure of lesbian and gay politics: Queer theory's focus on radical subjectivity ignores lesbian and gay histories and the hard won legal and legislative rights gained in the post-Stonewall era. These victories include human rights protection, legalization of same-sex marriage (in Canada), adoption rights, and HIV/AIDS activism that emerged out of gay and lesbian liberation movements.

3. Lesbian invisibility: Queer theory's erasure of identity constructions can serve to re-inscribe patriarchy by reinforcing (both in subtle and dominant

forms) male power and privilege. In turn, this can devalue the gains made by radical lesbianism within feminism's calls for specificity in actions and making the personal political. For example, with the loss of specific identity categories (e.g., women-loving-women) it becomes difficult, if not impossible, to foreground traditional forms of women's subordination to men. Some other recent battles over identity politics have occurred when some feminist communities have targeted transsexual women as gender imposters and labeled them as a threat to feminism based on claims of biological essentialism. I discuss these debates further in the fourth essay in this dissertation.

4. Academic elitism: Queer theory has created an almost impenetrable lexicon that has moved away from early feminist gains that were premised in accessible writing, consciousness-raising, and community building. Rather than circulating in the community as an impetus for action, queer theory, through its linguistic turn, has isolated itself in the ivory tower of the academy and, for many, has lost its activist roots and sense of insurgency.

5. Over-emphasis on textual and linguistic representation: Queer theory itself has become a tool of domination through its impenetrable language and narcissistic preoccupation with textual representation. As Plummer (2005) states, "[M]any gays, lesbians, and feminists themselves see no advance at all in queer theory that, after all, would simply "deconstruct" them, along with all their political gains, out of existence" (p. 369).

Intersecting queer theory with critical theory and its foci on historical and political contexts and abetting social action offers possibilities for addressing these critiques of queer theory. Indeed, this is what queer criticality aims to do as a more encompassing theory to address sex, sexual, and gender differences in education and culture. Ultimately, the goal of queer criticality is to mediate queer theory's intellectual radicalism in an intersection where it can engage the more grassroots radicalism grounded in a counterpublic melding of the humanistic and the political that undergirds critical theory and its educational expression: critical pedagogy. As Plummer (2005) posits, "'Queer' would seem to be antihumanist, to view the world of normalization and normality as its enemy, and to refuse to be sucked into conventions and orthodoxy…. It transgresses and subverts" (p. 359). However, a queer critical approach to research can parallel a critical humanist approach to social research in that both call for an engagement with disenfranchised populations through the lenses of history, politics, and culture that flow through individuals and refract back in the discourses and discursive practices that give rise to particular subject positions and ideologies.

Like queer theory, critical theory expressed as critical humanism is concerned with experience, subjectivity, and creativity. In both cases, analysis starts with lived experience and how individuals (re)act within their social worlds (Plummer, 2005). Both discourses place political and ethical concerns at the forefront of research agendas. Both queer and critical research paradigms are concerned with human dignity, well-being, and the struggle against oppression. What queer research needs in order to guide and enable social action is immersion in critical concerns with the political ideals of modernity,

namely democracy, freedom, ethics, and social justice, as they are linked to grassroots advocacy and social action (Grace, 2007a).

From this perspective, emancipatory intentions are placed at the centre of research endeavors for critical scholars. Critical researchers are concerned with democratizing values to reduce human suffering; promoting an ethics of caring and compassion; articulating a politics of recognition and respect; and emphasizing the importance of trust (Kincheloe & McLaren, 2005; Plummer 2005). Kincheloe and McLaren articulate how critical research, at its core, is focused on the empowerment of individuals to confront injustice. This form of research and teaching (as demonstrated through critical pedagogy) is not only transformative in its intent, but it also challenges claims to neutrality and positivist objectivity. Weis and Fine (2004) suggest that critical social research shares "a commitment to framing and/or reframing research questions of theory, policy, and politics from within sites of contestation" (p. xx). These critical perspectives align neatly with queer theory's transgressive and emancipatory goals and are important dimensions in informing queer criticality.

The tension in both the realities of the present and the hope for the future is central to the futurist project of critical theory (Britzman & Dippo, 2003). For critical pedagogues such as Freire (1998), critical theory is not an *a priori* discourse; it is a dialectical approach to understanding a world fraught with tensions. Thus it is a questioning of social reality, a search for contradictions and, at its most basic level, an ethical imperative for the creation of a more just world (Freire, 1998; Roberts, 2003). Thus there is much that critical theory can offer to the development of queer criticality that focuses on both social justice and inclusive and ethical cultural practices for SMGV

people in education and communities. A queer critical formation requires a theoretical openness that Giroux (2003) insists must guide developments in critical theory itself. He dismisses the "arrogance of theoretical certainty" and suggests that a relevant and viable critical theory should recognize its "own indeterminate and partial character, particularly since it is constantly being shaped by the particular contexts in which it is taken up" (p. 155). Giroux's view of emerging critical theory parallels a postfoundational view of queer theory as unfixed and uncertain.

In their historical review of critical theory, Kincheloe and McLaren (2005) remind us that, over the past twenty-years, critical theory has been significantly critiqued and redeployed by a series of post-discourses (e.g., feminisms, poststructuralism, postcolonialism, and more recently posthumanism). These post-discourses have challenged traditional beliefs in individual agency beyond an analysis of class and social and historical forces. Likewise, Peters, Olssen, and Lankshear (2003), in their discussion of the future of critical theory, call for critical scholars to engage in "a *practice* which resists all unitary thought to celebrate multiple potentialities" (p. 14, original emphasis). As these scholars suggest, in contemporary times when critical theory and praxis are waning and under considerable attack from rightist and neoliberal agendas, new critical methodologies are needed to bring back the urgency and insurgency of critical research in order to analyze the formation of individual identities, democratic processes, and ultimately, to radicalize and bring forth calls for social, global, and economic justice. My work to develop queer criticality as a theoretical framework represents a move in this direction as it seeks to explore the dynamic tension between the historical pursuit of social justice as a political ideal of modernity and the very inchoateness of queer theory

and its perceived disconnection from social action. Still there is another perception that provides a basis for queer theory informing resistance and action in education: Formal educational environments have viewed queer theory as a threat to the destabilization of heteronormativity and the underpinnings of power, privilege, and patriarchy that operate to serve and protect the status quo of schooling. As DePalma and Atkinson (2009) insist, our goal as critical educators should be "to reflect on the fundamental tension between the power of destabilization offered by queer theory and the emancipatory promise of strategic identity-based critical pedagogy" (p. x).

Radical Potentiality: Juxtaposing Queer and Critical Perspectives

While critical theory and critical pedagogy have been seen to rely on essentialist notions of the self and fixed categories of social identity, I juxtapose queer and postfoundational perspectives to develop a multiperspective way of theorizing. Queer criticality resists and refuses essentialism, yet still recognizes the ways in which racism, ethnocentrism, sexism, heterosexism, classism, and other forms of oppression become very real within educational and other social institutions. These oppressions have serious consequences on an individual's sense of belonging, safety, and agency in the world. They are linked to the construction of social identities as well as to political, moral, and social ways of organizing the world (Weis & Fine, 2004). In this light, Foucault (1978) would require us to ask: How can we refuse certain identities when others attempt to keep us in our place? From the perspective of SMGV people and how we are positioned in the world, this requires researchers to interrogate the ways in which processes of perceived normalization are insidious. This analysis begins with questioning and problematizing

what identities used to name SMGV people mean. This questioning is part of a call to become awake and draw attention to the hegemonic (our familiarity with what is known) and to our fear of what we refuse to know.

This type of resistance to regimes of the normal can have multiple meanings. For example, Hoy (2004) identifies how resistance is most often taken up in critical theory as "emancipatory resistance to domination" (p. 2). However, from a poststructural perspective that is informative to queer theory, resistance can also be analyzed as "domination's resistance to emancipatory efforts" (p. 2). As Hoy posits, "Critique is what makes it possible to distinguish emancipatory resistance from resistance that has been co-opted by the oppressive forces" (p. 2). This understanding has led to the development of the critical poststructural concept of genealogy, which concerns itself with "identify[ing] and analyz[ing] the background practices that lead to [oppressive conditions]" (p. 2). Genealogy presents a deep critical questioning of resistance to power and domination as complex and interwoven processes. For Hoy, resistance "is contextually bound to the social and psychological structures that are being resisted" (p. 3). These structures of thought undergird the processes of intelligibility that allow us to make sense of our actions, which can represent either conformity or resistance to dominant power.

Hoy's (2004) concept of critical resistance to dominant power is informative to the development of queer criticality. For Hoy, critical resistance "involves using the very mechanisms of power to destabilize and subvert domination" (p. 85). Such resistance has found expression in the emergence of queer theory through the development of new methods of analysis and new ways of living the radical and the sexual that subvert and destabilize the power relationships that undergird normativity. These strategies of

resistance are often understood as attempts to "turn the system against itself" (Hoy, 2004, p. 85); in other words, to twist or to take a "queered" position. For example, the creation of homosexuality as a medicalized perversion was used to subjugate a particular class of persons – namely homosexuals (Foucault, 1978; Grace, 2008). However, with newfound visibility, the term "homosexual" also became a site of resistance that prompted a community to coalesce around this naming. This emergence prompted the development of a subaltern identity and counter-hegemonic discourse that could now speak its own name and, thus, advocate for its own liberation. Still, Foucault (1978) cautions us that power is amorphous, capillary-like, and as such, can re-generate and re-organize itself in an effort to continue to dominate and subjugate. Therefore, he insists that resistance must be an ongoing project. It must be queered in the sense that it is fluid, constantly shifting its grounds of analysis and its sites of resistance. As Foucault (1978) insists, "There is no single locus of great refusal, soul of revolt, source of all rebellions, or pure law of the revolutionary" (pp. 95-96).

In exploring resistance within a queer critical framework, one must begin by interrogating how subjects come to be dominated through discourses and discursive practices that are steeped in morality, law, religion, medicine, sexuality, culture, and politics. Queer critical resistance seeks not only to provide an alternative identity-based narrative of who we are, but it also encourages us to question how we ought to live and govern our lives. Such resistance, as Hoy (2004) suggests, brings subjects "up against a limit-experience that disrupts their deepest convictions and sense of who they are" (p. 90). The goal is not the certainty of oneself, but the dissolution of or to "go beyond" (p. 91) oneself. This is the goal of queer critical critique: to open up untold possibilities and a

sense of hope in which "critique is thus a crucial condition of [the practice of] freedom" (p. 92).

Weis and Fine (2004) challenge us to link this critique to making particular commitments embodied in advocacy and action. This call is at the heart of queer criticality that works to counter an exclusive status quo in social arenas like education. Here we need to provide alternatives for being and acting in the world and to create counter-hegemonic possibilities for building a more just world. This is what it means to link critique to social action for cultural transformation (Allman, 2001). A queer criticality searches for the emancipatory potential grounded within concrete social situations by, for example, interrogating the lived experiences of students and teachers in schools (Hoy, 2004). This steeps resistance in critique that energizes and enhances possibilities for engagement, thus locating counteraction as a proactive and thoughtful process. In an increasingly complex and interdependent world, the traditional call for "the revolution" has shifted ground to demands for politically informed and strategic resistance to contest the ways in which institutions, individuals, and ideologies work to shape consciousness, performativity, and subjectivity. For Hoy (2004), resistance becomes "both an activity and attitude. It is the activity of refusal. It is also an attitude that refuses to give in to resignation" (p. 9). From this critical poststructural perspective, or what Hoy (2004) identifies as "post-critique," it is not necessary to know all of the potential outcomes of resistance in advance; rather, change agents "will find what is possible by seeing what their resistance opens up" (p. 11). This is not to say that these agents should have a laissez-faire attitude; rather, they should engage in critical assessment to see what questions may be asked and what actions may be taken. This

process involves a combination of deconstruction and genealogy as methods that are necessary to develop critical forms of resistance that attend to history and politics.

Queer theory shares these commitments with critical social analysis. As Gamson (2000) suggests, the emergence of queer theory has presented key challenges that have shifted the terrain of qualitative research. For example, queer theory is not only interested in the lived identities of SMGV people, but it is also committed to interrogating the very structures and strictures, such as the heterosexual/homosexual and male/female binaries, that underpin virtually every aspect of Western society and knowledge production (Sedgwick, 1990). However, with its initial heavy emphasis on discourse analysis, subjectivity, and critique, much of queer theory has focused on literary criticism, textual analysis, and linguistic practices in which the social is collapsed into the literary (Gamson, 2000; Plummer, 2005). In queer theory, "the analyses of discourse [have] overtake[n] the analysis of real world events" (Plummer, as cited in Gamson, 2000, p. 357). This linguistic turn has limited fieldwork and empirical social research in key social and cultural domains like education by its refusal to name a subject that can be researched. For many analysts, this has contributed to a sense of postmodern nihilism. The development of a queer criticality is an effort to counter this nihilism and its attending sense of hopelessness that stalls social action, which could lead to change that makes the world more just and inclusive.

To advance a queer critical project to make the world better, we might use Gamson's (2000) suggestion to focus on the institutional and the discursive as means to bridge both empirical and theoretical work. As Gamson sees it, researchers ought to investigate the "processes by which the experiences of sexual desire are given

institutional, textual, and experiential shape" (p. 360). Rather than choosing between text and experience, discourse and institution, fluidity and solidarity, multiperspective queer criticality would work to explore the productive tensions that can be found when multiple, yet complementary theoretical perspectives are brought together in pursuit of similar questions and investigations. This turn to multiperspective theorizing incorporates critical theory's emphasis on lived experience and queer theory's call for visibility, voice, agency, and the right to self-determination (Hall, 2003). Thus, queer theory as an integral part of multiperspective theorizing casts suspicion on positivist research that has traditionally sought to quantify, pathologize, and essentialize the root causes of non-normative sexualities (Gamson, 2000). Queer theory's skepticism and need for fluidity parallels Kincheloe and McLaren's (2005) description of critical theory as "never static; it is always evolving, changing in light of both new theoretical insights and new problems and social circumstances" (p. 306). Accordingly, critical theorists are always striving to find new ways to understand the human condition and to illuminate the interconnected ways in which power and oppression construct our lived realities. Queer theory shares these commitments by foregrounding gender and sexuality as the analytic lenses of its inquiry. "Critical researchers [and queer researchers] are profoundly concerned with who we are, how we got this way, and where we might go from here" (Kincheloe & McLaren, 2005, p. 309). In investigating these dynamics from queer critical perspectives, we can juxtapose queer theory's desire to keep identity fluid with critical theory's need to define identity in relation to required action by subjecting identity to the partial closure needed to frame action and still defy any fixity in identity that queer theory rejects (Grace, 2008). This juxtaposition enables a longstanding goal of the queer project: to develop broad

alliances that resist the powers of normalization and oppression (Hall, 2003). This desire for forming broad alliances is shared by critical theory, and they have been a key focus of its educational counterpart, critical pedagogy.

In summary, as Plummer (2005) relates, both queer theory and critical theory, as it focuses on humanism, share foci on self-reflexivity and positionality; an understanding of lived experience as a messy, complex, and constantly evolving process; a commitment to politics and ethics; a concern with social constructions and an analysis of power; and an emphasis on problematizing how research is constructed and presented in an effort to represent marginalized groups. For educationalists, this multi-dimensionality is a basis on which to build queer criticality as a multiperspective social theory with implications for culturally transforming the lives and realities of SMGV people both inside and outside of the classroom.

Developing a Multifaceted Research Methodology

With the understanding that lived reality is a socially constructed narrative open to multiple interpretations that cannot lead to universalizing truth, I draw upon aspects of critical and queer theorizing to develop a multifaceted research methodology. This approach seeks to counter the perspective that normative discourses and research practices are politically neutral. In this research inquiry, I locate myself as a queer cultural worker who interrupts the barriers of heteronormativity in queer and critical ways to encourage research participants to speak from their own locations inside and outside of (hetero)normative educational culture. I also locate myself as a researcher who is engaged in a political process in which I am a witness who "speaks beside" the research participants' testimonies as they gain self-awareness and represent their lived experiences

(Sedgwick, 2003). As King (1999) suggests, "queer theory provides an interpretive space for the generation of alternative versions of culture, which emanate from resistance to compulsory heterosexuality" (p. 479). This method of self-reflexive engagement has the potential to increase research participants' own sense of self-determination in their everyday teaching lives. My ultimate goal in this research is to bring theory, research, and practice into an intersection to enable a process of democratization whereby the research participants can become subjects and agents in their own liberation rather than mere objects of research. To help engender this "catalytic validity," my multi-faceted research project is designed to promote open-endedness, deliberative dialogue, and reciprocity, which can lead to transformation (Lather, 1991).

Weis and Fine (2004) suggest that critical researchers need to "situate analyses of inequity, power, privilege, and deprivation within and beneath structural circumstance" (p. xv). They describe this process as "oscillation," which is a "deliberate movement between theory 'in the clouds' and empirical materials 'on the ground'" (p. xvi). This process involves writing among multiple publics to offer "complex, detailed, and sophisticated analyses of a slice of the social matrix, theorizing its relationship to the whole" (p. xvi). Such a critical methodological approach focuses on "jagged lines of power," relationality, and historicity as a "series of fissures and connections" (p. xvi). As Weis and Fine posit, "No one group can be understood as if outside of the relational and structural aspects of identity formation" (p. xvii). Thus, the goal of a queered research methodology is to move from the personal to social awareness, critique, action, and reflexivity.

Similar to this structural analysis, Tuhiwai Smith (1999) calls for the development of a "social justice validity," which ensures that research methods and methodologies are grounded within commitments to social justice. These methodologies might include, among others, narratives of resistance to domination and storytelling that recognize particular and distinct experiences shaping the identities of marginalized individuals and groups. Such methodological approaches are designed to develop an explanatory power to assist marginalized groups to name, reflect, and act so they challenge and work to change oppressive conditions. These methods are based in the tradition of critical praxis and a belief that the roots of theory ought to be grounded in the materiality of everyday conditions.

With these research and political commitments in mind, first I begin my multifaceted inquiry by engaging in document analysis to assess how Canadian educational policymaking at school, district, and provincial/territorial levels addresses or fails to address the needs and interests of SMGV teachers, students, and straight allies in relation to (a) Canadian law and legislation, and (b) the creation of safe, caring, inclusive, and welcoming environments for the teaching-learning interaction. Document analysis serves to trace, over time, the continuities and discontinuities evident within a particular set of discourses. It can reveal how individual lives are shaped through institutional policy and everyday social relations.

Second, I use ethnographic and autobiographical life-narrative techniques (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Grace & Benson, 2000; Grace, Cavanaugh, Mitzi, & Wells, 2007; King, 1999) to investigate how life-narrative research involving SMGV teachers and students can transform educational practice and contribute to theory

building. Narratives can provide a way for marginalized groups to reclaim their voices by writing about their own experiences (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Fontana & Frey, 1998, 2000). Thus the research participants in my study had the choice and opportunity to share narratives that addressed the possibilities, challenges, risks, and resistances they considered when they were determining how visible and vocal they could be in their educational and community environments (for another example of this research collaboration, see Roberts, Allan, & Wells, 2008). These narratives may also discuss how research participants attempted to resist, deconstruct, and redeploy the dominant discourses of heteronormativity. Each research participant's primary interests determined the length and nature of these narratives including creative writing, poetry, and artwork.

As a key component of my research, participants had the opportunity to discuss the themes and images that shaped their narratives, and to question my story and my role in this research process. By using aspects of ethnographic research, my research strives to reclaim the missing voices, histories, and experiences of SMGV teachers as important social, historical, and cultural representations that influence how we come to interpret and understand the landscape comprising teacher identity, educational policy, and inclusive practice.

My third research method involves a series of dialogic open-ended interviews with seven classroom teachers. Employing an open-ended interview process serves to help avoid preconceived categorizations that might hinder the scope and limit the depth of the research inquiry. This structure helps to keep the focus of the interview on the research participant's perspectives and not on the researcher's own potential biases (Fontana & Frey, 2000).

A multi-faceted approach to research moves beyond a mere emphasis on triangulation and the "fixing" or "securing" of research data, and instead focuses on the crystallization of experience. Richardson (1998) suggests that "in post modernist mixed-genre texts, we do not triangulate, we crystallize" (p. 358). Correspondingly, crystallization emphasizes that there are more than three sides to any approach to research data collection and design. The figuration of the crystal and its prisms emphasize refraction, fragmentation, and reflection, which in turn creates different colours, images, patterns, and nuanced textures that often reveal new and unexpected surfaces and directions within the research and teaching landscape. Crystallization emphasizes research and educational techniques that are conceptualized as a journey and process rather than as a fixed methodology designed to arrive at a final end point or set of grand narratives or summary conclusions (Richardson, 1998). The figuration of crystallization holds no one truth, but many partial reflections or glimpses from which we attempt to engage with and make sense of lived experience. Correspondingly, the research journey is more appropriately viewed as a process rather than as a definitive representational practice.

Pitt and Britzman (2003) ask, "Where does one situate the event that is experience? In the past that is narrated or in the presence of interpretation?" (p. 759). Sedgwick (2003) suggests that a researcher's attempts at understanding and (re)presenting experience are "likeliest to occur near the boundary of what a writer can't figure out to say readily, never mind prescribe to others" (p. 2). By working with the research participants to deconstruct their lived experiences, I attempted to work at the margins of this interpretive boundary in an effort to challenge traditional notions of

objective and distanced research. At the boundaries edge, I engaged in a "lusty, rigorous, enabling confusion that deterritorializes ontological reckonings, epistemological conditions and justifications, and methodological striations" (St. Pierre & Pillow, 2000, pp. 1-2). This is a methodological attempt to engage in a more expansive speaking that requires the researcher to take a position "beside" the research participant (Sedgwick, 2003).

Collectively, this research design utilizes a multifaceted approach since different research methods provide a way to corroborate and check research data for plausibility, authenticity, credibility, and relevance (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000, 2005). Moreover, a multi-method approach also helps to make the research more holistic as different research methods provide different kinds of data (Lather & Smithies, 1997; Richardson, 1998; St. Pierre & Pillow, 2000).

Queer Knowledge Building

The interview data collected for my doctoral study is part of a larger SSHRC-funded research project conducted by my doctoral supervisor, Dr. André P. Grace. This study and my doctoral research have both received University Ethics Approval (see Appendices). Together, Dr. Grace and I interviewed 53 sexual minority and gender variant teachers from across Canada in relation to their welfare and work experiences (see Appendices for the research consent form with a list of guiding interview questions). All research participants have signed an ethics consent form agreeing to allow Dr. Grace and me to utilize their interviews as part of Dr. Grace's SSHRC-funded national study and as part of my doctoral dissertation. All participants are over 18 years of age and have voluntarily agreed to participate in this research. Interviews took place between 2005 and

2006 and ranged between 1 and 2 hours in length and were conducted in person or over the telephone.

Research participants were identified through our teaching networks. As well, provincial/territorial teacher associations and federations also sent out our call for research participants to their members, which generated considerable interest in the study and its future findings. Some teachers who were participants in the study also referred research participants to us.

Overall, there was tremendous interest in this research from teachers, ministries of education, and teacher association/federations. We felt it important that all self-identified SMGV teachers who wanted to participate in this study were provided with the opportunity to do so. As a result, the number of research participants was much greater than we had originally intended to interview. It was important to us that no teacher be turned away or denied the opportunity to share his or her experiences with us. For many teachers in the study, this was the first time that they had been provided with the opportunity to share their personal and professional experiences as SMGV educators. The stories shared were variously deeply moving, disconcerting, and immensely hopeful.

Due to the sheer volume and massive amounts of data collected, several graduate students obtained their thesis or dissertation research out of this large-scale study. My doctoral research involves a subset of seven teachers in total. This includes four teachers who worked as activist-educators in their schools for SMGV inclusion, and three transsexual teachers.

All 53 open-ended interviews in the national research study, including the seven participant interviews in my dissertation work, were audio-taped and transcribed. Each of

the research participants was invited to review transcriptions of their interviews in an iterative process in which they could make corrections, deletions, or amendments, as they deemed appropriate. Importantly, this dialogical process of co-constructing meaning involves both the researcher and the research participants in the selection and interpretation of data (Lather & Smithies, 1997). This holistic approach is part of producing my dissertation research as a dialogic text in which the researcher and the research participants build a collective and informative account through open conversations (Fine et al., 2000; Weis & Fine, 2001).

Life history and narrative approaches to research can have a variety of positive benefits to research participants. For the SMGV research participants in this study, these benefits include the ability and desire to share personal and professional stories in a safe and confidential space, the opportunity to feel a part of a larger community of SMGV educators, and the desire to make a significant contribution to research that can translate into positive changes in educational policy and practice in Canadian schools. As King (1999) suggests, in his work with gay teachers, using queer ethnographic research can reveal "new intentions and new understandings by participants, who themselves might be experiencing queer consciousness" (p. 487).

Contributions to the Research Literature

In her 2006 book on youth, sexualities, and secondary schooling, Rasmussen (2006) identifies that

Queer theoretical analysis has the potential for much broader applications within the discipline of education. … The potential value of further analyzing the

intersections between feminist, queer, and poststructural theorizing in studies of

gender and education has yet to be fully explored. (p. 222)

This research intends to investigative this absence by examining how institutionalized

policies and practices impact the recognized space and place of SMGV teachers and

students in Canadian schools. It contributes to the creation of a national database for

developing and instituting non-discrimination policies, resources, and educational

strategies that protect and support SMGV teachers and students (Wells, 2010). It provides

knowledge and insights to assist in the development of curriculum and instruction that

incorporates SMGV perspectives as part of an encompassing inclusionary pedagogy

(Wells, 2003c, 2005, 2006, 2007, & 2008; Wells & Tsutsumi, 2005). In sum, my doctoral

research juxtaposes critical and queer multiperspective theorizing as analytic lenses to

generate guiding themes or virtues for an inclusive public education, future policy

recommendations, and implementation strategies with immediate relevance to help

educators, students, and educational interest groups address important SMGV educational

and cultural issues.

In terms of educational policy, the needs and concerns of SMGV teachers and

students have not been situated as a significant educational policy issue by most

provincial and territorial governments in Canada. While legal progress has been made in

the areas of marriage, adoption, and parenting rights, schools as the last remaining

bastion of conservative exclusion have yet to significantly open their doors to embrace

fully sex, sexual, and gender differences as a source for meaningful teacher and student

dialogue and engagement (Egale Canada, 2009). For example, social and safety needs of

SMGV teachers and students have yet to be situated as a serious concern by educational

policymakers (Grace & Wells, 2009; Schrader & Wells, 2007). Perhaps governmental

reluctance has come from an unwillingness or insecurity to frame SMGV student and

teacher identities as something other than a moral or religious issue. For example,

ensuing public debates surrounding SMGV teachers can quickly lapse into stereotypical

discussions, polarized arguments, and moral panic driven by misunderstanding and

sensationalism in relation to pedophilia, predatory teachers, immorality, religiosity,

tolerance, and denial. These debates often fuel public fear and subsequent dialogue

centered on the vulnerability of children, the conservative role of public education, and

the need to return to character-based education. Clichéd questions that often arise from

these discussions include: Should SMGV teachers be permitted to work in schools? Are

they attempting to recruit youth into a homosexual or deviant lifestyle? These types of

sinister questions position SMGV teachers and students as outlaws and outcasts within

their own schools, as if they were some form of contagion.

As Allan, Atkinson, Brace, DePalma, and Hemingway (2009) suggest, "LGBT

identities are made absent [in public education]…, while being made doubly present by

the fact they are taboo, and are brought into being though the popular discourses of

homophobia" (p. 68). In Canada, school boards and administrators serve as gatekeepers

to queer knowledge and identities in the classroom (Grace, 2007b; Grace & Wells, 2009).

As Epstein and Johnson (1998) posit, the very "desexualisation of teachers as teachers is

attributable to the desexualisation of schooling required (however problematically) by

government and dominant sexual culture" (p. 122). In Alberta, this is most noticeably

apparent with the introduction of Bill 44 and the infamous Section 11, which prohibits

any planned curricular discussion of sexuality, sexual orientation, or religion in the

classroom without the express notification of parents (Legislative Assembly of Alberta, 2009). I discuss the exclusionary effects of this legislation in essay number two in this dissertation.

Public education has been given the mandate to educate all students and to provide all students and teachers with a non-discriminatory learning and work environment. Yet, to date, there has been little public debate or governmental policy created to facilitate this legal obligation. Consequently, discriminatory school practices flourish within Canadian K-12 schools. Increasingly, SMGV teachers and students are challenging these educational policy absences and pedagogical silences that construct their working and learning environments as hostile spaces by turning to the courts to uphold their Charter-mandated right to attend and work in schools where they can feel safe and be protected from prejudice and discrimination (Grace & Wells, 2004, 2005). However, we must do more than simply operate on a policy level or attempt to expose students to a "rainbow" curriculum on diversity. We must also engage in a queer critical praxis, which calls for educators to help students develop critical thinking skills, analytic abilities, and the deconstructive techniques necessary for them to become critical inquirers. Teachers should act as the facilitators of critical conversations in which students learn to "read against the grain" and teachers teach against it (Allan, et al., 2009, p. 72).

Dissertation Format

To address the questions and issues articulated in this introduction, I have developed four interconnected essays informed by my interest in queer theory as a verb, rather than as a descriptive noun. In this sense, I employ queer and critical theories to

develop a queer criticality that examines how dominant discourses and discursive practices function in particular ways that define and delimit the regimes of the "normal" in K-12 Canadian education. This multiperspective theory "invites a rotating position for the writer/researcher… to be at once grounded and analytically oscillating between engagement and distance [and] explicitly committed to deep situatedness" (Weis & Fine, 2004, p. xxi). It demands that the "researcher [be] multiply positioned: grounded, engaged, reflective, well-versed in scholarly discourse, knowledgeable as to external circumstances, and able to move between theory and life 'on the ground'" (p. xxi). Ultimately, my goal is to document the conditions of hope and possibility that exist in our schools and classrooms and to help nurture a fertile ground in which this hope can be sustained and shared for the betterment of public education. This would help public education to reach its potential as just and inclusive education.

My research interests and personal commitments overlap throughout this work, some of which will be more apparent than others. All serve to shape my multiple subjectivities as a queer researcher, cultural worker, gay male teacher, and advocate for SMGV human and civil rights. These investments and interests attest to the political nature of education and include four dominant themes that I will explore through individual, yet connected essays in this research:

(1) Situating and interrogating the factors and discourses that help or hinder SMGV youth move from being considered at-risk to growing into resilience within their school, community, and familial environments.

(2) Exploring interpretive policy frameworks that serve to privatize or politicize SMGV policy claims that make our lives, history, and culture in/visible.

(3) Tracing how sexual minority teachers resist pathologizing identities and (hetero)normative discourses to become activist educators who serve as catalytic agents for social justice in their schools and communities.

(4) Engaging an analytic lens to demonstrate how transsexual teachers can serve to challenge (hetero)normativity, disrupt essentialized biological "truths" about gender, and help, ultimately, to reveal, resignify, and reinscribe bodily being in the classroom to construct new spaces for transgender and transsexual identities to be recognized and valued as part of an inclusive public education.

The first two essays in this series provide a genealogical account of how the subjectivities of SMGV youth and teachers have been discursively produced, classified, and regulated based on their actual or perceived non-normative sexuality locatedness. Pillow (2004) suggests that genealogy is an apt research methodology because it "emphasizes that the formation of polices are about regulating, reproducing, and surveilling certain bodies" (p. 10). These accounts review historical and contemporary research literature to trace how specific knowledges and subjectivities have been constituted in particular historical, cultural, and political ways.

The third and fourth papers in this dissertation represent empirically-based research conducted with four self-identified sexual minority teachers and 3 transsexual teachers from across Canada. In these essays I explore how schools are normalizing spaces centered around the construction and maintenance of binaries such as good/bad; heterosexual/homosexual; self/other; teacher/student; and male/female (Rassmussen, 2006). I examine how queered perspectives and identities seek to destabilize these binary operations in the pursuit of queer and transitional pedagogies that attempt to bring

sexuality, gender, pleasure, and desire into the classroom. I also explore how transsexual teachers are frequently positioned as being at odds with queer theory by seeking to maintain heteronormative binaries as survival strategies. For example, are teachers who transition in their schools from one gender to another engaged in a queer practice of transformative education or the maintenance of heterosexual regimes of the normal? In conservative educational spaces that do not and will not tolerate gender ambiguity, how does transitioning serve to reify the male/female binary in schools?

Ultimately, the essays that comprise this dissertation research are designed to echo Weis and Fine's (2004) belief that "… to document signs of possibility is indeed to keep them alive and nurture their survival" (p. xxiv). Collectively, I hope these essays will provide deep insights into how non-normative identities are produced, regulated, disciplined, resisted, and lived in particular historical, cultural, social, and political moments through the activities of everyday life in the classroom and school. I also hope that they will bring the development of a queer criticality to bear on public education and disturb the idealist yet exclusionary goals that have marked public education in Canada.

References

Allan, A., Atkinson, E., Brace, E., DePalma, R., & Hemingway, J. (2009). Speaking the unspeakable in forbidden places: Addressing lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender equality in primary school. In R. DePalma & E. Atkinson (Eds.), *Interrogating heteronormativity in primary schools: The No Outsiders project* (pp. 67-84). Stoke on Trent, UK: Trentham Books.

Allman, P. (2001). *Critical education against global capitalism: Karl Marx and revolutionary critical education.* Westport, CT: Bergin & Garvey.

Blount, J. M. (2005). *Fit to teach: Same-sex desire, gender, and school work in the twentieth century.* New York: State University of New York Press.

Britzman, D. P., & Dippo, D. (2003). Admitting "a perhaps": Maxine Greene and the project of critical theory. In M. Peters, C. Lankshear, & M. Olsen (Eds.), *Critical theory and the human condition: Founders and praxis* (pp. 130-139). New York: Peter Lang.

Clandinin, D. J., & Connelly, F. M. (2000). *Narrative inquiry: Experience and story in qualitative research.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

DePalma, R., & Atkinson, E. (Eds.). (2009). *Interrogating heteronormativity in primary schools: The No Outsiders project.* Stoke on Trent, UK: Trentham Books.

Denzin, N. K., & Lincoln, Y. S. (Eds.) (2005). *The Sage handbook of qualitative research* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Denzin, N. K., & Lincoln, Y. S. (Eds.). (2000). *Handbook of qualitative research* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Egale Canada. (2009). *Youth speak up about homophobia and transphobia: The first national climate survey on homophobia in Canadian schools.* Retrieved from Egale Canada: http://www.egale.ca/index.asp?lang=&menu=1&item=1401

Epstein, D., & Johnson, R. (1998). *Schooling sexualities.* Briston, PA: Open University Press.

Filax, G., Sumara, D., Davis, B., & Shogan, D. (2005). Queer theory/Lesbian and gay approaches. In B. Somekh & C. Lewin (Eds.), *Research methods in the social sciences* (pp. 81-88). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Fine, M., Weis, L., Weseen, S., & Wong, L. (2000). For whom?: Qualitative research, representations and social responsibilities. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research* (2nd ed.) (pp. 107-131). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Fontana, A., & Frey, H. J. (1998). Interviewing: The art of science. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *Collecting and interpreting qualitative materials* (pp. 47-78). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Fontana, A., & Frey, J. H. (2000). The interview: From structured questions to negotiated text. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research* (2nd ed.) (pp. 645-672). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Foucault, M. (1978). *The history of sexuality, Vol. 1: An introduction.* New York: Vintage.

Frank, B. (1996). *Hiding to work/working to hide: Gay men in teaching.* Paper presented at the Conference of Atlantic Educators, Wolfville, NS.

Freire, P. (1998). *Teachers as cultural workers: Letters to those who dare to teach* (D. Macedo, D. Koike, & A. Oliveira, Trans.). Boulder, CO: Westview Press.

Friend, R. A. (1998). Heterosexism, homophobia, and the culture of schooling. In S. Books (Ed.), *Invisible children in the society and its schools* (pp. 137-166). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Gamson, J. (2000). Sexualities, queer theory, and qualitative research. In N. K. Denzin &
Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research* (2nd ed.) (pp. 347-365).
Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Giroux, H. A. (2003). Pedagogy of the depressed: Beyond the new politics of cynicism.
In M. Peters, C. Lankshear, & M. Olsen (Eds.), *Critical theory and the human
condition: Founders and praxis* (pp. 143-168). New York: Peter Lang.

Grace, A. P. (2007a). Envisioning a critical social pedagogy of learning and work in a
contemporary culture of cyclical lifelong learning. *Studies in Continuing
Education, 29*(1), 85-103. doi:10.1080/01580370601146361

Grace, A. P. (2007b). In your care: School administrators and their ethical and
professional responsibility toward students across sexual-minority differences. In
W. Smale & K. Young (Eds.), *Approaches to educational leadership and practice*
(pp. 16-40). Calgary, AB: Detselig Enterprises/Temeron Books.

Grace, A. P. (2008). The charisma and deception of reparative therapies: When medical
science beds religion. *Journal of Homosexuality,* 55(4), 545-580.
doi:10.1080/00918360802421676

Grace, A. P., & Benson, F. J. (2000). Using autobiographical queer life narratives of
teachers to connect personal, political and pedagogical spaces. *International
Journal of Inclusive Education, 4*(2), 89-109. doi:10.1080/136031100284830

Grace, A. P., & Wells, K. (2001). Getting an education in Edmonton, Alberta: The case
of queer youth. *Torquere, Journal of the Canadian Lesbian and Gay Studies
Association, 3,* 137-151.

Grace, A. P., & Wells, K. (2004). Engaging sex-and-gender differences: Educational and

cultural change initiatives in Alberta. In J. McNinch & M. Cronin (Eds.), *I could

not speak my heart: Education and social justice for gay and lesbian youth* (pp.

289-307). Regina, SK: Canadian Plains Research Centre, University of Regina.

Grace, A. P., & Wells, K. (2005). The Marc Hall prom predicament: Queer individual

rights v. institutional church rights in Canadian public education. *Canadian

Journal of Education, 28*(3), 237-270. Retrieved from

http://www.csse.ca/CJE/Articles/FullText/CJE28-3/CJE28-3-gracewells.pdf

Grace, A. P., & Wells, K. (2006). The quest for a queer inclusive cultural ethics: Setting

directions for teachers' pre-service and continuing professional development. In

R. J. Hill (Ed.), *Challenging homophobia and heterosexism: Lesbian, gay,

bisexual, transgender and queer issues in organizational settings* (pp. 51-61).

New Directions for Adult and Continuing Education, no. 112. San Francisco:

Jossey-Bass.

Grace, A. P., & Wells, K. (2007). Using Freirean pedagogy of just ire to inform critical

social learning in arts-informed community education for sexual minorities. *Adult

Education Quarterly, 57*(2), 95-114. doi:10.1177/ 0741713606294539

Grace, A. P., & Wells, K. (2009). Gay and bisexual male youth as educator activists and

cultural workers: The critical praxis of three Canadian high-school students.

International Journal of Inclusive Education, 3(1), 23-44.

doi:10.1080/13603110701254121

Grace, A. P., Cavanagh, F., Ennis-Williams, C., & Wells, K. (2007). Researchers'

positionalities and experiences mediating lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans-identified,

and queer research as a personal and cultural practice. *Auto/Biography, 14*(4), 1-20.

Green, A. I. (2002). Gay but not queer: Toward a post-queer study of sexuality. *Theory and Society, 31*, 521-545.

Halberstam, J. (1998). *Female masculinity.* Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

Hall, D. E. (2003). *Queer theories.* New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Hoy, D. C. (2004). *Critical resistance: From poststructuralism to post-critique.* Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Jagose, A. (1996). *Queer theory: An introduction.* New York: New York University Press.

Kincheloe, J. L., & McLaren, P. (2005). Rethinking critical theory and qualitative research. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *The Sage handbook of qualitative research* (3rd ed.) (pp. 303-342). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

King, J. (1999). Am not! Are too! Using queer standpoint in postmodern critical ethnography. *Qualitative Studies in Education, 12*(5), 473-490. doi:10.1080/095183999235908

Kusmashiro, K. (Ed.). (2001). *Troubling intersections of race and sexuality: Queer students of color and anti-oppressive education.* Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.

Lather, P. (1991). *Getting smart: Feminist research and pedagogy with/in the postmodern.* New York: Routledge.

Lather, P., & Smithies, C. (1997). *Troubling the angels: Women living with HIV/AIDS.* Boulder, CO: HarperCollins.

McNinch, J., & Cronin, M. (Eds.). (2004). *"I could not speak my heart": Education and social justice for gay and lesbian youth.* Regina, SK: Canadian Plains Research Center.

Peters, M., Olssen, M., & Lankshear, C. (Eds.) (2003). *Futures of critical theory: Dreams of difference.* New York: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.

Pillow, W. S. (2004). *Unfit subjects: Educational policy and the teen mother.* New York: RoutledgeFarmer.

Pitt, A., & Britzman, D. (2003). Speculations on qualities of difficult knowledge in teaching and learning: An experiment in psychoanalytic research. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education, 16*(6), 755-776. doi:10.1080/09518390310001632135

Plummer, K. (2005). Critical humanism and queer theory: Living with the tensions. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *The Sage handbook of qualitative research* (3rd ed.) (pp. 357-373). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Rasmussen, M. L. (2006). *Becoming subjects: Sexualities and secondary schooling.* New York: Taylor & Francis.

Richardson, L. (1998). Writing: A method of inquiry. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *Collecting and interpreting qualitative materials* (pp. 345-371). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Roberts, P. (2003). Knowledge, dialogue, and humanization: Exploring Freire's philosophy. In M. Peters, C. Lankshear, & M. Olsen (Eds.), *Critical theory and the human condition: Founders and praxis* (pp. 169-183). New York: Peter Lang.

Roberts, G., Allan, C., & Wells, K. (2007). Understanding gender identity in K-12 Schools. *Journal of Gay and Lesbian Issues in Education, 4*(4), 119-129. doi:10.1300/ J367v04n04_08

Schrader, A. M., & Wells, K. (2007). *Challenging silence, challenging censorship: Inclusive resources, strategies and policy directives for addressing BGLTT realities in school and public libraries.* Ottawa, ON: Canadian Teachers' Federation.

Sears, J. T. (Ed.). (2005). *Youth, education, and sexualities: An international encyclopedia* (Vol. 1). Westport, CT: Greenwood Press.

Sedgwick, E. K. (1990). *Epistemology of the closet.* Berkeley: University of California Press.

Sedgwick, E. K. (2003). *Touching feeling: Affect, pedagogy, performativity.* Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

St. Pierre, E. A., & Pillow, W. S. (2000). Introduction: Inquiry among the ruins. In E. A. St. Pierre & W. S. Pillow (Eds.), *Working the ruins: Feminist poststructural theory and methods in research* (pp. 1-24). New York: Routledge.

Sullivan, N. (2003). *A critical introduction to queer theory.* New York: New York University Press.

Tuhiwai Smith, L. (1999). *Decolonizing methodologies: Research and indigenous peoples.* New York: Zed Books.

Weis, L., & Fine, M. (2001). Extraordinary conversations in public schools. *Qualitative Studies in Education, 14*(4), 497-523. doi:10.1080/09518390110046355

Weis, L., & Fine, M. (2004). *Working method: Research and social justice.* New York: Routledge.

Wells, K. (2003a). Where is the hope? In Canadian Teachers' Federation (CTF) & Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario (ETFO) (Eds.), *Seeing the rainbow: Teachers talk about bisexual, gay, lesbian, transgender and two-spirited issues* (pp. 68-70). Ottawa, ON: CTF & ETFO.

Wells, K. (2003b). *Understanding difference differently: Sex-and-gender OUTlaws in Alberta schools.* Unpublished master's thesis, University of Alberta, Edmonton, Alberta, Canada.

Wells, K. (2003c). *Building safe, caring and inclusive schools for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender Students: Professional development workshop series for Alberta teachers.* Edmonton, AB: Alberta Teachers' Association.

Wells, K. (2005). *Gay–straight student alliances in Alberta schools: A guide for teachers.* Edmonton, AB: Alberta Teachers' Association.

Wells, K. (2006). *The gay–straight student alliance handbook: A comprehensive resource for K-12 teachers, administrators, and school counsellors.* Ottawa, ON: The Canadian Teachers' Federation.

Wells, K. (2007). Diverse threads in social fabrics: Autobiography and arts-informed educational initiatives for social justice. In I. Killoran & K. P. Jimenez (Eds.), *Unleashing the unpopular: Talking about sexual orientation and gender diversity*

in education (pp. 117-128). Olney, MD: Association for Childhood Education International.

Wells, K. (2008, Winter). Generation queer: Sexual minority youth and Canadian schools. *Education Canada, 48*(1), 18-23. Retrieved from ERIC Database. (EJ782698)

Wells, K. (2010). *Sexual orientation and gender identity educational website.* Retrieved from Alberta Teachers' Association website: www.teachers.ab.ca

Wells, K., & Tsutsumi, L. M. (2005). *Creating safe and caring schools for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and trans-identified students: A guide for counsellors.* Edmonton, AB: The Society for Safe and Caring Schools and Communities.

Essay One
Sexual Minority and Gender Variant Youth in Canadian Schools:
Perspectives on Risk and Resilience

Contemporary research into school violence, bullying, and harassment indicates that it is important for educators to identify risk and resilience-enhancing factors that serve to compromise or promote the healthy individual, psychological, and social development of all youth (Goldstein & Brooks, 2005a; Thompson, 2006; Wells, 2009). By understanding related risk and resilience-enhancing factors, educators, health-care and social-service providers, and parents or guardians can more effectively plan for multifaceted critical interventions that can help to support at-risk youth activate the protective factors that can enable them to grow into resilience by responding more effectively to diverse developmental challenges, stigma, adversity, or stressful life experiences they may encounter.

The systemic nature of schools as heteronormalizing spaces enhances specific risk factors and places limitations on possibilities for all teachers and students who identify as non-heterosexual (Atkinson & DePalma, 2009; Martino, 2008). The examination of the individual, developmental, cultural, political, and social impacts of heteronormativity form the basis for informing queer criticality, which I utilize as a multifaceted theoretical lens. This essay seeks to trace the impact these discourses have on sexual minority[1] (lesbian, gay, bisexual) and gender variant (trans-identified, transgender, transsexual) youth by developing a genealogy of related risk and resiliency-enhancing factors that, in dynamic equilibrium, do not focus solely on perceived deficits; rather, they also work to identify and build upon areas of strength. Importantly, these risk factors and assets are not merely characteristics located within any one individual, but are understood as being

malleable, shaped as they are by larger environmental, social, cultural, political, and contextual influences. As a result, challenging environments can create adverse or hostile conditions for even the most strong and positively adapted youth. In these terms, resilience is never absolute and therefore needs to be contextualized, grounded in theory, focused on more than risk- or harm-reduction strategies, and nurtured across multiple levels of influence such as the individual, family, school, and community (Luthar & Cicchetti, 2000; Luthar & Zelazo, 2003; Pianta & Walsh, 1998).

Exploring Emerging Concepts of Risk and Resilience

The last decade has witnessed a concerted and increased focus on understanding the dynamics of sexual orientation in adolescence (Saewyc, in press). This multidisciplinary research has focused on the effects of stigmatization, discrimination, and rejection, ensuing health disparities, developmental milestones, and increasing risk-related behaviours in sexual minority youth. To date very little comprehensive adolescent health research has been conducted on gender variant youth and the unique risk factors they experience. With this growing understanding of the unique risk factors that sexual minority youth experience, research has recently begun to explore protective factors that can be used to guide interventions directed at fostering resiliency to improve health, safety, and educational outcomes for sexual minority youth.

In a growing body of research and educational literature focused on youth resilience, risk factors are commonly understood as those experiences that tend to increase the likelihood of the development of problems or negative consequences in a young person's life. Protective or resilience-enhancing factors are identified as internal

and external influences that can have a positive impact on healthy youth development by helping to protect youth from engaging in unhealthy behaviours or destructive coping mechanisms. Research and educational experience indicates that individuals are inherently born with an innate resiliency and the capacity to work to develop protective factors (Goldstein & Brooks, 2005a; Thompson, 2006).

The genealogical investigation into concepts of risk and resilience presented in this essay, as they impact sexual minority and gender variant (SMGV) youth, is divided into four major sections. The first section explores and offers critique of the waves of research that have been conducted on SMGV youth since the 1970s. The next section explores contemporary research that examines "at-risk" factors that many SMGV youth experience as part of their lived realities within heteronormative school, family, and community environments. The third section explores the importance of studying resilience and identifies protective factors that are common to positively adapted youth and young adults. The fourth section highlights how most contemporary research on SMGV youth has been focused on a deficit model, which, as Rasmussen (2006) suggests, positions SMGV youth as "objects of pathos" within educational research and practice. Building on Rasmussen's argument, I highlight how at-risk labels can serve to pathologize SMGV youth and deny them a sense of personal agency that is necessary for resistance to homophobia, transphobia, and heterosexism within their schools, families, and communities. To conclude this analysis, I examine how SMGV youth have been narrated, and increasingly positioned, through traditional and contemporary forms of research as at-risk, resilient, and liberated. I use these narrativized subject positions to explore potential implications for future educational research and directed interventions

for SMGV and questioning youth in Canadian K-12 schools.

To conduct this genealogical analysis, I surveyed diverse bodies of literature from the fields of education, health, adolescent sexuality, developmental psychology, and critical youth studies to interrogate how SMGV youth have been positioned historically as at-risk for a number of social stressors and related health concerns (such as drug and alcohol abuse, depression, homelessness, violence, and suicidality). In this analysis I draw upon historical and contemporary research and landmark studies, with an emphasis on Canadian-based data where available and appropriate. Over a decade of research evidence clearly indicates that educational institutions have a legal, ethical, and professional responsibility to respond appropriately to the urgent health, safety, and educational needs of SMGV youth (Grace & Wells, 2005, 2009; Taylor & Peter, in press; Wells, 2008). A failure to respond by important adults in the lives of youth, places vulnerable youth at significant risk and denies them access to important asset-creating factors in their lives.

The challenges of utilizing such disparate bodies of knowledge include an overwhelming focus on psychosocial discourses of adolescent development within a preponderance of the youth-focused health and sexuality-related research. This myopic focus on the individual, rather than an exploration of the workings of heteronormativity and power, often results in the positioning of SMGV youth as abnormal and pathological. This individual pathologizing and its accompanying complicity with the maintenance of the "regimes of the normal" (Warner, 1993) ought to be problematized and questioned in research practices and in the development of educational interventions designed to foster the resilient adaptation of youth.

As Rasmussen (2006) suggests, how SMGV youth adopt and understand their identities is intimately related to their subjectivities. Still, the "processes of subjectification are not the same as processes of identification" (Rasmussen, 2006, p. 71). For example, subjectification is a process without a start or end. The subject or self is constituted by power, which delimits the modes of identification available. Accordingly, the self is interpellated into existence within the given matrix of discourses available. Or as Foucault states,

> I would call subjectification the process through which results the constitution of the subject, or more exactly, of a subjectivity which is obviously only one of the given possibilities of organizing a consciousness of self. (as cited in Rasmussen, 2006, p. 72)

Or perhaps put more simply, the processes of normalization within research focused on SMGV youth are themselves an instrument of disciplinary power. For example, what subject positions are available to SMGV youth when the vast majority of research and educational interventions have positioned them as at-risk? These "tropes of risk" (Rasmussen, 2006, p. 144), which are premised on models of "normal" adolescent development create SMGV youth, by default, as "abnormal," or even deviant, and outside the bounds of healthy development. This slippage to individual pathologizing is an easy one to make and one that most researchers and educationists seem comfortable to perpetuate.

Moving from At-Risk to Resilient

Much of the contemporary research on the needs and experiences of sexual minority youth has shifted away from a historical focus on the etiology of homosexuality

to a focus on the successful psychological adaptation of a stigmatized minority group and the effects of minority stress on the individual (Meyer, 2003). This is evidenced in research that has focused on stage-models of sexual minority identity development (e.g., Cass, 1979 and Troiden, 1989). From these perspectives, healthy identity development has been understood as a largely sequential, bounded, and linear process with failure to move successfully from one stage to another (e.g., developmental milestones) resulting in arrested development or crisis. More recently, these linear models have been highly critiqued as they fail to distinguish between males and females and their differing developmental trajectories (Saewyc, in press).

As a result of this early emphasis on the typology of identity development, and its focus on sequential developmental milestones, a small collection of Canadian-based educational resources and academic research that examines the unique needs and experiences of SMGV youth in Canadian K-12 educational and community-based settings has emerged within the past two decades. Forming a diverse body of professional and research literature, such studies have explored:

- inclusive curriculum strategies (GALE-BC, 2004a; GRIS, 2003; STA, 2000; McCaskell, 2005; TBE, 1997; TDSB, 2002);

- professional development initiatives (CTF, 2005; CTF & ETFO, 2002; Grace & Wells, 2004, 2006; Rainbow Resource Centre, n.d.; STF, n.d.; Wells, 2003, 2005, 2006, 2007; Wells & Schrader, 2007);

- sexual minority and gender identity inclusive policy development (Bacon, 1999; Shortall, n.d; VSB, 2004; Winnipeg School Division No. 1, 2002);

- health and safety needs and concerns (Grace, 2005, 2008; Grace & Wells, 2001,

2005, 2007, 2009; McCreary Centre Society, 1999; Janoff, 2005; Martino, 1999; Peterkin & Risdon, 2003; Wells, 2009; Williams, Connolly, Pepler, & Craig, 2003, 2005);

- educational supports and services (Fisher, 1999; GALE-BC, 2004b; Meyer, 2009, 2010; Morton, 2002; Ryan, 1998, 2003; Schneider, 1997; Schrader & Wells, 2007; Wells, 2005, 2006, 2008; Wells & Tsutsumi, 2005);

- religious education (Henry, 2001; Podgorski, 2001; Grace & Wells, 2005); and

- queer theory/pedagogy (Britzman, 1995, 1997; Bryson & de Castell, 1993; Filax, 2006; Killoran & Jimenez, 2007; Lewis & Karin, 1994; McNinch & Cronin, 2004; Smith & Smith, 1998; Sumara & Davis, 1998).

Although this collection creates an impressive corpus of Canadian-based literature, there is still relatively little large-scale national research data on the experiences of SMGV youth in Canadian schools, families, and communities (Egale, 2009; Standing Senate Committee on Human Rights, 2007; Taylor & Peter, in press). Notably, there is also a paucity of research that explores the protective or resilience-enhancing factors and targeted interventions that help SMGV youth positively adapt to experiences of adversity in their everyday lives.

Research Trends Investigating the Experiences of Sexual Minority Youth

In his typology of the historically-related emergence of emphases in sexual minority youth-related research, Savin-Williams (2005) identifies four stages that encompass how researchers' understandings of sexual minority youth have evolved:

(1) First stage response: 1970s & 80s – During this stage, the experiences of sexual minority youth are positioned as "a distinct category from 'normal' adolescence" (Savin-Williams, 2005, p. 49) and are constructed as deviant, pathological, and in need of specialized medical intervention. For example, before 1973 homosexuality was considered a mental illness (Grace, 2008). After the American Psychological Association de-classified homosexuality as a pathology, research began to move beyond attempts to cure adolescents of homosexuality to a focus on helping them learn how to develop mastery to manage stigma and shame.

(2) Second stage response: 1980s & 90s – In this period, distinctive sexual minority youth developmental challenges are recognized, although primarily through a clinical lens, as being "at-risk" for increased drug and alcohol abuse, homelessness, violence, suicide, and school-related problems (Friend, 1993, 1998). The research literature during this time period is dense with narratives of victimization, or what Rofes (2004) identifies as the "martyr-target-victim" (p. 41) paradigm. The key outcomes of this early research led to the widespread recognition of formal schooling as an exclusionary heteronormative site that has tremendous consequences for the health, safety, and personal development of sexual minority youth. Quantitative research studies on the risk factors associated with being or being perceived as a sexual minority youth become critical catalysts in advocating for educational interventions and policy-based responses to the health-and-safety needs of sexual minority students. Anti-gay violence, bullying, and abuse in symbolic and physical forms became increasingly recognized as a

serious source of concern.

(3) Third stage response: Late 1990s & early 2000s – This progressive stage is characterized by education for social change to ameliorate the social, cultural, and political marginalization of sexual minorities. Educational interventions focus on the creation of safe spaces, LGBTQ-inclusive curriculum, and anti-harassment policy development. Advocacy is based in identity politics and liberal human-rights discourses that call for a "space at the table" and "human rights for all." Rapid and significant gains are made in law and legislation at the federal and provincial levels. For example, in 1998, the Alberta human-rights statute was amended by the Supreme Court of Canada to include sexual-orientation protections, and in 2005 same-sex marriage was legalized in Canada. However, these gains are largely assimilationist in nature and the (hetero)normalizing structures of schooling are left in tact. During this time period, research on sexual minority youth begins to shift its emphasis and concentrates on resilience as a construct and the importance of a developmental assets-based approach to intervention. The protective factors that enable sexual minority youth to overcome discrimination and thrive as leading change agents in their schools, families, and communities increasingly become key sites for research investigations and targeted educational interventions (Grace & Wells, 2009; Savin-Williams, 2005). For example, the establishment of gay-straight alliances (GSAs) are identified as critical sites within formal schools that challenge the heteronormative status quo (Wells, 2005, 2006, 2010). Through initiatives, like GSAs, and as a result of shifting cultural and identity politics, "queer" begins to enter the classroom

vernacular as students assert their identities as fractured, multiple, and situational. These events help to recast identity politics and issues of youth agency as key sites for research investigation (Rasmussen, Rofes, & Talburt, 2004). As a result, issues of queer being, becoming, belonging, and desire have begun to emerge as critical sites of contestation within public schools (Grace & Wells, 2005, 2007, 2009).

(4) Fourth stage: Future response – With increasing gains in the social and legal recognition and protection of sexual minorities, Savin-Williams (2005) argues that "banality" may be the wave of the future. He posits that youth are increasingly adopting a "post-gay" identity where sexuality is no longer considered the defining characteristic of their personhood. Savin-Williams maintains that the everyday ordinariness of same-sex attractions may well become the defining feature for the future of sexual minority youth.

Perhaps, researchers would be wise not to focus solely on the post-gay world that Savin-Williams (2005) suggests that we ought to be working towards, but rather a post-gay world that investigates queerness as abjection or otherness that is deemed to be outside the normal. Accordingly, the processes of normalization ought to continue to be at the centre of our object of analyses, rather than essentialized identity categories that are viewed as fixed and immutable. The slippage into linear psychosocial developmental theories and associated pathologies creates a popular and easy discourse that fails to interrogate the "normal" as part of understanding the positional. As a result of this slippage, a discourse of pathology becomes the primary authorized discourse in which to advocate for sexual minority youth. Unfortunately, by continuing to position sexual

minority youth as "at-risk" we, in turn, deny them alternative subject positions in which they can define themselves. This lens of pathology also serves to rob sexual minority youth of the individual and collective agency needed to address and resist heteronormativity. In addition, while conditions may be improving for sexual minority youth, gender variant youth still face significant discrimination in schools (Taylor & Peter, in press).

It could be argued that Savin-Williams' post-gay world and the quest for banality may appear to be on the horizon of possibility for sexual minority youth in urban centres that have access to ample community supports and services. However, the experiences of sexual minority youth in rural communities and sexual minority youth from ethno-cultural minority backgrounds can reflect a far different reality. Savin-Williams' post-gay identity represents a monolithic and problematic identity category that serves to erase differences rather than embrace them as an integral component of a queer identity. Because of Savin-Williams' controversial claims, this fourth stage, banality, is currently one of the most contested issues in the field of queer educational studies. Many researchers argue that our society will reach a post-gay world at the same time we emerge into a post-racist or post-sexist world, neither of which appears to be on the horizon anytime soon (Wells, 2008).

Risk Factors for Sexual Minority and Gender Variant Youth

Since the 1980s major qualitative and quantitative research studies have begun to identify and explore critical risk factors in the lives of SMGV youth. In a recent analysis of the experiences, risks, and health challenges faced by vulnerable youth in British

Columbia, the McCreary Centre Society found that "vulnerable youth are at greater risk for not finishing school, experiencing homelessness, problem substance use, and other health-compromising behaviours" (Saewyc, Wang, et al., 2006, p. 4). This report also identified key stressors that mitigate against the healthy development of youth to include a history of physical abuse and sexual violence; families dealing with substance abuse, mental health problems, and violence; and multiple moves, living in foster care, and running away from home.

Given historical research trends and the enhanced, and at times multiple risk factors, that SMGV youth experience, suicidality; school-related problems; homelessness; symbolic and physical violence and threats to personal safety; and substance use, sexual abuse, and HIV-risk behaviours have been identified as critical risk factors in need of specialized intervention and support. These risk factors may be compounded for SMGV youth as they attempt to mediate life from various faith, religious, ability, ethnocultural, socioeconomic, and gendered backgrounds. In addition, SMGV youth who are street-involved, living in care, or involved with the justice or corrections system are also at increased risk for significant health and life challenges. These challenges may be significantly exacerbated for gender variant youth. For example, limited smaller-scale studies utilizing non-representative samples have found that gender variant youth frequently report higher rates of depression, suicide attempts, risky sexual behaviours, violence, homelessness, and HIV infection (Coker, Austin, & Schuster, 2010). Biegel (2010) identifies that gender variant youth of colour may face the most difficult challenges of all minority groups as they tend to be disproportionately from lower socioeconomic backgrounds. The intersectionality of ethnicity, culture, class, and

gender non-conformity can serve to amplify risk factors and compromise the resilient adaptation of gender variant youth. More large-scale population health research is needed to explore the health, safety, and educational experiences of gender variant youth in Canada and the United States (Coker, Austin, and Schuster, 2010; Saweyc, in press).

Suicidality

Suicidality is a fairly recent umbrella term developed to describe suicide-related events (known as ideation and self-harm) and suicide attempts in youth and adults. A great deal of contemporary research has focused on suicide in youth; in particular, the last two decades have witnessed dozens of studies documenting higher suicide rates for sexual minority youth when compared to their heterosexual peers (Campos, 2005; Coker, Austin, and Schuster, 2010).

North American adolescent research studies conclude that suicide is one of the leading causes of death of today's youth (Saewyc, in press). For sexual minority youth, suicide *is* the number one cause of death (Campos, 2005). Suicide rates may be equally as high, or higher, for gender variant youth; however, very little population health research has studied this specific subpopulation in detail. As a result, there is no current accurate large-scale data on the experiences of gender variant youth and suicide.

Current research literature on adolescent suicide identifies several critical risk factors that significantly influence suicidality. For example, depression is considered one of the most fundamental suicide risk factors for adolescents with feelings of helplessness and hopelessness; substance abuse; and the recent or attempted suicide of a family member or close friend also identified as increased stressors (Russell & Joyner, 2001). As

well, a history of family dysfunction and sexual abuse are also considered to be key

suicidal risk factors in the general adolescent population (Remafedi, 1994). In addition to

these general risk factors, more recently researchers have identified specific risk factors

unique to sexual minority youth. These risk factors include gender atypicality, age of

disclosure/coming out, family acceptance, and intrapersonal conflict regarding sexuality

(Friedman, et al., 2006; Remafedi, 1994). As Canadian researchers Dorais and

Lajeunesse (2001/2004) highlight, "Most suicide attempts occur when [sexual minority]

youth either fear coming out or when they have just done so – often a time associated

with personal and/or family crisis" (p. 24). Correspondingly, sexual minority youth who

have had experiences of victimization (by family members or peers) were also found to

be more vulnerable to suicide ideation or attempts (Friedman, et al., 2006; Russell &

Joyner, 2001).

 In 1989 a landmark study entitled the "Report of the Secretary's Task Force on

Youth Suicide" was released by the US Secretary of Health and Human Services

(Gibson, 1994). This report contained a controversial chapter on suicide, which identified

gay and lesbian youth as being two to three times more likely to attempt suicide than their

heterosexual peers. This ground breaking study indicated that gay and lesbian youth may

account for up to thirty percent of all youth suicides, and it identified that one third of all

gay and lesbian youth suicides occur before the age of 17 (Gibson, 1994). More recently,

The Suicide Prevention Resource Centre (2008) in the United States reported that sexual

minority youth were 1.5 to 7 times more likely to attempt suicide than their heterosexual

peers.

In Canada, these findings are parallel and have been validated by numerous research studies. For example, Kroll and Warneke (1995) posit that "Canada has one of the highest youth suicide rates in the world . . . of all teens who commit suicide, about one third appear to be homosexual in orientation" (p. 1). In Alberta, a more recent study indicates that gay male and bisexual youth are 13.9 times more at risk for a serious suicide attempt than heterosexual male youth (Bagley & Tremblay, 1997). In a comparative study of the United States and Canada, Saewyc, Skay, and Pettingell (2004) found that "sexual minority youth were consistently at increased risk for suicide involvement vs. heterosexual peers, with a large population of GLB [gay, lesbian, bisexual] teens reporting ideation or attempts" (p. 138). Complementary research suggests that lesbian teens, identified in one British Columbia youth survey, are nearly five times more likely to attempt suicide than heterosexual girls (Saewyc et al., 2007). Saewyc, the studies lead author, suggests that these statistics may be high, as girls are generally more likely to attempt suicide, whereas boys use more lethal means and actually commit suicide (Bohn, 2006).

A comparative report (Tonkin, Murphy, Lees, Saewyc, & the McCreary Centre Society, 2005) of the trends evident in three large-scale studies of 72,000 students in grades 7-12 in British Columbia (1992, 1998, 2003) found that gay, lesbian, and bisexual youth when compared with their heterosexual peers are more likely to report a history of abuse; report a higher percentage of suicide attempts (25% in 2003); and are six times more likely to attempt suicide. Overall, this report suggests that although trends indicate a decrease in the levels of abuse reported by heterosexual teens, GLB youth are more likely to report having had a history of abuse and suicidality than their heterosexual peers.

More recently, the Child Death Review Unit of the BC Coroner's Service (2008) conducted a review of youth deaths from 1997 to 2003 that identified 81 children and youth who died by suicide. Those at increased risk for suicide included Aboriginal youth, sexual minority youth, older youth (ages 17-18), male youth, and youth questioning their sexuality. The majority of youth who committed suicide experienced an acute stressful life event twenty-four hours prior to their death; almost half had a history of mental health problems, with depressive symptoms the most frequently reported. Nearly half of these youth also experienced chronic dysfunction, including neglect and abuse, in their relationships with family members or romantic partners. The Coroner's report identified seventeen key recommendations for the prevention of child and youth suicide. Included in these recommendations, the report identified schools as critical prevention and intervention sites for youth at risk for suicide and suicide ideation. The report also identified the importance of drawing upon evidence-informed suicide predictors to help foster the creation of positive educational environments focused on increasing school connectedness and a sense of belonging among vulnerable youth.

Numerous studies such as those cited previously have replicated and validated many of the original landmark findings of the 1989 US Secretary of Health and Human Services report. As a result, researchers now commonly cite that gay and lesbian youth are at minimum 2 to 3 times more likely than their heterosexual peers to attempt suicide (Russell & Joyner, 2001; Ryan & Futterman, 1998). Accordingly, researchers identify that prevention efforts should focus on key risk factors such as depression, alienation from family, disconnection from the school community, and substance abuse as precursors to suicidality (Gwadz, Clatts, Yi, Leonard, Goldsamt, & Lankenau, 2006).

However, when exploring the unique risk factors associated with sexual minority youth, Russell and Joyner (2001) offer a compelling note of caution. "The overwhelming majority of sexual minority youths... report no suicidality at all" (p. 1280). In a research culture that is arguably obsessed with risk, further study is needed to explore the contextual and multifaceted asset-creating factors that enable so many sexual minority youth to remain resilient in the face of discrimination, victimization, and abuse. For example, leading youth health researchers Ryan & Futterman (1998) suggest two important sources for possible intervention: Lesbian and gay persons who do not attempt suicide often differ in two important ways from those who did: (1) they experienced less stress in coming out to their parents and family, and (2) they experienced less ridicule because of their sexual orientation. Unfortunately, very little research has been conducted on the suicidality of gender variant youth. These youth may be at risk for some of the most extreme forms of self-harm, violence, and discrimination as they attempt to navigate the complexities or gender, sexuality, and identity in a gender-conforming (within the male/female binary) and often transphobic world (Wyss, 2004).

School-Related Problems

In 1999, with funding from the Vancouver Foundation, the McCreary Centre released the *Being Out: Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, & Transgender Youth in BC Adolescent Health Survey.* This groundbreaking survey engaged seventy-seven LGBT youth from across British Columbia in an examination of their health and self-esteem needs in relation to issues that explored their feelings about school, body image, emotional health, sexual behaviour, and other risk-taking behaviours (McCreary Centre Society, 1999).

Youth surveyed ranged in age from 13 to 19, with a median age of 17. Of the 77 youth who participated in the survey, 68% were male and 32% were female.

The McCreary Report represents the first health survey of LGBT youth undertaken in British Columbia. It is notably one of the few quantitative-based surveys assessing the health needs of LGBT youth conducted in Canada. Although the survey sample is small, the findings bear a strong correlation with large-scale LGBT youth-health surveys conducted in the United States (Remafedi, 1994). Significantly, findings from this survey indicate that more research is needed to investigate how schools and communities can build safe, supportive, and inclusive environments that work collaboratively to meet the specific health and safety needs of LGBT youth in Canada. Selected findings from the McCreary Report (1999) include:

- Almost 50% of the youth surveyed reported suicide attempts, with over 50% of these youth reporting a history of sexual and/or physical abuse.

- Sixty-six percent of gay and lesbian students heard homophobic remarks made by other students at school.

- Thirty-seven percent of gay and lesbian youth questioned felt like outsiders in their school.

- Seventeen percent reported being assaulted at their school within the past year.

- Almost 40% of gay and lesbian youth surveyed had dramatically low self-esteem.

- Thirty-nine percent of participants told a teacher or school counsellor that they were gay or lesbian.

- Thirty-seven percent stated that they hated or disliked school.

- Eighty-two percent reported regularly hearing their peers make homophobic

remarks at school.

- Twenty-eight percent reported that they also heard their teachers making homophobic comments.

When asked where they found sources of support, these youth stated that they primarily turn to close friends and female family members.

In order to address the devastating effects of homophobia, transphobia, and heterosexism on the emotional and physical health needs of LGBT youth, the McCreary Report recommends the creation of school-based educational programs (e.g., GSAs) and support services (e.g., sensitivity training) that are designed to support LGBT youth and children from same-sex parented families to combat heterosexism, homophobia, and transphobia.

Significantly, many of the findings of the McCreary study resonate with an influential report released by the Children's Commission of British Columbia. This governmental report identifies several critical factors in the suicide deaths of children, which include a lack of meaningful connection in school and a hostile reaction to the disclosure of sexual orientation (Office of the Auditor General of British Columbia, 2000/2001). Sadly, the legacy of homophobia, transphobia, and heterosexism continues to severely impact the health, safety, and emotional needs of many LGBT youth, not only in British Columbia, but across Canada and in the United States as the studies described on the following pages attest.

In 2004, Youthography, a division of Ping national marketing, questioned 1,358 youth participants between the ages of 13 and 29 on a variety of social issues, including a series of questions on LGBT topics (Wells, 2006). This sample included youth from

every province in Canada. The survey revealed that 3.5% of respondents self-identified as an LGBT person. Of the respondents who identified themselves as heterosexual, 7.5% acknowledged experimenting with members of their own sex. Fifty-eight percent reported knowing an LGBT coworker or classmate and 62% agreed or completely agreed that they were very comfortable with the topic of LGBT issues. Surprisingly, 23.8% reported witnessing an act of violence or verbal abuse directed toward an LGBT person their own age (in the 15–19 age group the rate increased to 27.5%). This study represents the first truly national survey on the experiences of LGBT youth in Canada and serves as an important benchmark for future comparative research.

In 2005 researchers Williams, Connolly, Pepler, and Craig studied a sample of 97 gay, lesbian, bisexual, and questioning high school students from a large south central Canadian city. These data were collected from a large-scale survey of 1,598 adolescents from five high schools. Six percent of the students surveyed self-identified as gay, lesbian, bisexual, or questioning (45 males and 52 females). Notably, 53 of the 97 participants described their identity as questioning. Overall, the study found that sexual minority and questioning youth reported more emotional and behavioral difficulties; higher symptoms of depression and externalizing behaviors; more hostile peer environments and victimization; greater rates of bullying and sexual harassment; and less social support in both their family and peer group contexts.

Importantly, this study also found that questioning youth experienced similar rates of victimization, adjustment difficulties, and perceived social-support experiences when compared with the gay, lesbian, and bisexual youth surveyed. Previous research has largely ignored the experiences of questioning youth, which is problematic as youth who

are questioning their sexual orientation may be as vulnerable to discrimination, victimization, harassment, and decreased social support as their sexual minority peers. Similarly, more research is needed to investigate the school-based experiences of heterosexual youth who come from same-sex parented families as very little is known about their school-based experiences with bullying and victimization. Likewise, research should also explore heterosexual youth who are *perceived* to be non-heterosexual based on their gender presentation and expression.

Overall, the results from the study by Williams and associates suggest that the depression and externalizing behaviours reported by sexual minority and questioning youth are largely a result of their experiences with victimization and a lack of social support. Importantly, these risk factors are not directly related to a youth's sexual orientation on its own. Rather they are influenced significantly by the lack of a supportive and understanding social environment. Correspondingly, the effects of exposure to stigma and discrimination are one of the leading explanations for continued health disparities among sexual minority youth in population health research (Saewyc, in press).

Williams, Connolly, Pepler, and Craig conducted a similar study in 2003. This study involved 3,636 adolescents from 17 high schools in Toronto, Kingston, and Montreal. In this survey 130 youth self-identified as gay, lesbian, bisexual, or questioning (60 male, 70 female). These 130 LGB and questioning youth were then statistically matched to a random comparison group of 130 self-identified heterosexual youth in an effort to compare, contrast, and evaluate the survey's results. The study's combined grouping of the 260 adolescents ranged in ages from 14 to 18. Overall, the 2003 study found that 3.6% of all adolescents surveyed identified as lesbian, gay, bisexual, or

questioning with more youth identifying as bisexual (50) or questioning (68) than as gay (9) or lesbian (3). The study also reported that sexual minority and questioning youth reported higher incidences of bullying, sexual harassment, and physical abuse than their heterosexual peers and sexual minority and questioning youth also reported significantly more experiences of physical victimization by a romantic partner than did heterosexual youths. Based on their findings, Williams and associates highlight the need to (1) develop spaces for positive peer group interactions, which are critical for successful prevention and intervention efforts, and (2) emphasize the need to review school-based non-discrimination policies and practices and their effectiveness in relationship to the health-and-safety needs of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and questioning youth.

A more recent survey conducted by the Toronto District School Board in 2006, found that 8% of students surveyed in grades 7-12, identified themselves as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, two-spirited, queer, or questioning (Yau & O'Reilly, 2007). Collectively, what these Canadian-based studies indicate is the undeniable presence of sexual minority, gender variant, and questioning youth in junior and senior high schools. The research evidence is clear and compelling: sexual minority, gender variant, and questioning youth are at increased risk for negative health, safety, and educational outcomes, which require specialized school-based interventions and dedicated supports.

In a recent follow-up to their pioneering 1999 study, the McCreary Centre Society (Saewyc, Poon, et al., 2007) piloted new comparative research and found that lesbian, gay, and bisexual youth, when compared to their heterosexual peers, were more likely to:

- have experienced physical and sexual abuse, harassment in school, and discrimination in the community;

- have run away from home at least once during the past year;

- be sexually experienced, and more likely to either have been pregnant or to have gotten someone pregnant;

- be current smokers, tried alcohol, or used other drugs;

- report emotional stress, suicidal thoughts, and suicide attempts;

- participate less frequently in sports and physical activity, and report higher levels of computer usage/time; and

- feel less cared about by parents and less connected to their families.

Homophobic Bullying

A large-scale American-based study of 7,376 seventh and eighth grade students, which was designed to investigate experiences of bullying, found that 10.5% self-identified as lesbian, gay, or bisexual and 4.6% identified as questioning their sexual orientation (Birket, Espelage, & Koenig, 2009). This study found that when compared to their heterosexual peers, lesbian, gay, bisexual, and questioning youth were more likely to report (1) higher levels of bullying, (2) homophobic victimization, and (3) increased negative health outcomes. Questioning students, who often experience the least social and educational supports, reported higher rates of bullying, victimization, depression, suicidality, drug use, and truancy when compared with both sexual minority and heterosexual peers (Birket, Espelage, & Koenig, 2009).

Sexual minority and questioning students are not the only targets of bullying and abuse in schools. For example, a 2008 study found that heterosexual students "experience similar psychological and social consequences from being called homophobic epithets

[i.e. "fag talk"], including higher self-reported withdrawal, depressed mood, and personal distress" (Poteat, 2008, p. 190). The report concludes that aggressive social climates are a significant contributing factor in homophobic bullying. Accordingly, school programs ought to specifically address student aggression and negative/hostile school climates, and how homonegativity can contribute to school-based bullying and violence.

In relation to these findings on aggressive social climates, Varjas et al. (2008) reported that verbal bullying/abuse targeting sexual minority youth was the most common type of school-related bullying. These researchers found that between 70% and 80% of students targeted by anti-gay bullies were actually heterosexual, indicating that homophobic bullying is the most common form of bullying found in junior high schools and occurs across all racial and ethno-cultural groups. Anyone marked as "different" or outside the norm in schools could be a target of anti-gay ridicule.

Likewise, in a study of over 13,000 high school-aged youth, Espelage, Aragon, Birkett, and Koenig (2008) explored the relationships between homophobic bullying, negative health outcomes, and parental and school-based support. They found that positive school climates and parental support were key protective factors mitigating against student drug use and depression. These authors identified victimization by peers as one of the strongest predictors for school disengagement by sexual minority and questioning youth.

Building upon the importance of developing positive and inclusive school climates, another influential American study identified how sexual minority youth are five times more likely than their heterosexual peers to miss school due to concerns related to their personal safety (Garofalo, Wolf, Kessel, Palfrey, & DuRant, 1998). For example,

in a study of middle school students, researchers found that 30% of lesbian, gay, and bisexual students dropped out of school altogether because of harassment and fear (Elias et al., 1992). As these research studies indicate, homophobic bullying appears to be a major factor related to non-completion of high school and those students who are early leavers.

Further research on the impact of homophobic bullying and school completion, conducted by the United Kingdom's Department for Children, Schools and Families (2007), identified homophobic bullying as a significant factor in students being more likely to miss school, less likely to complete their formal education, and less likely to feel safe and make a positive contribution to their community. Another influential UK study reported that 72% of children who were bullied because of their sexual orientation had played sick or were truant to avoid abuse at school (Rivers, 2000).

In one of the largest safe schools studies conducted to date, involving 237,544 students in grades 7-9, it was revealed that 7.5% of students reported being harassed because of their actual or perceived sexual orientation (California Safe Schools Coalition & 4-H Center for Youth Development, University of California, Davis, 2004). Of those students who were harassed, they reported lower grades (24%), higher absentee rates (27%), greater depression (55%), and were more likely to make plans to commit suicide (35%) when compared to their heterosexual peers. Not surprisingly, many SMGV youth who have experienced bullying report long-term mental health symptoms that are strongly correlated with posttraumatic stress disorder (D'Augelli, Grossman, & Starks, 2006).

Egale Canada's First National School Climate Survey

In 2009 Egale Canada released the results from Canada's first national school climate survey (Taylor & Peter, in press). This survey involved over 3700 youth from across Canada (with the exception of the province of Quebec). The average age of youth respondents was 17.4 years of age. Overall, 73% of the youth participants identified as heterosexual; 26% as lesbian, gay, bisexual, or questioning; and 3% as transgender. The survey, which included both quantitative and qualitative responses, involved two phases, which included an (1) in-school phase, with 20 school boards and 149 school districts participating, and (2) an open-access online questionnaire that any student could complete. Perhaps not surprisingly, at the request of Catholic Bishops, no Catholic school boards participated in this national study.

Demographically, 46% of the youth respondents lived in a small city or suburb; 43% lived in an urban area; and 11% lived in rural, First Nations reserves, or Armed Forces bases. Analysis of the survey results provided several important school-related findings, which were identified under the categories of verbal harassment, physical harassment, and sexual harassment.

Verbal Harassment

- Seventy percent of youth reported hearing comments like "that's so gay" everyday in their schools.

- Forty-eight percent of youth reported hearing homophobic remarks daily (e.g., "Faggot"; "Dyke").

- Fifty-seven percent of LGBQ youth reported being verbally harassed for their gender expression.

- Seventy-four percent of transgender youth reported being harassed because of their gender expression.
- Thirty-seven percent of youth with LGBTQ parents also reported verbal harassment.

Physical Harassment

- One quarter (25%) of LBQ and 17% of gay males reported being physically harassed in their schools.
- Thirty-seven percent of transgender youth reported physical harassment or assault in their schools.
- Twenty-seven percent of students with LGBTQ parents experienced assault or harassment in schools.

Sexual Harassment

- Thirty-eight percent of female LBQ youth, 41.4% of the male GBQ, and 49.4% of transgender youth participants reported being sexually harassed at school at least once during the past year.

In addition to experiences with harassment at school, the LGBTQ youth surveyed identified change rooms (49%), washrooms (43%), and hallways (43%) as unsafe spaces in their schools. Over 52% of LGBTQ youth reported feeling unsafe at school, compared with only 3.4% of the heterosexual youth surveyed. Interestingly, students from same-sex parented families (61%) and trans students (78%) were the largest groups of students who reported feeling unsafe at school. Almost half of the LGBTQ participants (44.3%) agreed with the statement "It is hard for me to feel accepted at my school," compared to just 14.4% of non-LGBTQ students. Based on these observations, Taylor (2010), the study's

lead researcher, asks "How many educators are underestimating the extent of homophobia and transphobia in their school cultures and the damage being done to students in their care?" (p. 61).

Clearly, the sexual minority, gender variant, and questioning youth surveyed in the multitude of Canadian and internationally-based research studies cited previously are very clear in suggesting that their schools have failed to provide them with safe, supportive, and inclusive learning environments.

Homelessness and Street-Involved Youth

The Public Health Agency of Canada (2006a) estimates that everyday there are 150,000 youth living on the streets in Canada. Correspondingly, findings from a large scale, multi-year Health Canada study, which involved just under 5,000 street youth, found that the ratio of males to females living on the street is approximately 2 to 1. Conflict with parents was identified as the most significant reason why most street youth left home. The report also found that in 2003, more than 35% of street youth reported dropping out of school or having been expelled. More than 50% of street youth reported emotional abuse or neglect and approximately 80% reported smoking daily. These youth were also reported to have lower rates of condom use and much higher prevalence of sexually transmitted infections such as chlamydia and gonorrhea than one would find in the general population of youth in the same age group (Saewyc, in press). Current estimates also suggest that between 12% and 32% of street youth in Canada are also involved in prostitution (PHAC, 2006a).

Moreover, because of these collective risk factors and limited opportunities to engage in formal education and training, many youth become dependent on the "street economy." This economy often entails participation in sex work, panhandling, drug trafficking, and theft, as primary sources of income necessary to meet basic survival needs for food, clothing, and shelter. Findings from the Public Health Agency of Canada (2006a) indicate that between 20 to 23 per cent of street youth reported having had a past experience of trading sex for money, cigarettes, drugs, alcohol, and/or shelter and that females were more likely than males to have done so. Notably, street-involved youth in Montreal were found to have death rates 11 times higher than comparable age and sex adjusted rates for the general population of youth in Montreal, with suicide and drug overdoses being the most prevalent causes of death (Roy, Boivin, Haley, & Lemire, 1998).

Not surprisingly, SMGV youth are often at an increased risk for street-involvement as many are forced out of their homes and cast away from their support networks when they disclose or have their non-heterosexual or gender identity exposed (Ryan & Futterman, 1998). Multiple research studies indicate that between 11% and 35% of street youth (1 in 5 on average) self-identify as a SMGV or report questioning their sexual identity (Cochran, Stewart, Ginzler, & Cauce, 2002; National Alliance to End Homelessness, 2009). These rates are most likely underreported since SMGV youth are unlikely to reveal their sexual orientation or gender identity to authorities.

A Seattle study of homeless youth found more negative outcomes for street-involved sexual minority adolescents than their heterosexual counterparts (Cochrane et al., 2002). These outcomes included "more-frequent departures from home, greater

vulnerability to physical and sexual victimization, higher rates of addictive substance use, more psychopathology, and riskier sexual behavior" (Cochrane et al., 2002, p. 775). The study also found that "adolescents face great challenges as they work to come to terms with their sexual orientation... Their [sexual minority] homeless counterparts, however, frequently have no family members available, no school environment to support them, and transient or insufficient peer networks" (p. 775). Other research studies indicate that lesbian, gay, and bisexual homeless youth are 62% more likely to attempt suicide than their heterosexual homeless peers, and have higher risk exposure to sexual abuse and exploitation, experience 7.4 more acts of sexual violence, and are at greater risk for drug abuse (National Alliance to End Homelessness, 2009).

These research studies suggest that key intervention strategies for the street-involved youth population should also specifically target SMGV youth and work to identify and build upon prevention programs that help youth to build positive social networks. A critical aspect of these social networks includes strengthening ties to the home and with peers who are not street-involved (PHAC, 2006a). Correspondingly, educators, counsellors, social workers, and police officers should attempt to facilitate connections and contacts with supportive friends at home and in the school environment. Effective intervention strategies should also seek to work with the school system to develop family-focused interventions for youth who are at-risk for becoming street-involved.

Symbolic and Physical Violence and Threats to Personal Safety

In 2005, criminologist Douglas Janoff released a groundbreaking study on homophobic violence in Canada. His book begins with a necrology, which details more

than 100 known homicides of SMGV persons in Canada from 1990-2004. In his analysis

Janoff identifies that more than 40% of the perpetrators of these hate crimes were

homophobic teenagers. Correspondingly, the Public Health Agency of Canada (2006b)

identifies that the most common *perpetrators* of youth violence are young, heterosexual

males. The most common *victims* of youth violence are: "peers, including girlfriends,

boyfriends and other young people; family members, including siblings and parents; and

members of ethnocultural groups or sexual minorities" (PHAC, 2006b, para. 4). These

findings have recently been affirmed by Statistics Canada (2008), which issued results

from the first social survey to collect national data on the extent to which gay, lesbian,

and bisexual individuals were victims of violent crime and discrimination (Beauchamp,

2008). The survey found that gay, lesbian, and bisexual adults experienced higher rates of

violent victimization including sexual assault, robbery, and physical assault and rates of

discrimination three times higher than heterosexuals. Statistics Canada found that the

majority of hate crimes involve young people, both as the perpetrators and victims of hate

crimes (Dauvergne, Scrim, & Brennan, 2008). For example, one in ten hate crimes in

Canada is motivated by a person's actual or perceived sexual orientation or gender

identity and more than 50% of these hate crimes are violent in nature, result in physical

trauma, and require medical intervention.

An American study involving more than 12,000 adolescents in grades 7-12 found

that youth who reported same-sex or both-sex romantic attractions were more likely to

experience extreme forms of violence (Russell, Franz, & Driscoll, 2001). The youth

surveyed were more likely to have been in a fight that resulted in the need for medical

treatment and, in particular, bisexual youth were more likely to have been jumped and

violently attacked. In British Columbia a study reported that 20% of gay and lesbian youth had been physically assaulted in the past year (McCreary Centre Society, 1999). A 1999 Safe Schools Coalition study of Seattle public schools found that sexual minority youth were five times more likely than their heterosexual peers to be targets of violence and/or harassment, almost three times more likely to be injured in a fight severely enough to need medical attention, and nearly twice as likely to be threatened or injured by someone with a weapon. Since the study's inception in 1993, seven young people have reported being gang raped in public schools because of their sexual orientation (Reis, 1999).

Sexual minority youth are not only the victims of violence. In some cases they may also become the perpetrators of violence. DuRant, Krowchuck, and Sinal (1998) reported that young gay and bisexual males are more likely to carry and use weapons when compared with their heterosexual peers. This self-defensive behavior is often linked to youth feeling at-risk for violence based on their actual or perceived sexual orientation. Russell, Franz, and Driscoll (2001) found that "youths attracted to the same sex were more than twice as likely to perpetrate violence" (pp. 904-905). This violence was often motivated by feelings of fear and a perceived need for self-defense. With few safe social spaces available for sexual minority youth to meet one another to socialize and experience the normal developmental process, many turn to bars and nightclubs, which are often located in more dangerous parts of a city that are intended for adults. As a result, these youth often find themselves in spaces where they may be the witness or object of violence.

In his groundbreaking research, D'Augelli (1998) summarizes several of the key

reasons why lesbian, gay, and bisexual youth are more likely to be victimized than adults:

(1) adolescents, in general, are at a greater risk of experiencing violence; (2) they tend to

congregate in gay-identified neighborhoods and at events; (3) people associate them with

the HIV/AIDS epidemic; and (4) they often experience a "backlash" resulting from

increased LGBTQ visibility in the media and society (p. 188). As youth begin to self-

identify as non-heterosexual or transgender at increasingly younger ages, they will

inevitably experience greater vulnerability and, in turn, seek out avenues for support. The

nature and scope of the social, health, and educational services available will have a

tremendous impact on the development of their self-esteem and safety. When these

supports are in place they can help to assist SMGV youth in positively meeting the

everyday challenges and opportunities of adolescence and young adulthood. In an effort

to help develop these services and supports, D'Augelli (1998) identifies systemic

victimization, institutionalized silence, marginalization, and direct attacks on those youth

who are or are perceived as being SMGV as key areas that ought to be addressed if the

health and safety needs of these youth are to be improved. Correspondingly, a healthy

personal and social identity can only be developed in a safe, supportive, and inclusive

environment. These environments often make the difference between youth who enter

adulthood with resilience and those that slide towards self-erasure.

Substance Use, Sexual Abuse, and HIV-Risk Behaviours

Contemporary research indicates that sexual minority youth are at a higher risk

for acquiring HIV than their heterosexual peers (Joint United Nations Programme on

HIV/AIDS, 2009; Saewyc et al., 2006). Those sexual minority youth who are from racial

or ethnic minorities are at an even greater risk for HIV infection. These increased

instances of HIV-risk related behaviours "appear to be associated in part with a higher

prevalence of sexual victimization" (Saewyc et al., 2006, p. 1108), stigma, lack of

knowledge, discrimination, and fear of public exposure of their identities. For example, a

large comparative survey, which analyzed a series of adolescent health surveys conducted

in the Pacific Northwest (Seattle and British Columbia) from 1992 to 2003, found that

gay, lesbian, and bisexual adolescents who reported a history of sexual abuse or assault

were more likely than their heterosexual peers to have had an "early sexual intercourse

debut, engage in unprotected intercourse, have multiple sexual partners or be involved in

prostitution or survival sex, become pregnant, and use illicit substances, including

injection drug use" (Saewyc et al., 2006, p. 1104). This same study also found that gay,

lesbian, and bisexual youth may engage "in HIV high risk behaviors as a way of coping

with sexual orientation stigma and sexual violence they may experience" (p. 1104).

     As a result of societal prejudice and discrimination, many SMGV youth often

internalize society's negative messages regarding sexual orientation and gender identity,

and suffer from self-hatred as well as social and emotional isolation. For some youth,

substance abuse can be an attempt to self-medicate as a means to manage stigma and

shame, to deny same-sex feelings, or as a defense against ridicule and anti-gay violence.

To address the impact of social prejudice, discrimination, and their relationship to rising

HIV infection rates amongst sexual minority and questioning youth, Mutchler, Ayala, and

Neith's (2005) research on building resiliency in young gay men identifies that effective

HIV prevention and educational programs should be peer driven (e.g., program decisions

are made by the young gay men); explicit about sexual practices and condom usage (e.g., materials discuss how to use condoms for anal intercourse); culturally relevant (e.g., messages make sense to the particular ethnocultural population); on-going and conducted in safe non-homophobic spaces (e.g., group activities happen in a place designated for gay youth); tailored to gay youth's issues and their perceptions of HIV risk (e.g., focus groups are used to understand the specific community and cultural factors that lead to HIV high-risk behaviors); and identify skill-building opportunities (e.g., teaching young gay men how to negotiate safer sex practices and/or build refusal skills).

Mutchler, Ayala, and Neith's (2005) research also reaffirms what previous research has demonstrated: sexual minority youth from cultural and ethnic minority backgrounds often face increased stressors that may expose them to greater risk factors than their Caucasian sexual minority peers. Historically, most of the research on sexual minority youth has been based primarily on the experiences of privileged white middle and upper class lesbians and gay men (Ryan & Futterman, 1998). For many global ethnocultural minority groups, homosexuality is seen as a distinctly Western phenomena or "disease." In North America, homophobia within ethnocultural communities such as African-Canadian, Caribbean, and Aboriginal communities can be traced to White domination and assaults on masculinity (West, 1993). These cultural stressors place enormous pressure on ethnocultural minority youth who may be coming out or coming-to-terms with a non-heterosexual identity. "Unlike racial stereotypes that are often positively reframed by the family and ethnic community, negative cultural perceptions of homosexuality are reinforced; within ethnic minority communities, as with mainstream culture, homophobia is generally high" (Ryan & Futterman, 1998, p. 14).

When designing inclusive programs for SMGV youth, Stapel (2005) identifies the importance of recognizing the critical intersections of race, culture, and sexuality. Stapel suggests that educators and community workers ask the following questions when designing SMGV-specific youth outreach and intervention programs: Is our organization inclusive of and does it reach out to youth from ethnocultural minority backgrounds? Are these youth made to feel welcome, comfortable, and safe? Are our promotional materials inclusive of diverse identities and communities? Are the topics we discuss inclusive of and of interest to different minority groups?

In addition to identifying as an ethnocultural minority, being a SMGV or questioning youth in a rural community can also pose unique challenges that educational programs and support services should address. For example, Stapel (2005) identifies several critical factors that can help to create successful interventions for SMGV youth who live in rural environments.

(1) Embrace technology: The Internet can serve as a powerful tool to enable rural youth to access information and resources on SMGV issues. Thus it is important ensure that school and public libraries do not use software programs that filter out SMGV websites or restrict access to information on healthy sexuality (Schrader & Wells, 2005, 2007). For many youth, the Internet is a virtual lifeline of support. However, not all youth have confidential access to computers and/or the Internet. Therefore resources and services must also be provided in other ways to ensure that outreach efforts are not class-based and only serving those youth who have the economic and/or geographic means to access them.

(2) Network with professional service providers: Help educate local social workers, public health/school-based nurses, counsellors, and medical professionals on SMGV youth issues. For many youth, these professionals will be the first line of support they seek out when questions or difficulties arise. Organizations can work with these professionals to ensure that they understand and respect confidentiality guidelines and ethical codes of conduct that pertain to SMGV youth (Wells & Tsutsumi, 2005).

(3) Address transportation issues: For many rural SMGV youth, transportation is the most significant barrier to service. Programs should consider providing travel stipends, bursaries, car pools, charter buses, or a travel buddy system. Successful programs designed to meet the needs of rural SMGV youth must address travel limitations if their programs are to achieve designated goals and outcomes.

(4) Develop inclusive resource collections: Organizations are encouraged to work with local school or public libraries to ensure their holdings are inclusive of SMGV topics and issues (Schrader &Wells, 2005, 2007). Often LGBTQ-themed books are censored or challenged by dubious reason of constructed "community standards". This censorship deprives rural youth access to information that depicts their lives and communities. Without access to the Internet, libraries and inclusive resource collections can serve as an oasis for many SMGV and questioning youth.

(5) Evaluate new and existing programs: Very little research has been conducted on the needs and experiences of SMGV youth living in rural or remote communities. Therefore, it is important to engage in research to create a database of exemplary practices that can help to inform future practice, influence policy development, and develop targeted funding opportunities.

(6) Create local alliances: Rural individuals and communities often value their independence and autonomy. Many communities are skeptical of outside interventions or offers of support. To help address these barriers to service, organizations and educators should seek to build local community partnerships and "home-grown" strategies that are designed to meet the needs of the local community. One way to build these alliances is to partner with local colleges and universities to develop a gay–straight student alliance or SMGV student support groups. Sexual minority, gender variant, and questioning youth from local and surrounding communities can be encouraged to attend these programs.

In all educational initiatives and support services it is especially important to always maintain a person's confidentiality and anonymity. The coming out and coming-to-terms processes are unique for each individual. Rural and remote communities are often tightly knit and well connected. As a result, many closeted SMGV youth are fearful to access supports and services. Emphasizing confidentiality and maintaining anonymity can help to dissuade these fears and, in turn, encourage youth to seek out sources of support. Perhaps above all else, the most important aspect in supporting SMGV youth is simply to be visible. The very presence of supportive programs, services, and adult SMGV and allied role models can give young people a sense of hope and possibility for their future. Even if youth never attend these programs, they will know that supports are available should they ever need to access them.

Building Resilience in At-Risk Youth

Why study resilience? One glance at today's newspaper headlines or television sound bites demonstrates how the world around us, and our role in it, is growing

increasingly complex. Parents, teachers, and health-care professionals recognize that

today's youth are facing a multitude of new challenges and adversities. These

complexities highlight how more research is needed to explore the variables that can help

to predict (and prompt) resilient adaptation among youth in the face of adversity.

Perhaps, more pragmatically stated, what conditions enable some youth to overcome

tremendous obstacles and still thrive? How can we as researchers learn from these

examples to help other youth develop what Goldstein and Brooks (2005a) identify as a

"resilient mindset" (pp.3-4)?

Understanding these complex and multidimensional processes can help to inform

and develop models and critical interventions that can serve to help us more fully

understand and profile resilience trajectories among positively adapted youth. Goldstein

and Brooks (2005a) argue that every child is capable of developing a resilient mindset,

which can enable them to "deal more effectively with stress and pressure, to cope with

everyday challenges, to bounce back from disappointments, adversity, and trauma, to

develop clear and realistic goals, to solve problems, to relate comfortably with others, and

to treat oneself with respect" (p. 4).

Resilience is a relatively new concept in the research literature (Glicken, 2006).

While there is no common definition of resilience, most contemporary researchers agree

that it is a "biopsychosocial process" (Goldstein & Brooks, 2005a, p. 4), which represents

a combination of one's ability to overcome adversity and develop the skills necessary to

adapt, mature, increase competence, and thrive in challenging or high-risk environments.

In addition to this definition, some researchers also consider resilience to be an integral

part of an individual's genetic makeup. For example, Masten (2001) postulates that

resilience should be considered the norm, rather than exception for the human species. To support her claim, she asserts that resilience is not an extraordinary quality, rather it is innate and therefore can be developed and nurtured. This perspective reflects a newer trend in resilience-based research, which attempts to move beyond clinical symptom-driven approaches related to treatment and intervention. The trend now is to engage in more holistic research that examines not only deficits, but also areas of strength, which can be built upon to help develop the protective factors that are necessary to help build resilient adaptation in youth (Goldstein & Brooks, 2005a; Luthar & Cicchetti, 2000).

In their analysis of the emerging body of literature related to resilience, O'Dougherty Wright and Masten (2005) describe three waves of research. Early research explored individual resilience, which focused on individual traits or characteristics of resilient people. Second stage research highlighted the processes leading to resilience in development. In this stage, research emphasis is placed on the role of relationships and systems that extend beyond the immediate family (for example, biological, social, and cultural influences). The third wave of resiliency research focuses on the multi-dimensional interventions that are necessary to understand the processes of resilient adaptation. Research in this wave explores the development of resiliency frameworks or models and conducts experimental studies to test resilience theory. This perspective emphasizes how resilience is a process or phenomenon, rather than a fixed trait, attribute, or characteristic of person. For example, youth resilience researchers Luthar and Zelazo (2003) highlight that "children's own characteristics are likely to be less influential than aspects of the environment in promoting and sustaining resilience" (p. 530).

Accordingly, a critical source to help build resilient adaptation in children and youth is to improve the "quality of the parent-child relationship and, more generally, the well-being of caregivers" (p. 533). This is particularly important in situations where an adverse family environment cannot be changed without posing great risk to the child. In these settings, enhancing community and school-based supports are critical in helping to address a child's basic need for a sense of belonging, strong attachment, and unqualified support. As Luthar and Zelazo (2003) emphatically state, "resilient adaptation rests on good relationships"(p. 544) that are readily available and unconditionally supported in the life of a child.

As evidenced by the recent waves of resilience-based research, current research has undertaken a conceptual shift away from simply identifying the individual attributes of resilient children (a check-list style approach) to a more complex understanding that emphasizes the *processes* of resilience (Glicken, 2006). As Pianta and Walsh (1998) suggest, resilience studies need to move beyond individual "success stories", and focus on multidimensional developmental factors. A developmental systems approach necessarily focuses on resilience as both a process and a construct. Early resiliency research tended to primarily focus on development psychopathology and the pathway between normal and abnormal development. Out of this focus on risk and disorder, the identification of "protective factors" designed to inform programs and interventions were developed and implemented in an effort to enhance a child's innate resilience. However, as Pianta and Walsh suggest, from a developmental perspective, "locating resilience in children is problematic" (p. 410). Resilience is much more complex than a "single-location discourse" such as situating resilience only within the child, family, or school.

Rather, a more complex understanding positions resilience as a multi-faceted process, which should be researched and understood within a broad social, cultural, and developmental context.

Accordingly, resilience is much more than a simple set of characteristics to be developed or protective factors to be harnessed. Rather it is better understood as a complex developmental process, which must be contextualized for each individual child and youth. For example, resilient adaptation can perhaps be best understood as a "constellation of family factors, parenting behaviors, life stress, and child characteristics" (p. 410), which collectively combine to create protective or asset-enhancing factors. It is the interaction of these conditions that is critical in the development of resiliency and its future study. For example, these core competencies are the result of the interaction of important systems in a child's life. The more positive and supportive interactions children have with their family, school peers, and community, the more positive developmental outcomes they will acquire. Therefore, as Pianta and Walsh (1998) posit, "resilience is more process than product" (p. 411) and, as such, interventions that foster resilience and positive adaptation need to be gender specific and adapted for different regions and ethnocultural groups and for specific identity groups like sexual minority and gender variant youth (Saewyc, in press).

In these terms, resilience is not a product or end goal; rather, it is a process that must be continually developed, targeted, nurtured, and sustained. Children need integrated and comprehensive interventions to help nurture resilience across multiple domains and contexts. One-time interventions, such as "add-on" or "short-term" programs may actually increase, rather than reduce risk. Accordingly, Luthar and

Cicchetti (2000) argue for "comprehensive services that are not only strongly anchored in theory and scientific evidence on resilience but also involve concerted efforts to use existing resources and personnel within given classrooms, school, or communities" (p. 866).

Regardless of the approach taken in studying resilience, "we must remember that resilience is not absolute. Virtually every youth has a breaking point" (Gabarino, 2005, p. xi). Youth may appear resilient in social terms, but they can be severely wounded in inner or emotional ways. For example, boys tend to act out in explicit anti-social ways. However, girls tend to internalize stressors, which often do not manifest themselves in outward or physically noticeable behaviors.

In their comprehensive review of historical and contemporary resilience-based research, Goldstein and Brooks (2005b) emphasize that future research directions should include: (1) the development of ecologically-based models that take into account the interaction of youth and their environment, which forms their developmental context; (2) the important role of positive relationships with healthy adults; and (3) the present competencies of a child rather than a sole focus on deficiency measures. Collectively, this focus can help to influence the development of evidenced-based models that take advantage of and foster resiliency-enhancing factors that reduce risk, build healthy relationships, and enhance self-esteem. It is this shift away from a focus on maladjustment, risk, and deficits to an exploration of competence, positive adaptation, self-sustainability that is critical when working with vulnerable youth populations to effect positive change.

Identifying Protective Factors of Resilient Children and Young Adults

Glicken (2006) identifies protective factors as "the supports and opportunities that buffer the effect of adversity and enable development to proceed" (p. 11). Protective factors are also commonly understood as "assets," "resources," and "buffers" whose presence or absence across multiple environments can have a significant impact on a child's or adult's ability to overcome or positively address risk factors and/or stressful life events. However, it is important to emphasize that resilience in and of itself cannot be directly measured. Rather, it is inferred based on "direct measurement of the two component constructs, risk and positive adaptation" (Luthar & Zelazo, 2003, p. 514). Importantly, "Children cannot 'make themselves' enduringly resilient" (Luthar & Cicchetti, 2000, p. 864). Resilience is more than a personal attribute to be developed, as challenging environments can create adverse conditions for even the most strong and positively adapted youth.

The Public Health Agency of Canada (2006b) identifies several key protective factors that can help to reduce the risk that youth will experience violence. These protective or resiliency-enhancing factors include "a nonabusive home; strong, early childhood attachment to caregiver(s) and good parental supervision; positive adult role models; and completion of high school and post-secondary school" (para. 28). For example, research by Grace and Wells (2009) demonstrates how nurturing home environments can contribute to the development and enhancement of a resilient mindset in gay male youth enabling them to become activist-educators for social justice within their heteronormative school environments. Conversely, Luthar and Zelazo (2003) identify that being a witness or victim of violence, interactions with anti-social peers,

experiences of discrimination and prejudice, and unsupportive and/or under resourced school environments can serve to increase the vulnerability of youth.

Based on her studies in developmental clinical research, Thompson (2006) brings together resilience-based research and effective intervention strategies to identify key attributes that are often exhibited by resilient children and youth. These assets include the ability of youth to solve problems proactively and think for themselves (for example, these youth often demonstrate higher academic outcomes, intellectual aptitude, good conduct, and a positive social history); a capacity to navigate complex emotions and deal with frustration (these skills are often learned from parents who are readily available and of good mental health); an abrogation of responsibility for other people's problems (indicating a strong internal locus of control); an awareness of the structures of oppression (such as an alcoholic parent, or a hostile, or homophobic/transphobic school environment); an optimistic outlook and persistence in the face of adversity; a healthy self-concept and positive vision for the future; an ability to live a meaningful and rewarding life (for example, a sense of belonging and attachment); a propensity for resisting internalizing put downs and negative labeling; a sense of humor and a tendency not to hold grudges; an ambition to develop and build friendships based on mutual support and trust (for example, youth with a resilient mindset often have a strong desire to help others; they often exhibit a sense of strength, connection, and interdependence found through cooperation and collaboration and are not afraid to reach out to offer support and encouragement); an ability to successfully manage one's life; and a sense of autonomy.

Based upon these attributes, Thompson (2006) suggests that "schools, institutions, and community groups can foster these qualities by helping young people establish relationships with caring adult role models and by providing environments that recognize achievements, provide healthy expectations, nurture self-esteem, and encourage problem-solving and critical thinking skills" (p. 71). While these are important characteristics that all educators and policy makers should be aware of and help to develop, educational interventions ought to move beyond a sole focus on individual or personal attributes to a more complex examination of how issues related to class, race, ethnicity, historicity, and other social and cultural determinants impact a youth's ability to develop a resilient mindset. With Thompson's model, what happens when a youth "fails" to become resilient? Too often the blame lies with the individual youth who did not try "hard enough" or was not "good enough" to become resilient. This can be a devastating message for any youth to internalize. The deficits of Thompson's neo-liberal model are its almost exclusive focus on a psychological stage theory of personal development, which presumes a linear and normal pathway and its tendency to blame individuals rather than oppressive systems when youth fail. Indeed, any deviation from this sequential pathway presupposes arrested development, individual pathology, and weakness (Rasmussen, 2006). A more encompassing and critical perspective would question what counts as normal development and how notions of power are implicated in this definition. As Luthar and Cicchetti (2000) suggest, rather than focusing solely on the development of attributes, interventions focused on promoting resilient adaptation in youth should be guided by (1) a strong grounding in theory, and be contextualized within the particular group being targeted; (2) efforts should be focused not only on the reduction of negative

outcomes, but also toward positive adaptation and the development of core competencies; (3) interventions should be designed to build upon specific resources or existing "assets" present within individuals or target populations; (4) interventions should have a strong developmental focus and operate across multiple levels of influence such as the family, community, school, and individual; (5) intervention efforts should work to develop self-sustainability, which often relies on the involvement of localized supports found within communities; and (6) when possible, data should also be collected and compared with appropriate control groups to examine the effectiveness of such interventions.

Taking Gender into Account:
Developing Resilient Adaptation in Young Males and Females

Contemporary resilience-based research has begun to take a gendered perspective in its investigations of how resilience can be nurtured more effectively within young males and females. For example, Pollack (2005) and Jordan (2005) each offer much-needed research that helps to complicate our understandings of resilience as a gendered experience. As an example, Pollack (2005) suggests that there is an urgent need for mentoring and interconnectedness to promote the development of a resilient mindset in boys and young males. Imprisoned by a strict code of masculinity, he argues that young males often internalize their emotions and suffer in silence. The "boy code" and its associated hard masculinity tell young males that they will lose the respect of their peer group if they follow their emotional voices, reach out for a sense of connectedness, or talk openly about their feelings. To counter this inward reaching focus, Pollack identifies several key influences that can help to promote resilient adaptation in young males. These positive influences include the need for boys and young males to develop close friends

they can rely on in their lives. Pollack also stresses the importance of boys establishing platonic friendships with girls within their circle of peers and developing empathy and love at an early age as key resilience enhancing characteristics. Family mentors who are trusted adults that can help boys feel loved and protected are also stressed as critical positive influences in the lives of boys and young males.

Jordan (2005) suggests that fostering relationship and a sense of connection is critical to the development of resilient adaptation in *both* boys and girls. Girls tend to "attribute failure to internal factors and success to chance or external factors, while boys tend to attribute failure to external factors and success to internal factors" (p. 81). Girls' coping styles are also more relational, whereas boys' coping styles are more problem-focused or instrumental. Typically, males engage in a "fight-or-flight" response when faced with stress, while females respond to stress with a "tend-and-befriend" response. This relational response is associated with the creation of networks to protect themselves and others from threat. Jordan suggests, "Women respond relationally to stress; they seek connection" (p. 82). Perhaps what both sexes need is a shift away from an exclusive focus on the development of self-esteem, which is individualistic and derives from comparisons with others, toward a more holistic understanding of social-esteem, which "depends a lot on how one is treated by others and whether one can be authentic and seen and heard in relationships with important others" (p. 81).

In times of stress youth need to learn to move outward, rather than inward in focus. This is particularly true for young males. Human connection is vital and, in the developing years, it plays a significant role in creating neural connections and reinforcing positive patterns of behaviors. All youth need to be encouraged to seek out supportive

relationships that do not pose further danger or risk in their lives. This relational

resilience focuses on strengthening "relationships rather than increasing an individual's

strength" (p. 83). Clearly, strengthening important relationships in a young person's life

helps to build and strengthen their personal agency and, in turn, their ability to face life's

challenges and adversities positively.

Building the Resilient Adaptation of Sexual Minority and Gender Variant Youth

The historical focus on the risk factors faced by SMGV youth has been an

important area of study. It has driven new forms of research, identified areas for critical

intervention, provided an impetus for inclusive policy development, and created a

heightened awareness surrounding the health, safety, and educational needs of sexual

minority, gender variant, and questioning youth. However, as Russell (2005) notes, the

"body of research on sexual minority youth... is arguably obsessed with risk. As a result

we lack clarity in our use and understanding of risk and resilience.... More attention is

needed to [understand] the ways that risk and resilience may operate at multiple levels or

in multiple contexts" (p. 7). As well, the meanings and uses associated with each term

need to be problematized and, as necessary, re-conceptualized as we rethink possibilities

for research, policy, and practice.

To address this obsession with risk, Horn, Kosciw, and Russell (2009) argue that

a paradigm shift is needed in which researchers no longer study SMGV youth as "either

at-risk OR resilient, but rather … [they focus attention] on understanding the ways in

which LGBT youth negotiate their development within various social contexts" (p. 863).

In this light, resilience is studied as a multifaceted process of positive adaptation in the

face of adversity and challenging life circumstances such as parental rejection, workplace discrimination, bullying, and hostile school environments.

Despite the growing body of resilience-based research, much of the current literature in relation to SMGV youth has highlighted "risk and protective factors in their lives that are no different than those in the lives of all adolescents" (Russell, 2005, p. 9). It is true that many of these risk factors are indeed normative and applicable to the lives of all youth. However, there are a number of risk and protective factors that are unique to SMGV youth. For example, Russell (2005) identifies the following risk factors as being unique to SMGV youth:

> Coming out at a younger age, which can be associated with suicidality; coming out at school, which is associated with peer harassment and victimization; coming out to parents, which is associated with suicidality; conflict at home due to an adolescent's sexual orientation, which has been linked to running away; sexual orientation-based victimization, which is associated with psychological distress, personal homonegativity, suicidality, sexual risk-taking, school drop-out, and truancy; and gay-related stress (gay-related stressful events, negative attitudes toward or discomfort with homosexuality), which is associated with compromised emotional health, conduct problems, and suicide attempts. (p. 10)

To help ameliorate these SMGV specific youth risk factors, a small yet growing body of literature has begun to explore the protective factors unique to SMGV youth. These protective factors, which are critical in the resilient adaptation of SMGV youth, are identified as:

- Positive representations: Affirming representations that move beyond

stereotypical portrayals of SMGV persons in the classroom curriculum, on

television, in magazines, and on the radio, can serve to build the self-esteem and

foster the healthy personal and social development of SMGV youth (Fenaughty &

Harré, 2003).

- Family acceptance and nurturing relationships: Welcoming and affirming family

  relationships are arguably the most important protective factor in the lives of

  SMGV youth. These familial relationships are critical in helping youth to develop

  a positive sense of self and, in turn, can help to reduce the stresses associated with

  coming out and coming to terms with a non-heterosexual or gender variant

  identity (Brown & Colbourne, 2005; Eisenberg & Resnick, 2006; Fenaughty &

  Harré, 2003; Russell, 2005).

- School connectedness and peer support: Teacher training on SMGV issues is

  associated with the development of positive school climates and increased

  educational outcomes, which can also serve as a mitigating factor in decreasing

  stress associated with homophobic bullying and harassment (Fenaughty & Harré,

  2003; Russell, 2005). Gay–straight student alliances are one example of school-

  based supports that can help to foster experiences of school connectedness and a

  sense of belonging (Szalacha, 2003; Wells, 2006). For example, Goodenow,

  Szalacha, and Westheimer's (2006) recent population-based study found that "the

  presence of school support groups for LGB students was significantly associated

  with lower victimization and suicidality risk for sexual minority adolescents, that

  the perception of staff support was protective, and that victimization was a

  significant predictor of suicidality" (p. 583). In an earlier comparison-based study,

Szalacha (2003) reported that schools with GSAs were rated by both students and

staff as "having significantly less hostile, more supportive psychosocial climate

for LGB students than was true in schools without GSAs" (as cited in Goodenow,

Szalacha, & Westheimer, 2006, p. 576).

- School-based policies: Schools with policies that prohibit discrimination on the

grounds of sexual orientation and gender identity are also considered a significant

protective factor in the lives of SMGV youth (Russell, 2005). Goodenow,

Szalacha, and Westheimer (2006) found that schools that had support groups for

sexual minority students were more likely than other schools to have written

policies on sexual orientation and were more likely to have trained staff on those

policies. Clearly, the school environment is a major influence on suicidality and

other risk factors that sexual minority youth experience. As Goodenow, Szalacha,

and Westheimer state,

> Threats, harassment, and intimidation at school may be especially critical
>
> for sexual minority youth.... Anti-gay victimization has been found to
>
> occur often in the presence of others, and is sometimes even encouraged
>
> and applauded by peers.... [As a result,] LGB adolescents may be reluctant
>
> to report even the most severe victimization if they perceive school
>
> authorities as unsympathetic, unapproachable, and unwilling to intervene
>
> on their behalf. (p. 585)

- Support networks: Sexual minority and gender variant youth are often one of the

most important sources of support for one another. The shared experience of

coming out in a heteronormative world can help to foster a sense of connection,

which, in turn, can reduce feelings of isolation, alienation, and despair when SMGV youth realize that they are not alone in their experiences (Fenaughty & Harré, 2003). For example, community-based groups, such as local youth groups, can offer a critical source of support by providing a space and place where SMGV youth can openly discuss their feelings without fear of stigmatization or violence (Grace & Wells, 2001). These groups provide an important opportunity for peer-to-peer and intergenerational mentoring to occur, where "everyday" role models can share their experiences to help youth to develop real-life strategies for overcoming adversity within their local communities.

- Comprehensive sexual health education: Fears and inaccurate information related to sexually transmitted infections and HIV/AIDs can lead to increased risk-taking behaviours and suicidal thoughts for SMGV youth (Fenaughty & Harré, 2003; Wells, 2008). It is important for educators to challenge stereotypes and misinformation that conflate sexual practices with specific sexual or gender identities. HIV/AIDS does not discriminate based on sexual or gender identity. Correspondingly, accurate, SMGV-inclusive education, provided in a non-judgmental manner is strongly correlated with a reduction in sexual risk-taking behaviors (Russell, 2005). For some sexual minority youth, who may be or fear becoming HIV positive, informed education can help them and others to understand better that HIV is a preventable disease and not a "death sentence" (Fenaughty & Harré, 2003, p. 14). This is particularly important with increasing HIV/AIDS rates being reported among young men who have sex with men around the world (UNAIDS, 2009). Unfortunately, many SMGV youth continue to be

denied access to non-judgmental sexual health information in their schools, families, libraries, and communities, placing them at increased risk for physical, emotional, and mental health problems (Mutchler, Ayala, & Neith, 2005; Schrader & Wells, 2007; UNESCO, 2009).

Collectively, these unique protective factors can help SMGV youth to positively adapt to challenging life circumstances and develop a resilient mindset in the face of adversity. Helping youth to positively integrate their sexual orientation and gender identity is a critical developmental milestone, which is strongly correlated with the need for family acceptance, peer support, and access to supportive community environments (Gwadz, Clatts, Yi, Leonard, Goldsamt, & Lankenau, 2006). In particular, gender variant, Two-Spirit, and ethnocultural sexual minority youth are recognized as especially vulnerable populations as they often experience increased stigma and ridicule and face additional barriers and challenges when attempting to access inclusive information and supports.

Ultimately, helping all youth to foster and positively integrate a stable sexual orientation and gender identity is critical in helping to build their personal resilience. Clearly, access to multiple protective factors can help youth to increase their likelihood of positively adapting to life challenges and adversities. A focus on both risk/vulnerability factors as well as protective factors/assets at the individual, family, and community levels should be a focus for critical interventions to help support SMGV youth to grow into resilience. Accordingly, the research is clear in demonstrating that "multiple protective factors substantially increase the likelihood of positive outcomes among at-risk groups" (Luthar & Cicchetti, 2000, p. 875).

Concluding Perspective: Implications for Future Research

Cohler and Hammack (2007) characterize the large body of research conducted with sexual minority youth as premised within two competing narrative frameworks, which they identify as "narratives of struggle and success" and "narratives of emancipation" (p. 49). Narratives of struggle and success reflect early stage research that characterized lesbian and gay youth as victims of homophobia and heterosexism who were more likely to experience serious mental health issues (e.g., depression, anxiety, and suicidality) when compared with their heterosexual peers. This research foci still dominates much of the field of contemporary youth studies, which positions adolescence (for both heterosexual and non-heterosexual youth) as a "stage of storm and stress" (Ayman-Nolley & Taira, 2000, p. 35).

In contrast to this traditional deficit focus, Cohler and Hammack (2007) characterize and welcome the emergence of new approaches to research on sexual minority youth as premised in narratives of emancipation, which focuses on de-pathologizing the lived experiences of sexual minority and questioning youth, embracing the fluidity of multiple and situated identities, and investigating how youth positively address issues related to minority stress. This research seeks to re-define the very concept of "normality" so queer is no longer defined outside the realm of healthy adolescent development. However, despite this new research emphasis, Cohler and Hammack provide a caution: "Questions of development and normality cannot be considered independent of both time and place" (p. 49). Rather the inclusion of contextual considerations such as culture, race, gender, socio-historical context, geography, and, I would add, positional issues of power, agency, and subjectivity must be taken into

account when attempting to understand how SMGV youth develop and occupy subject positions such as "at-risk" and "resilient."

Most of the contemporary research focused on SMGV youth parallels the invention of the category of adolescence as a social construct. As Lesko (2001) suggests, adolescence was a category historically created for the purposes of "naming, studying, diagnosing, predicting, and administering an identifiable adolescent population" (p. 61). In this regard, Lesko positions adolescence as "a technology [designed] to produce certain kinds of persons within particular social arrangements" (p. 50). From this critical perspective, rather than a sole focus on what constitutes "normal" development for SMGV youth, researchers should also ask how and why the very category of "queer youth" has been produced and regulated as being at-risk.

Traditionally researchers and educators have relied on "at-risk" discourses to make sexual minority, and more recently gender variant, youth intelligible in an effort to provide interventions for them (Talburt, 2004). This discourse is steeped in the tradition of social science research that calls for a coherent developmental narrative with a clear beginning, middle, and end. As Talburt (2004) suggests, educators and researchers have "persisted in using these statistics and narratives of victimization to justify specific counseling services, youth programs, and calls for educational equity through arguments that harassed gay and lesbian students are denied equal access to opportunities to learn" (p. 28). While this notion of minority stress is important, at the same time it has re-inscribed a narrative in which "coming out" is defined as fundamental to the development of a positive and healthy identity for SMGV youth. As researchers taking up notions of queer criticality, we need to be cautious and resist the creation of a "celebratory

discourse" related to coming out that positions those who come out as heroes fighting against the forces of homophobia, transphobia, and heterosexism pitted against those who remain in the closet as victims and martyrs (Rasmussen, 2006). For example, what happens if a youth is not able to safely come out within their faith, religious, ethnic, or rural community? Does their refusal to be liberated presuppose or inscribe discourses of shame and disavowal?

Coming out is always contextual and relational and should be situated within understandings of how sexuality, race, culture, ethnicity, geography, class, gender, ability, and power can work independently or interdependently to open up or limit possibilities for disclosure to self and others. We do not live our identities in installments. This in/out dichotomy glosses over individual agency and the deployment of identities as a site of resistance and, in some cases, survival. For example, the primary developmental task in the narrative of struggle and success is to overcome the "risks" associated with a non-heterosexual identity and to "transcend the inevitable internalization of heterosexism and homophobia, and reclaim gay identity as a positive index of relational and sexual being" (Cohler & Hammack, 2007, p. 52).

There is little doubt that this research was vital in supporting positive educational and social interventions that have been of immense benefit to SMGV youth. However, the narrative of fixed developmental pathways and the development of a positive life course trajectory achieved by coming out and coming to terms as a sexual minority or gender variant person is also problematic as it fails to situate the "normal" development of SMGV adolescent identity within shifting historical moments and cultural traditions. For example, rapid advances in law and legislation benefiting sexual minorities, notably

in Canada since 1998, have provided sexual minority youth with an expanded horizon of possibilities in which they can imagine and narrate a future without victimization as the central mechanism in which they might become intelligible to themselves and others (Cohler & Hammack, 2007).

Without question, the conceptual shift towards focusing on resilient adaptation and narratives of emancipation is a welcome trend in research focusing on the health, educational, and social needs and experiences of SMGV youth. However, we should also be mindful to critique the trend in resilience-based research that focuses exclusively on psychological analysis and linear developmental pathways. The very category of normalcy must be problematized, and at the centre of our research efforts, if SMGV youth are to be provided with the opportunity to develop their own subjectivities and sense of agency outside of disciplinary forms of heteronormative discourses and power relationships.

Concomitantly, as Horn, Kosciw, and Russell (2009) suggest, research on SMGV adolescents must continue to evolve. When charting the course for future research endeavours, these researchers emphasize that emerging adolescent health research and interventions ought to focus on (1) the role of familial relationships, with particular attention to the effects of family acceptance and rejection on the health and well-being of SMGV youth; (2) further exploration of the development and fluidity of sexual and gender identities and how trajectories of development might differ for youth who come out at younger ages (13 or 14 years old) versus those youth who come out later in life (23 or 24 years old); (3) attention to the role and relationship that critical interventions (e.g., LGBTQ-inclusive curriculum, policy, and anti-bullying programs) and extracurricular

opportunities such as gay–straight alliances and other youth support groups contribute to the reduction of risk and promotion of resilient adaptation; (4) an analysis of how "mainstream" youth serving agencies and educational programs account or fail to account for the differing needs and experiences of SMGV youth within their services, which should be designed to support all youth; (5) what protective or risk-related role does religion have in the lives of SMGV and questioning adolescents; and (6) what are the experiences of SMGV youth within workplace environments and what relationship does having to hide one's sexual orientation and gender identity have within this context.

Clearly, while advances have and continue to be made within adolescent research, all too often sexual orientation and gender identity still remain forgotten or unaddressed sources of analyses, which limits not only how we understand the experiences of SMGV youth, but of all youth whom we hope to benefit with our research. The time has come for a paradigm shift whereby SMGV youth are no longer understood as a separate category for investigation and analysis, but rather incorporated into all aspects of adolescent studies and educational interventions.

References

Ayman-Nolley, S., & Taira, L. L. (2000). Obsession with the dark side of adolescence: A decade of psychological studies. *Journal of Youth Studies, 3*(1), 35-48. doi:10.1080/136762600113022

Bacon, J. (1999). *Creating safer schools for lesbian, gay and bisexual youth: A resource for educators concerned with equity.* Toronto, ON: Education Wife Assault.

Bagley, C., & Tremblay, P. (1997). Suicidal behaviors in homosexual and bisexual

males. *Crisis, 18*(1), 24-34. Retrieved from http://www.youth-suicide.com/gay-bisexual/suicide.htm

Beauchamp, D. L. (2008). *Statistics Canada, Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics: Sexual orientation and victimization.* Ottawa, ON: Ministry of Industry, Government of Canada.

Biegel, S. (2010). *The right to be out: Sexual orientation and gender identity in America's public schools.* Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press.

Birkett, M., Espelage, D. L., & Koenig, B. (2009). LGB and questioning students in schools: The moderating effects of homophobic bullying and school climate on negative outcomes. *Journal of Youth Adolescence, 38*(7), 989-1000. doi:10.1007/s10964-008-9389-1

Bohn, G. (2006). Lesbian teens more likely to attempt suicide. *Vancouver Sun.* Retrieved from http://www.vancouversun.com

Britzman, D. P. (1995). Is there a queer pedagogy? Or, stop reading straight. *Educational Theory, 45*(2), 151-165. doi:10.1111/j.1741-5446.1995.00151.x

Britzman, D. P. (1997). What is this thing called love? New discourses for understanding gay and lesbian youth. In S. de Castell & M. Bryson (Eds.), *Radical in<ter>ventions: Identity, politics, and differences in educational praxis* (pp. 183-207). Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.

Brown, M., & Colbourne, M. (2005). Bent but not broken: Exploring queer youth resilience. In M. Ungar (Ed.), *Handbook for working with children and youth: Pathways to resilience across cultures and contexts* (pp. 263-277). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Bryson, M., & de Castell, S. (1993). Queer pedagogy: Praxis makes im/perfect. *Canadian*

    Journal of Education, 18(3), 285-305. Retrieved from

    http://www.csse.ca/CJE/Articles/FullText/CJE18-3/CJE18-3-08Bryson.pdf

California Safe Schools Coalition, & 4-H Center for Youth Development, University of

    California, Davis. (2004). *Consequences of harassment based on actual or*

    perceived sexual orientation and gender non-conformity and steps for making

    schools safer. Retrieved from California Safe Schools Coalition website:

    http://www.casafeschools.org

Campos, D. (2005). *Understanding gay and lesbian youth: Lessons for straight school*

    teachers, counselors, and administrators. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield

    Education.

Canadian Teachers' Federation (CTF). (2005). *Lessons learned: A collection of stories*

    and articles about bisexual, gay, lesbian and transgender issues. Ottawa, ON:

    Author.

Canadian Teachers' Federation (CTF), & Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario

    (ETFO). (2002). *Seeing the rainbow: Teachers talk about bisexual, gay, lesbian,*

    transgender and two-spirited realities. Ottawa, ON: Authors.

Cass, V. C. (1979). Homosexual identity formation: A theoretical model. *Journal of*

    Homosexuality, 4, 219-235. doi:10.1300/ J082v04n03_01

Child Death Review Unit – BC Coroners Service. (2008). *"Looking for something to look*

    forward to…": A five-year retrospective review of child and youth suicide in

    British Columbia. Vancouver, BC: Author.

Cochran, B. N., Stewart, A. J., Ginzler, J. A., & Cauce, A. M. (2002). Challenges faced

by homeless sexual minorities: Comparison of gay, lesbian, bisexual, and

transgender homeless adolescents with their heterosexual counterparts. *American

Journal of Public Health, 92*(5), 773-777. Retrieved from

http://ajph.aphapublications.org/

Cohler, B. J., & Hammack, P. L. (2007). The psychological world of the gay teenager:

Social change, narrative, and 'normality'. *Journal of Youth Adolescence, 36*, 47-

59. doi:10.1007/s10964-006-9110-1

Coker, T. R., Austin, S. B., & Schuster, M. A. (2010). The health and health care of

lesbian, gay, and bisexual adolescents. *Annual Review of Public Health, 31*, 457-

477. doi:10.1146/annurev.publhealth.012809.103636

D'Augelli, A. R. (1998). Developmental implications of victimization of lesbian, gay,

and bisexual youths. In G. M. Herek (Ed.), *Stigma and sexual orientation:

Understanding prejudice against lesbians, gay men, and bisexuals* (pp. 187-210).

Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

D'Augelli, A. R., Grossman, A. H., & Starks, M. T. (2006). Childhood gender

atypicality, victimization, and PTSD among lesbian, gay, and bisexual youth.

Journal of Interpersonal Violence, 21(11), 1462-1482.

doi:10.1177/0886260506293482

Dauvergne, M., Scrim, K., & Brennan, S. (2008). *Hate crime in Canada, 2006*. Retrieved

from Statistics Canada website: http://www.statcan.gc.ca

DePalma, R., & Atkinson, E. (Eds.). (2009). *Interrogating heteronormativity in primary

schools: The No Outsiders project.* Stoke on Trent, UK: Trentham Books.

Department for Children, Schools and Families. (2007). *Safe to learn: Embedding anti-*

bullying work in schools. Retrieved from Department for Children, Schools and

Families website: http://www.dcsf.gov.uk

Dorais, M., & Lajeunesse, S. L. (2001/2004). *Dead boys can't dance: Sexual orientation,*

masculinity, and suicide (P. Tremblay, Trans.). Montreal, PQ: McGill-Queen's

University Press.

DuRant, R. H., Krowchuck, D. P., & Sinai S. H. (1998). Victimization, use of violence,

and drug use at school among male adolescents who engage in same-sex sexual

behavior. *Journal of Pediatrics, 133*(1), 113-118. doi:10.1016/S0022-

3476(98)70189-1

Egale Canada. (2009). *Youth speak up about homophobia and transphobia: The first national*

climate survey on homophobia in Canadian schools. Retrieved from Egale Canada

website: http://www.egale.ca

Eisenberg, M. E., & Resnick, M. (2006). Suicidality among gay, lesbian, and bisexual youth:

The role of protective factors. *Journal of Adolescent Health, 39*, 662-668.

doi:10.1016/j.jadohealth.2006.04.024

Elias, M., Ubriaco, M., Reese, A., Gara, M., Rothbaum, P., & Haviland, M. (1992). A

measure of adaptation to problematic academic and interpersonal tasks of middle

school. *Journal of School Psychology, 30*, 41-57. doi:10.1016/0022-4405(92)90019-2

Espelage, D. L., Aragon, S. R., Birkett, M., & Koenig, B. W. (2008). Homophobic teasing,

psychological outcomes, and sexual orientation among high school students: What

influence do parents and schools have? *School Psychology Review, 37*(2), 202-216.

Retrieved from http://www.nasponline.org/publications/spr/pdf/spr372espelage.pdf

Fenaughty, J., & Harré, N. (2003). Life on the seesaw: A qualitative study of suicide

resiliency factors for young gay men. J*ournal of Homosexuality, 45*(1), 1-22. doi:10.1300/J082v45n01_01

Filax, G. (2006). *Queer youth in the province of the 'severely normal'.* Vancouver, BC: UBC Press.

Fisher, J. (1999). *Reaching out: A report on lesbian, gay, and bisexual youth issues in Canada.* Retrieved from Egale Canada website: http://www.egale.ca

Friedman, M. S., Koeske, G. F., Silvestre, A. J., Korr, W. S., & Sites, E. W. (2006). The impact of gender-role nonconforming behavior, bullying, and social support on suicidality among gay male youth [Adolescent Health Brief]. *Journal of Adolescent Health, 38,* 621-623. doi:0.1016/j.jadohealth.2005.04.014

Friend, R. A. (1993). Choices, not closets: heterosexism and homophobia in schools. In L. Weis & M. Fine (Eds.), *Beyond silenced voices: Class, race, gender in the United States* (pp. 209-235). New York, NY: State University of New York Press.

Friend, R. A. (1998). Heterosexism, homophobia, and the culture of schooling. In S. Books (Ed.), *Invisible Children in the Society and its Schools* (pp. 137-166). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Gabarino, J. (2005). Foreword. In M. Ungar (Ed.), *Handbook for working with children and youth: Pathways to resilience across cultures and contexts* (pp. xi-xiii). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Garofalo, R., Wolf, R. C., Kessel, S., Palfrey, J., & DuRant, R. H. (1998). The association between health risk behaviors and sexual orientation among a school-based sample of adolescents. *Pediatrics, 101*(5), 895-902. Retrieved from http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/cgi/content/abstract/101/5/895

Gay and Lesbian Educators of British Columbia (GALE-BC). (2004a). *Challenging*

    homophobia in schools (2nd ed.). Retrieved from GALE-BC website:

    www.galebc.org

Gay and Lesbian Educators of British Columbia (GALE-BC). (2004b). *Creating and*

    supporting a gay/straight alliance (2nd ed.). Retrieved from GALE-BC website:

    www.galebc.org

Goldstein, S., & Brooks, R. B. (2005a). Why we study resilience? In S. Goldstein & R. B.

    Brooks (Eds.), *Handbook of resilience in children* (pp. 3-15). New York: Kluwer.

Goldstein, S., & Brooks, R. B. (2005b). The future of children today. In S. Goldstein &

    R. B. Brooks (Eds.), *Handbook of resilience in children* (pp. 397-400). New

    York: Kluwer.

Goodenow, C., Szalacha, L., & Westheimer, K. (2006). School support groups, other

    factors, and the safety of sexual minority adolescents. *Psychology in Schools,*

    43(5), 573-589. doi:10.1002/pits.20173

Gibson, P. (1994). Gay male and lesbian youth suicide. In G. Remafedi (Ed.), *Death by*

    denial: Studies of suicide in gay and lesbian teenagers (pp. 15-68). Boston:

    Alyson Publications.

Glicken, M. D. (2006). *Learning from resilient people: Lessons we can apply to*

    counseling and psychotherapy. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Grace, A. P. (2008). The charisma and deception of reparative therapies: When medical

    science beds religion. *Journal of Homosexuality, 55*(4), 545-580.

    doi:10.1080/00918360802421676

Grace, A. P. (2005). Reparative therapies: A contemporary clear and present danger

across minority sex, sexual, and gender differences. *Canadian Woman Studies,*

    24(2, 3), 145-151. Retrieved from http://www.yorku.ca/cwscf/les.html

Grace, A. P., & Wells, K. (2001). Getting an education in Edmonton, Alberta: The case

    of queer youth. *Torquere, Journal of the Canadian Lesbian and Gay Studies*

    Association, 3, 137-151.

Grace, A. P., & Wells, K. (2004). Engaging sex-and-gender differences: Educational and

    cultural change initiatives in Alberta. In J. McNinch & M. Cronin (Eds.), *I could*

    not speak my heart: Education and social justice for gay and lesbian youth (pp.

    289-307)*.* Regina, SK: Canadian Plains Research Centre, University of Regina.

Grace, A. P., & Wells, K. (2005). The Marc Hall prom predicament: Queer individual

    rights v. institutional church rights in Canadian public education. *Canadian*

    Journal of Education, 28(3), 237-270. Retrieved from

    http://www.csse.ca/CJE/Articles/FullText/CJE28-3/CJE28-3-gracewells.pdf

Grace, A. P., & Wells, K. (2006). The quest for a queer inclusive cultural ethics: Setting

    directions for teachers' pre-service and continuing professional development. In R. J.

    Hill (Ed.), *Challenging homophobia and heterosexism: Lesbian, gay, bisexual,*

    transgender and queer issues in organizational settings (pp. 51-61). New Directions

    for Adult and Continuing Education, no. 112. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Grace, A. P., & Wells, K. (2009). Gay and bisexual male youth as educator activists and

    cultural workers: The critical praxis of three Canadian high-school students.

    International Journal of Inclusive Education, 3(1), 23-44.

    doi:10.1080/13603110701254121

G.R.I.S. Québec. (2003). *Teaching guide.* Retrieved from G.R.I.S. website:

http://www.santepub-mtl.qc.ca

Gwadz, M. V., Clatts, M. C., Yi, H., Leonard, N. R., Goldsamt, L., & Lankenau, S. (2006). Resilience among young men who have sex with men in New York City. *Sexuality Research & Social Policy, 3*(1), 13-21. doi:10.1525/srsp.2006.3.1.13

Henry, F. B. (2001). *A resource for an inclusive community: A teacher's guide for and about persons with same-sex attractions.* Retrieved from Alberta Catholic School Trustee's Association website: http://www.acsta.ab.ca/resources/pastoral/inclusive.htm

Horn, S. S., Kosciw, J. G., & Russell, S. T. (2009). Special issue introduction: New research on lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender youth: Studying lives in context. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence, 38*, 863-866. doi:10.1007/s10964-009-9420-1

Janoff, D. V. (2005). *Pink blood: Homophobic violence in Canada.* Toronto, ON: University of Toronto Press.

Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS. (2009). *UNAIDS action framework: Universal access for men who have sex with men and transgender people.* Geneva, Switzerland: UNAIDS.

Jordan, J. V. (2005). Relational resilience in girls. In S. Goldstein & R. B. Brooks (Eds.), *Handbook of resilience in children* (pp. 79-90). New York: Kluwer.

Killoran, I., & Jimenez, K. P. (Eds.). (2007). *Unleashing the unpopular: Talking about sexual orientation and gender diversity in education*. Olney, MD: Association for Childhood Education International.

Kroll, I., & Warneke, L. (1995). *The dynamics of sexual orientation and adolescent*

suicide: A comprehensive review and developmental perspective. Calgary, Canada: University of Calgary and the University of Alberta.

Lesko, N. (2001). *Act your age!: A cultural construction of adolescence.* New York: Routledge.

Lewis, M., & Karin, B. (1994). Queer stories/straight talk: tales from the school playground. *Theory Into Practice, 33*(3), 199-205. Retrieved from http://www.jstor.org/pss/1476507

Luthar, S. S., & Cicchetti, D. (2000). The construct of resilience: Implications for interventions and social policies. *Developmental Psychopathology, 12*(4), 857-885. doi:10.1017/S0954579400004156

Luthar, S. S., & Zelazo, L. B., (2003). Research on resilience: An integrative review. In S. Luthar (Ed.), *Resilience and vulnerability: Adaptation in the context of childhood adversities* (pp. 510-549). New York: Cambridge University Press.

Masten, A. S. (2001). Ordinary magic: Resilience processes and development. *American Psychologist, 56*, 227-238. Retrieved from ERIC Database. (EJ627466)

Martino, W. J. (2008). Male teachers as role models: Addressing issues of masculinity, pedagogy, and the masculinization of schooling. *Curriculum Inquiry, 38*(2), 189-223. doi:10.1111/j.1467-873X.2007.00405.x

McCaskell, T. (2005). *Race to equity: Disrupting educational inequality.* Toronto, ON: Between the Lines.

McCreary Centre Society. (1999). *Being out: Lesbian, gay, bisexual, & transgender youth in BC: An adolescent health survey.* Retrieved from McCreary Centre Society website: http://www.mcs.bc.ca

McNinch, J., & Cronin, M. (Eds.). (2004). *I could not speak my heart: Education and social justice for gay and lesbian youth.* Regina, SK: Canadian Plains Research Centre, University of Regina Press.

Meyer, E. J. (2009). Gender, bullying, and harassment: Strategies to end sexism and homophobia in schools. New York: Teachers College Press.

Meyer, E. J., (2010). *Gender and sexual diversity in schools: An introduction.* New York: Springer.

Meyer, I. H. (2003). Prejudice, social stress, and mental health in lesbian, gay, and bisexual populations: Conceptual issues and research evidence. *Psychological Bulletin, 129*(5), 674-697. doi:10.1037/0033-2909.129.5.674

Morton, M. (2002). *Final report: Research project on the needs and issues facing rural youth in Haldimand & Norfolk.* Simcoe, ON: Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender Haldimand & Norfolk Youth Planning Group.

Mutchler, M. G., Ayala, G., & Neith, K. L. (2005). Safer sex stories told by young gay men: Building on resiliency through gay-boy talk. *Journal of Gay & Lesbian Issues in Education, 2*(3), 37-50. doi:10.1300/J367v02n03_04

National Alliance to End Homelessness. (2009). *Incidence and vulnerability of LGBTQ homeless youth* [Brief No. 2]. Retrieved from National Alliance to End Homelessness website: http://www.nyacyouth.org

O'Dougherty Wright, M., & Masten, A. S. (2005). Resilience processes in development: Fostering positive adaptation in the context of adversity. In S. Goldstein & R. B. Brooks (Eds.), *Handbook of resilience in children* (pp. 17-37). New York: Kluwer.

Office of the Auditor General of British Columbia. (2000/2001). *Fostering a safe*

    learning environment: How the British Columbia public school system is doing.

    Retrieved form the Office of the Auditor General of British Columbia website:

    http://www.bcauditor.com

Peterkin, A., & Risdon, C. (2003). *Caring for lesbian and gay people: A clinical guide.*

    Toronto, ON: University of Toronto Press.

Pianta, R, C., & Walsh, D. J. (1998). Applying the construct of resilience in schools:

    Cautions from a developmental systems perspective. *School Psychology Review,*

    27(3), 407-417. Retrieved from ERIC Database. (EJ606147)

Podgorski, J. (Ed.). (2001). *Homosexuality and the Catholic high school: A compilation*

    of newsletters with new material. Ottawa, ON: Ontario Family Life Educators

    Network.

Pollack, W. S. (2005). Sustaining and reframing vulnerability and connection: Creating

    genuine resilience in boys and young males. In S. Goldstein & R. B. Brooks

    (Eds.), *Handbook of resilience in children* (pp. 65-77). New York: Kluwer.

Poteat, V. P. (2008). Contextual and moderating effects of peer group climate on use of

    homophobic epithets. *School Psychology Review, 37*(2), 188-201. Retrieved from

    ERIC Database. (EJ800137)

Public Health Agency of Canada. (2006a). *Street youth in Canada: Findings from*

    enhanced surveillance of Canadian street youth, 1999-2003. Retrieved from the

    Public Health Agency of Canada website: http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca

Public Health Agency of Canada. (2006b). *Youth and violence*. Retrieved from the Public

    Health Agency of Canada website: http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca

Rainbow Resource Centre. (n.d.). *Breaking barriers: An anti-homophobia workshop development and facilitation training manual*. Retrieved from the Rainbow Resource Centre website: http://www.rainbowresourcecentre.org

Rasmussen, M. L. (2006). *Becoming subjects: Sexualities and secondary schooling.* New York: Taylor & Francis.

Rasmussen, M. L., Rofes, E., & Talburt, S. (Eds.). (2004). *Youth and sexualities: Pleasure, subversion and insubordination in and out of schools*. New York: Palgrave MacMillan.

Reis, E. (1999). *They don't even know me! Understanding ant-gay harassment and violence in schools: A report on the five year anti-violence research project of the Safe Schools Coalition of Washington State.* Retrieved from the Safe Schools Coalition website: http://www.safeschoolscoalition.org

Remafedi, G. (Ed.). (1994). *Death by denial: Studies of suicide in gay and lesbian teenagers.* Boston: Alyson Publications.

Rivers, I. (2000). Social exclusion, absenteeism and sexual minority youth. *Support for Learning, 15*(1), 13-18. doi:10.1111/1467-9604.00136

Rofes, E. (2004). Martyr-target-victim: Interrogating narratives of persecution and suffering among queer youth. In M. L. Rasmussen, E. Rofes, & S. Talburt (Eds.), *Youth and sexualities: Pleasure, subversion, and insubordination in and out of schools* (pp. 41- 62). New York: Palgrave MacMillan.

Roy, E., Boivin, J. F., Haley, N., & Lemire, N. (1998). Mortality among street youth. *Lancet*, *352*, 32. doi:10.1016/S0140-6736(05)79510-6

Russell, S. T. (2005). Beyond risk: resilience in the lives of sexual minority youth.

Journal of Gay & Lesbian Issues in Education, 2(3), 5-18.

doi:10.1300/J367v02n03_02

Russell, S. T., & Joyner, K. (2001). Adolescent sexual orientation and suicide risk:

Evidence from a national study. *American Journal of Public Health, 91*(8), 1276-

1281. Retrieved from http://ajph.aphapublications.org/

Russell, S. T., Franz, B. T., & Driscoll, A. K. (2001). Same-sex romantic attraction and

experiences of violence in adolescence. *American Journal of Public Health,

91*(6), 903-906. Retrieved from http://ajph.aphapublications.org/

Ryan, B. (1998). *Safe spaces: Project report gay, lesbian, bisexual youth programming:

Multi-sectoral outreach.* Ottawa, ON: Canadian Public Health Association.

Ryan, B. (2003). *A new look at homophobia and heterosexism in Canada.* Retrieved from

Canadian Aids Society website: http://www.cdnaids.ca

Ryan, C., & Futterman, D. (1998). *Lesbian and gay youth: Care and counseling.* New

York: Columbia University Press.

Saewyc, E. M. (in press). Research on adolescent sexual orientation: Development, health

disparities, stigma and resilience. *Journal of Research on Adolescence.*

Saewyc, E. M., Skay, C., & Pettingell, S. (2004). Suicide ideation and attempts in North

American school-based surveys: Are bisexual youth at increasing risk? [Abstract].

Journal of Adolescent Health, 34(2), 138. doi:10.1016/j.jadohealth.2003.11.023

Saewyc, E. M., Wang, N., Chittenden, M., Murphy, A., & The McCreary Centre Society

(2006). *Building resilience in vulnerable youth.* Retrieved from The McCreary

Centre Society website: http://www.mcs.bc.ca

Saewyc, E. M., Skay, C, Richens, K., Reis, E., Poon, C., & Murphy, A. (2006). Sexual

orientation, sexual abuse, and HIV-risk behaviors among adolescents in the

Pacific Northwest. *American Journal of Public Health, 96*(6), 1104-1110.

Retrieved from http://ajph.aphapublications.org/

Saewyc, E. M., Poon, C., Wang, N., Homma, Y., Smith, A., & The McCreary Centre

Society. (2007). *Not yet equal: The health of lesbian, gay, & bisexual youth in

BC*. Retrieved from The McCreary Centre Society website: http://www.mcs.bc.ca

Saewyc, E. M., Skay, C. L., Hynds, P., Pettingell, S., Bearinger, L. H., Resnick, M., &

Reis, E. (2007). Suicidal ideation and attempts in North American school-based

surveys: Are bisexual youth at increasing risk? *Journal of LGBT Health Research,

3*(2), 25-36. doi:10.1016/j.jadohealth.2003.11.023

Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation. (n.d.). *Safe schools: Breaking the silence on sexual

difference.* Saskatoon, SK: Author.

Savin-Williams, R. C. (2005). *The new gay teenager.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard

University Press.

Schneider, M. S. (Ed.). (1997). *Pride and prejudice: Working with lesbian, gay and

bisexual youth.* Toronto, ON: Central Toronto Youth Services.

Schrader, A. M., & Wells, K. (2005). Queer perspectives on social responsibility in

Canadian schools and libraries: Analysis and resources. *School Libraries in

Canada Online, A Journal of the Canadian Association for School Libraries,

24*(4). Retrieved from http://www.cla.ca/casl/slic/244queerperspectives.html

Schrader, A. M., & Wells, K. (2007). *Challenging silence, challenging censorship:

Inclusive resources, strategies, and policy directives for addressing BGLTT

realities in school and public libraries.* Ottawa, ON: Canadian Teachers'

Federation.

Shortall, A. (n.d.). *Piecing together a caring community: A resource book on dismantling homophobia.* St. John's, NL: Newfoundland-Labrador Human Rights Association.

Smith, G. W., & Smith, D. E. (1998). The ideology of "fag": the school experience of gay students. *Sociological Quarterly, 39*(2), 309-336. Retrieved from http://www.jstor.org/pss/4121586

Standing Senate Committee on Human Rights. (2007). *Children: The silenced citizens: Effective implementation of Canada's international obligations with respect to the rights of the children.* Ottawa, ON: Government of Canada.

Stapel, C. J. (2005). *No longer alone: A resource manual for rural sexual minority youth and the adults who serve them.* Retrieved from National Youth Advocacy Coalition website: http://www.nyacyouth.org

Suicide Prevention Resource Center. (2008). *Suicide risk and prevention for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender youth.* Newton, MA: Education Development Center, Inc.

Sumara, D. J., & Davis, B. (1998). Telling tales of surprise. In W. F. Pinar (Ed.), *Queer theory in education* (pp. 197-219). Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Surrey Teachers' Association (STA). (2000). *"Moving beyond silence": Addressing homophobia in elementary schools.* Surrey, BC: Author.

Szalacha, L. A. (2003). Safer sexual diversity climates: Lessons learned from an evaluation of Massachusetts safe schools program for gay and lesbian students. *American Journal of Education, 110*, 58-88. Retrieved from

http://www.jstor.org/pss/1209275

Talburt, S. (2004). Intelligibility and narrating queer youth. In M. L. Rasmussen, E.
Rofes, & S. Talburt (Eds.), *Youth and sexualities: Pleasure, subversion, and insubordination in and out of schools* (pp. 17-39). New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Taylor, C. (2010). Facts of life in homophobia high: Findings of the first national climate survey on homophobia and transphobia in Canadian schools. In the *Proceedings of the 2nd Queer Issues in the Study of Education and Culture Pre-Conference of the Canadian Society for the Study of Education* (pp. 56-62), 78th Congress of the Humanities & Social Sciences, Concordia University. Montreal, Quebec.

Taylor, C., & Peter, T. (in press). Left behind: Sexual and gender minority students in Canadian high schools in the new millennium. In T. Morrison, M. Morrison, D.T. McDermott, & M.A. Carrigan (Eds.), *Sexual minority research in the new millennium.* Hauppage, NY: Nova Science.

Thompson, R. A. (2006). *Nurturing future generations: Promoting resilience in children and adolescents through social, emotional, and cognitive skills* (2nd ed.). New York: Routledge.

Tonkin, R. S., Murphy, A., Lees, Z., Saewyc, E., & The McCreary Centre Society. (2005). *British Columbia youth health trends: A retrospective, 1992-2003.* Vancouver, BC: The McCreary Centre Society.

Toronto Board of Education (TBE). (1997). *Safely out: Activities to challenge homophobia in schools.* Toronto, ON: Author.

Toronto District School Board (TDSB). (2002). *Rainbows and triangles: A curriculum*

document for challenging homophobia and heterosexism in the K-6 classroom. Toronto, ON: Author.

Troiden, R. R. (1989). The formation of homosexual identities. *Journal of Homosexuality, 17*, 43-73. doi:10.1300/J082v17n01_02

UNAIDS. (2009). *UNAIDS action framework: Universal access for men who have sex with men and transgender people.* Geneva, Switzerland: UNAIDS.

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). (2009). *International guidelines on sexuality education: An evidence informed approach to effective sex, relationships and HIV/STI education*. Paris, France: Author.

Varjas, K., Dew, B., Marshall, M., Graybill, E., Singh, A., Meyers, J., & Birckbichler, L. (2008). Bullying in schools towards sexual minority youth. *Journal of School Violence, 7*(2), 59-86. doi:10.1300/J202v07n02_05

Vancouver School Board (VSB). (2004). *Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, transsexual, two-spirit and questioning policy.* Retrieved from Vancouver School Board website: http://www.vsb.bc.ca

Wells, K. (2002/2010). *Sexual orientation and gender identity educational website.* Retrieved from Alberta Teachers' Association website: http://www.teachers.ab.ca

Wells, K. (2003). *Building safe, caring and inclusive schools for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender Students: Professional development workshop series for Alberta teachers.* Edmonton, AB: Alberta Teachers' Association.

Wells, K. (2004). Safe in my heart: Found poetry as narrative inquiry. In J. McNinch & M. Cronin (Eds.), *I could not speak my heart: Education and social justice for gay and lesbian youth* (pp. 7-18)*.* Regina, SK: Canadian Plains Research Centre,

University of Regina.

Wells, K. (2005). *Gay–straight student alliances in Alberta schools: A guide for teachers.* Edmonton, AB: Alberta Teachers' Association.

Wells, K. (2006). *The gay–straight student alliance handbook: A comprehensive resource for K-12 teachers, administrators, and school counsellors.* Ottawa, ON: The Canadian Teachers' Federation.

Wells, K. (2008, Winter). Generation queer: Sexual minority youth and Canadian schools. *Education Canada, 48*(1), 18-23. Retrieved from ERIC Database. (EJ782698)

Wells, K. (2009). Research exploring the health, wellness, and safety concerns of sexual minority youth. *Canadian Journal of Human Sexuality* [SIECCAN Newsletter], *43*(1-2), 221-229.

Wells, K. (2010). Gay-straight alliances: Trends and analysis (pp. 82-87). In the *Proceedings of the 2nd Queer Issues in the Study of Education and Culture Pre-Conference of the Canadian Society for the Study of Education* (pp. 81-85), 78[8h] Congress of the Humanities & Social Sciences, Concordia University, Montreal, Quebec.

Wells, K., & Tsutsumi, L. M. (2005). *Creating safe and caring schools for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and trans-identified students: A guide for counsellors.* Edmonton, AB: The Society for Safe and Caring Schools and Communities.

West, C. (1993). *Race matters.* Boston, MA: Beacon Press.

Williams, T., Connolly, J., Pepler, D., & Craig, W. (2003). Questioning and sexual minority adolescents: High school experiences of bullying, sexual harassment and physical abuse. *Canadian Journal of Community Mental Health, 22*(2), 47-58. Retrieved from http://cjcmh.metapress.com

Williams, T., Connolly, J., Pepler, D., & Craig, W. (2005). Peer victimization, social

support, and psychosocial adjustment of sexual minority adolescents. *Journal of

Youth and Adolescence, 34*(5), 471-482. doi:10.1007/s10964-005-7264-x

Winnipeg School Division No. 1. (2002). *Human rights/anti-homophobia resource guide*.

Winnipeg, MB: Author.

Wyss, S. E. (2004). 'This was my hell': The violence experienced by gender

nonconforming youth in US high schools. *International Journal of Qualitative

Studies in Education, 17*(5), 709-730. Retrieved from ERIC Database. (EJ682009)

Yau, M., & O'Reilly, J. (2007). *2006 Student census: System overview.* Retrieved from

Toronto District School Board website: http://www.tdsb.on.ca

End Notes

[1]I primarily use sexual minority and gender variant (SMGV) youth in this paper to identify non-heterosexual (lesbian, gay, bisexual) and gender variant (trans-identified, transgender, transsexual) youth. However, I adhere to the acronyms used by various researchers when citing their work. For example, some researchers use LGBT or LGBTQ, while others use LGB, or sexual minority to designate specific research target populations.

Essay Two
Interpreting Policy Frameworks from Moral and Political Perspectives:
Sexual Orientation and the Role of K-12 Education as a Public Policy Concern

In 1998, in the decision *Vriend v. Alberta*, the Supreme Court of Canada read sexual orientation into Alberta's human rights' statute. This judgment generated a widespread public debate concerning the basic recognition and rights of lesbian and gay persons in the province of Alberta. The Alberta Teachers' Association (ATA) and the Government of Alberta, two key policy actors, both took very different positions on this important public policy issue. For example, at the time of the *Vriend* decision the Government of Alberta stated that they would invoke the notwithstanding clause in the Canadian *Charter of Rights and Freedoms* to exempt the province from extending basic human rights protections to lesbian and gay citizens. This statement generated an intensely public dialogue that served to polarize the debate along largely moral-political and ethical-legal arguments that were framed within larger discussions of the private and public sphere and the role of the state. In contrast to the government's antagonistic stance, the ATA responded to the legal recognition of lesbians and gays as a historically marginalized population by quietly making changes to their *Code of Professional Conduct* to include a student's actual or perceived sexual orientation as a protected ground against discrimination. In 2001, the ATA also extended these same protections to teachers.

More than a decade later this polarization continues to exist, perhaps with even greater intensity. The Alberta Teachers' Association is now recognized as one of the leading teacher associations/federations in Canada for its inclusive policy and resource development in relation to educational issues focusing on sexual orientation and gender

identity (Grace & Wells, 2004, 2006). In contrast, the Government of Alberta has continued to threaten to use the notwithstanding clause in relation to sexual minority issues, most recently to prohibit the legalization of same-sex marriage in Alberta. This threat was made despite not having the jurisdictional purview to do so.

Other recent attempts to inculcate a public pedagogy of negation (Freire, 2005) towards sexual minorities includes the Government of Alberta's odious *Bill 44* and Section 11, which amended Alberta's human rights statute by including a parental opt out provision that allows parents or guardians to remove their children from any planned curricular discussions involving religion, sexuality, or sexual orientation in K-12 schools (Legislative Assembly of Alberta, 2009). Bill 44 like no other educational issue in the history of the province has united and mobilized educational stakeholders in unanimous opposition to the exclusionary and pedagogically limiting nature of the legislation. Key educational organizations such as the Alberta Teachers' Association, College of Alberta School Superintendents, Alberta School Councils' Association, and the Alberta School Boards Association united to speak out against the inclusion of Section 11, which was deemed to be an assault on the values and purposes of public education and an attack on a teacher's professional autonomy to provide accurate and age-appropriate information to students on a variety of issues that impact their lives (Wells & Chamberlain, 2009). These educational stakeholders realized that Section 11 was virtually unenforceable and flew in the face of the very tenets of public education. Accordingly, there was no justifiable educational reason to enshrine parental rights into Alberta's human rights legislation. To do so demonstrates a profound lack of respect for the role of public education in the 21st century. Enshrining these so called parental rights presumes that every parent is a good

parent who can decide and act outside their own moral, religious, and political biases and prejudices.

Highly visible and politically charged issues such as the *Vriend* decision, contemporary same-sex marriage debates, and *Bill 44*, demonstrate how policymaking power and influence are shared among many diverse actors and interest groups; they explicate how federal and provincial laws and the Canadian *Charter of Rights and Freedoms* can enhance or limit policy options and outcomes, especially in regards to social justice and human rights struggles (Lax & Phillips, 2009). Morality issues such as the struggle for sexual minority rights and recognition are "among the core conflicts in any diverse democracy. Such struggles have perhaps moved from race to sexual orientation, but basic tensions remain unresolved" (Lax & Phillips, 2009, p. 367). Therefore, these "hot button" social issues can provide critical windows into the politicization of the policy development, implementation, and evaluation cycle. For example, common anti-gay arguments suggest that affirmative "gay rights" policies are not responsive to actual public opinion, but rather are part of a "homosexual agenda" instituted by liberal elites, an activist judiciary, and special interest groups (Lax & Phillips, 2009). Others argue that human rights cannot be left to the tyranny of the majority to protect and maintain the fundamental tenets of democracy.

Morally charged issues such as the death penalty, abortion, legalization of marijuana, Aboriginal treaty rights, and sexual minority and gender variant (SMGV) rights all represent contemporary social issues that can provide researchers and policy analysts with important diagnostic opportunities to investigate the normative frameworks, moral values, and political strategies that are often utilized to block or manipulate the

mobilization of private needs into public policy concerns. Such contestations often involve a highly visible and vocal struggle in which the boundaries and discursive meanings that circulate to define the public/private divide are actively questioned, critiqued, and often strategically redeployed.

Upon careful analysis, the public/private divide is found to be much more complex and fluid than a traditional liberal model might suggest. The borders and meanings of the public and private spheres are in a perpetual state of re-articulation and negotiation and, as a result, are subject to a constant slippage of language and demarcation. Battles over who has the political and moral authority to constitute what is considered private and public (such as sexuality) become centered on who has the power and authority to frame and control the language, dialogue, and terms of debate. These contestations, serializations, and strategic repetitions can be revealed, deconstructed, and analyzed as dialectical contradictions. This means that they can be taken up as key sites to debate public versus private and to examine how policy concerns make the transition from private needs to public concerns and thus enter into the public policy arena whereby the government is required to take action. However, this politicization process also brings with it yet another set of concerns. Bringing public recognition to a private policy concern is only the first step of consciousness raising and policy advocacy. Moreover, there are no guarantees that once an individual or organization is able to shift an issue from the private to public sphere they will be able to control dialogue or debate, or obtain their desired policy outcome. In a Habermassian sense all knowledge and policy claims are political and shaped by historical and social circumstance (Grace, 2007; Young, 2003). In this historical and social milieu, power plays a key role not only as a repressive

force, but also as a productive one as well. For example, once a policy claim becomes public, another strategic battle emerges to control the interpretive framework in which public dialogue and debate will be constituted. It is from the regulation or control of this communicative space that the interpretive framework and the final public policy resolution will be greatly determined. As political scientists Lax and Phillips (2009) suggest, "central issues in public opinion research are now the degree to which opinion affects policy and the conditions under which it can" (p. 369).

Foucault's (1978) paradigm-shifting work in the study of the history of sexuality posits that in Western cultures, which are traditionally characterized by puritanical attitudes towards sex, sexuality, and gender, society engages in a "repressive hypothesis," which suggests how issues of sexuality and morality are linked to public policy and what it means to be a good citizen. This targeting also occurs internationally in countries under Western influence as in the case of the anti-homosexuality bill in Uganda that would replace imprisonment with the death penalty for the "crime" of homosexuality. Through the power of this repressive hypothesis, those who are non-heterosexual are othered through a process of silence and invisibility in public policy and discourse. Through this process of othering, sexuality becomes dialectically linked with the call for political and social liberation. *Bill 44*, for example, is illustrative of how public policy and government legislation can be used as a political force to determine which identities are deemed to be livable and therefore considered to have value in our society. As Foucault suggests, whoever determines what can be named and discussed in public space, also determines what can be known. Language and power are always politically intertwined.

In an effort to explore the public/private divide exacerbated by a repressive sexuality hypothesis, this paper investigates the interpretive frameworks and key-needs discourses that policy publics engage to politicize (make known) or depoliticize (keep hidden) the lived realities of SMGV teachers and students in Alberta K-12 public schools. This analysis will investigate three key spheres of policy development: the private, the public, and the social. To supplement this analysis, I will outline and engage queer criticality as a theoretical framework to develop an analytic approach to develop a policy argument for addressing the realities of SMGV teachers and students in Alberta K-12 public schools. A conceptual map of this policy problem is included in the appendices.

Queer criticality is a theoretical method that deconstructs aspects of queer theory and critical theory (especially as it is constituted in critical humanism) to reject their positioning as antithetical. In this regard, I bring queer into the intersection with critical because both queer theory and critical theory have measured resistance and transformation in incremental ways to expose social injustice, and to reveal hegemonic discourses, subjectivities, and power relationships that may or may not have been previously considered. Correspondingly, a queer criticality resists the unnecessary polarization of queer and critical theory and attempts to preserve the most productive elements of each paradigm. Ultimately, the goal of queer criticality is to position sexuality as a core dimension within social critique and policy analysis. Specifically, in this chapter I engage queer criticality to problematize heterosexuality as the primary set of relations for understanding sex, sexuality, and gender in public schooling and the development of educational policy. In particular, utilizing queer criticality to deconstruct and reconstruct the policy development cycle can serve to help link policy to an ethical

practice that respects and accommodates SMGV persons. As Landson-Billings and

Donnor (2005) suggest of critical race theory, queer criticality can also be considered as a

"new analytic rubric for considering difference and inequalities using multiple

methodologies" (p. 291). The work of critical scholars, regardless of their field, is "to

break new epistemological, methodological, social activist, and moral ground" (Landson-

Billings & Donnor, 2005, p. 291).

Situating the Methodology:
Developing a Queer Critical Framework for Policy Research

In an influential review of policy research, Troyna (1994) argues for a more

sociological oriented analysis of educational policy and practice. He suggests that

educational policy should be conceptualized in a broad framework that transcends

interdisciplinary boundaries and a traditional emphasis on positivist perspectives. This

post-positivist approach necessitates a more sophisticated understanding of policy

structuring, development, and implementation that requires the use of queer critical and

conceptual analytic tools as a basis for a queer criticality that can help to situate policy as

a complex and emergent, ethical, and political co-construction that attends to SMGV

persons, their positionalities, and their locatedness in public and private domains. In

undertaking this form of analytic approach, Troyna is careful to draw a distinction

between critical social research (CSR) and traditional forms of sociology by emphasizing

that CSR is not bounded by a single or grand theoretical mode of inquiry and, in turn, is

committed to move beyond surface level realities as it explores structural and ideological

underpinnings in an attempt to unmask and challenge oppressive social structures. This

perspective is important to queer criticality.

Within the CSR framework, Troyna calls for a "plurality of readings" (p. 72) of the policy cycle from various constituent groups and policy analysts to challenge the traditional perspective that policy is simply something done to people by the state. In developing a CSR perspective, Troyna notes the relative absence of other critical perspectives/readings such as feminist and anti-racist policy perspectives. Marshall (1997) concurs and suggests that critical and feminist perspectives can help to reframe the policy world by placing issues of gender, power, justice, and the state at the centre of critical policy research. Critical race theorists have also adapted this approach by using race as the standpoint from which to undertake critical policy analysis (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995). For example, Landson-Billings and Donnor (2005) suggest that critical social research, such as critical race theory, "must transcend narrow disciplinary boundaries if it is to have impact on people who reside in subaltern sites or even on policy makers" (p. 294).

Marshall (1999) also suggests that critical social research, and accompanying feminist perspectives, should be understood as mutually beneficial frameworks that demand a broader understanding of traditional policy discourses, policy communities, and policy networks that have been historically grounded in technoscientized methodologies that present analyses as nonnormative, neutral, objective, apolitical, and based within a "fact-value dichotomy" (House, 2005). Collectively, Troyna (1994) and Marshall (1999) propose that the dialectical contradictions and active contestations within policy communities can become fruitful sites for critical study by engaging a critical social research analysis. This analysis may reveal potential areas for resistance to hegemonic structures and concomitant demands for policy perspectives that strive to

promote social justice, freedom, and ethics as critical components of revitalizing democracy and the public sphere.

Lugg (2003, 2010) attempts to take these critical approaches one-step further by articulating the need for critical theory to be coupled with queer perspectives that engage in antiessentialist theorizing, which she situates as embracing the fluidity of sex, sexual, and gendered identities to challenge subordination, essentialism, and binary categorizations. Lugg turns to the emerging discourse of Queer Legal Theory (QLT), which draws upon Feminist Legal Theory (disestablishing patriarchy), Critical Race Theory (unmasking racist structures), Critical Legal Studies (challenging the perpetuation and reinscriptions of class structures), and Gay and Lesbian Legal Theory (contesting the reproduction of heteronormativity) to undergird QLT as an intersectional and multidimensional theoretical approach. Correspondingly, Lugg posits that QLT can be utilized as an analytic research tool to deconstruct regulatory institutions such as courts and schools in an attempt to reveal the hegemonic structures and heteronormative practices that oppress SMGV persons and keeps them invisible in the public policy arena. From this perspective, QLT aligns neatly with queer criticality as it draws upon historiography, archaeology, and genealogy (which will be subsequently defined) in an effort to deconstruct and reexamine history, legal precedents, and policy development to uncover traces or residues that reveal how homophobic, transphobic, and heteronormative repressive structures have been both subtly and overtly woven into the very fabric of regulatory institutions.

In an influential review of poststructurally-informed approaches to policy research, Gale (2001) identifies policy historiography, policy archaeology, and policy

genealogy as three interrelated, and Foucauldian inspired, research methodologies that provide representative and storied examples of a critical social research framework that works to critique and resist oppressive social practices. More specifically, he describes policy historiography as the substantive analysis of policy issues as hegemonic constructions that define the specifics and limits of policy (re)production. In contrast, policy archaeology is more concerned with examining the rules and norms that provide the discursive framework for policy formation that is often characterized by developing a chronology of events that can help to uncover and broaden understandings of specific strategies used to advance a particular policy agenda. This methodological excavation reveals how and why policy is created and for whom it is designed to serve. Policy genealogy provides a third lens that moves beyond a historicized analysis of the structured nature of policy to a more thorough examination of how policy is realized and enacted. Rather than attempting to recreate or develop a grand policy narrative or meta-theory, policy genealogy looks for the discontinuities, ruptures, and gaps, challenging the nature of distinctions and revealing how power circulates and produces specific policy subjects.

Nancy Fraser (1989), a critical feminist scholar, concurs that this Foucauldian approach is a promising methodological practice for critical and political reflection. However, she also cautions that these analytic methods and their examination of the modalities of power are beset with larger philosophical questions and problematics that require further analysis. For example, much of Foucault's theorizing is useful for helping to conceptualize understandings of power as productive, self-amplifying, and inscribed more through discursive social practices than ideological beliefs. However, Fraser departs

from Foucault's claims to moral objectivity and cautions that policy analysts should place value on critical perspectives. This means that they should be careful not to remove themselves and their normative frameworks from research analyses in an effort to develop an unbiased account of how modern power operates to produce normative subjectivities.

For Fraser, it is precisely the poststructuralist examination of everyday practices that provides for the development of a multiperspective critical social research framework that allows the policy analyst to research these practices as political constructions, rather than as neutral or naturally occurring phenomena. Concomitantly, though, Fraser takes exception to Foucauldian attempts to bracket out normative/liberal values as the very grounds necessary to offer a critique of them. Here Fraser cites Foucault's own slippage of language and his extensive reliance on domination, subjugation, and subjection to indicate the need for a resistance to subordination. Fraser pointedly states that resistance is indeed a normative (and necessary) position, or why else would we not simply submit? From precisely a meta-normative framework, Fraser asks why should we oppose the knowledge/power regime implicated in Foucault's theorizing? Fraser answers this question critically by theorizing that acts of discipline and punishment are presupposed on a liberal rights discourse of freedom, rights, and limits.

It is on this basis that Fraser asserts that Foucault was normatively confused and, as such, policy analysts should be cautious and develop a clear articulation of their own normative theoretical framework before they undertake any policy analysis. This informs a critically queer perspective suggesting that policy analysis, as it attends to relationships of power, is situated as a necessarily normative and political project that seeks to

challenge oppressive heteronormative practices in an effort to develop a more socially just and humane world.

Hoy (2004), echoes Fraser's call to bridge poststructural claims to anti-identification with calls for the development of critical alternatives. He posits the need to develop a radical potentiality, which suggests that normative judgments are necessary to offer critical and emancipatory alternatives for political action. Hoy identifies this approach as "post-critique", which involves a combination of deconstruction and genealogy as methods that are necessary to help develop critical forms of resistance.

Interpretive Frameworks: Developing a Critical Reading Practice

Historically, policy analysis has been preoccupied with functional, and more recently, systems-level analyses that are overly focused on technoscientized methodological approaches, evidenced-based practice, and cost-benefit analysis (House, 2005; Pal, 2001). Accordingly, an attempt to shift from the positivist to the critical domain necessitates an interrogation of political, interpretive, and normative frameworks in any such policy analysis. From a critical perspective, this shift entails the deconstruction of binary or oppositional logic as a regulatory regime of truth that undergirds systems of power, privilege, and knowledge. These oppositions or dialectical contradictions are premised on the existence of what Fraser (1989) identifies as "separate spheres," such as the public and private, masculine and feminine and, as Sedgwick (1990) would add, heterosexual and homosexual. Correspondingly, Sedgwick posits that

"an understanding of virtually any aspect of modern Western culture must be, not merely incomplete, but damaged in its central substance to the degree that it does not incorporate a critical analysis of [the] modern homo/heterosexual definition" (p. 1).

Meta-frameworks like the ones Sedgwick and Fraser identify serve to structure knowledge, identities, and policy development as they conspire to produce interpretive maps of normative rules, expectations, and behaviours. Engaging queer criticality as a theoretical framework for policy analysis would necessitate the deconstruction or decoding of these regulatory operations to reveal the structures of disavowal, lest they remain unexamined and uncontested. Here analysis has to interrogate how these identity constituting and identity limiting discourses are produced by the state. However, the state is not the sole producer of hegemonic constructions. Other agents, such as the media, are also constantly engaged and implicated in a plurality of interpretation, oppositional resistance, and complicity with these dominant discourses and discursive practices. As a result, these sites of resistance and regulation become key arenas for queer criticality. The development of a conceptual policy map can help to trace the effects of these hegemonic practices and, in turn, can identify key sites of rebuke and resistance.

A policy analyst can start to map out the policy pragmatics by identifying rival or conflicting discourses, which often take the form of social structures, institutions, political culture, oppositional groups, social movements, economic forces, and private interests. These public and private spheres constantly overlap and demonstrate how normative politics are implicated in identifying individual, social, and political needs. Fraser (1989) broadly identifies these needs as oppositional, reprivatization, and expert discourses (which will be discussed later in this chapter). These needs-based discourses

are in constant circulation and operate in tandem with multiple axes of power to advocate

for a particular policy approach designed to meet the specific needs identified. In Fraser's

terms, these discourses constitute multiple and contested "publics" that attempt to

mobilize their resources to advocate for different needs and thus differing policy

outcomes. Correspondingly, in conceptualizing this contestation over needs

identification, Fraser (1997) utilizes Habermas's notion to articulate the public sphere as

"an arena in which public opinion is constituted through discourse; where members of the

public debate matters of common concern, seeking to persuade one another through

giving reasons; and where the force of public opinion is brought to bear on government

decision making" (p. 101). As Lax and Phillips (2009) suggest, "we expect that political

actors will shift attention to opinion when policy salience is high and away when it is

low" (p. 370). This means that elected officials constantly undergo an analysis to

determine how responsive they need to be towards the electorate on any given issue

versus their own views. This trade off is part of a continual re-election strategy and most

evident on hot button morality issues in which legislators are expected to represent the

core values of their constituents and/or party.

In Alberta addressing issues related to sexual orientation and gender identity in

the public sphere is fraught with complex challenges over interpretive frameworks and

the politicization of needs discourses. For example, Lisac (2004), in his analysis of

Alberta politics, argues that a mythic identity of what it means to be an "Albertan" plays

a determinant role in the construction of public discourse, political normativity, and

individual subjectivity. Lisac posits that this identity is a simulacra that is perpetuated

through the mythos of the "severely normal" (p. 71) Albertan who is gripped by the fear

of western alienation. Lisac describes this alienation as "a combination of half-remembered history, a handful of genuine grievances, and shrewd current ambitions," (p. 2) which are skillfully perpetuated by the Progressive Conservative Government of Alberta. A key facet of this mythic identity involves the serialization of the archetypal image of the frontier cowboy, oil executive, farmer, and roughneck (Lisac, 2004). The constant circulation of this identity constituting discourse leads to the development of a false consciousness that positions Alberta as a "monolithic place with no differences of note" (p. 3). However, as Lisac astutely notes, the reality in Alberta is quite different.

Alberta is a diverse, multicultural, and urban-based province that waxes nostalgically for a lost innocence and a return to traditional values and a lost way of life. The cost of perpetuating this frontier mythos is the regulation and (re)production of normative subjectivities, and the subsequent maintenance of the political and moral status quo. In Alberta, anyone who questions these literalized myths is regulated to the status of an outsider, fugitive, or worse yet, homosexual.

When these myths are literalized (and actualized) through government policy, a totalizing public sphere is created where dialogue is controlled, dissent is dismissed, and public space is regulated. For example, a major goal of the former Klein government (1992-2006) and the current Stelmach government (2006-present) is to reduce the size of the public sphere by limiting free and open debate. The pervasive political intention is to develop a hegemonic collective, mythic Alberta that stands independent against the rest of Canada. Necessarily, any focus on internal diversity or dissent is readily marginalized and dismissed in an effort to maintain the coherence of the simulacra. However, upon closer examination the frontier mythos stands in dialectical contradiction to the diverse

reality of today's Alberta. For example, two-thirds of Alberta's population lives in the

urban centers of Edmonton and Calgary. Alberta is also the third most urbanized province

in Canada (behind Ontario and British Columbia), and the major corridor between

Edmonton and Calgary represents one of the fastest growing and ethnoculturally diverse

regions in Canada (Lisac, 2004).

Another historically normalizing factor in Alberta politics stems from the legacies

of William Aberhart and Ernest Manning positioning huge sections of Alberta as a

central constituent within Canada's bible belt. These fundamentalist roots play a

significant role in a host of policy communities that are influenced by public opinion,

lobbying efforts, and interest group politics. For example, Bill McQueen, the Mayor of

Lacombe, Alberta, when asked to describe the complexion of his community stated that it

was premised on the belief of "a capitalist society that is founded on biblical principles"

(Lisac, 2004, p. 56).

More recently, the creation and rapid rise of the Wild Rose Alliance Party of

Alberta, and its platform calling for the recognition "of families [as the] cornerstone of

society [that] must be maintained" (Wild Rose Alliance, 2010), demonstrates what

Kumashiro (2009) describes as "strategic framings" and the targeted social "marketing of

conservative policies" (p. 78), which position archetypes of the strict parent or

authoritarian family as central to the need for social and political reforms. These

neoconservative calls typically highlight the need for social and policy reforms to include

increased standardized testing, improved measures of fiscal accountability, increased

parental choice, more local control, and enhanced criminal sanctions/sentencing and

justice protections. Collectively, these frames work to inculcate a moral panic

surrounding the erosion of the common good by outside forces threatening to attack the heart of communities, namely the (heterosexual) nuclear family. Through these metaphors, conservative values (conflated with so called "family values") are designed to become the voter's values. Therefore, debates like the legalization of same-sex marriage represent a clear and present danger to traditionally family values and must be challenged. In these cases political salience is high and infused with moral politics. Elected officials are expected to satisfy the needs and interests of "the average" (read "severely normal") voter as well as key interest groups who may have influence over their re-election possibilities.

In their analysis of the impact of Christian fundamentalist discourses on the development of educational policy in the United States, Birden, Gaither, and Laird (2000) suggest that despite a mandated separation of church and state in American public schools, a wholly secular argument for SMGV inclusive policy development is naïve as organized interest groups such as the religious right have significant influence over policy development and public opinion. The authors suggest, that in an effort to counter pervasive religious fundamentalism under the guise of "family values," policy advocates should have a clear understanding of the "distinctive cultural [and religious] pragmatics" (p. 642), which require educators and analysts to acquire an understanding of biblical interpretation strategies. From the perspective of queer criticality, the infiltration of these fundamentalist positonings can be understood as constructing both dominant and counternormative reading practices that can be utilized by both sides of the culture debate/wars. The authors also astutely note that these dominant reading strategies are configured primarily within the matrix of heterosexual, white, male power and privilege.

In an effort to engage policy analysts in a critical reading of this complex policy terrain, the authors propose four hermeneutical tactics, or policy reading strategies, that are commonly used to support and oppose Christian fundamentalist interpretive frameworks, like the one's currently promulgated by the Wild Rose Alliance:

- Strict-Construction: This is premised on a literal interpretation of the bible as the sole source of ethical and moral norms. This reading strategy upholds heterosexual marriage as the only "godly social relation" (p. 651). Homosexuality is positioned as deviant, abnormal, and against God's teachings.

- Historical-Critical: This acknowledges biblical condemnations against homosexuality, but seeks to situate them in their appropriate historical and cultural context.

- Living-Document: This situates reading strategies within current cultural contexts and draws upon contemporary scientific, sociological, and cultural analyses that advocate for the recognition of the inherent dignity and rights of SMGV persons. This interpretive strategy also advocates for a "living reading" (p. 652) of the spiritual message of the holy scriptures.

- Post-Enlightenment: This is an abandonment of the bible in favour of secular ethical and moral frameworks arising from the enlightenment tradition.

The engagement of these different interpretive strategies involves a complex struggle over language and meaning that often occurs at the boundaries between where the public and private spheres intersect. In an effort to mobilize these interpretive frameworks from private to public discourses, efforts must be made to politicize the issue

as a public policy problem. With this politicization process comes the necessary establishment of an associated set of needs that crosses multiple publics.

Moving From the Private to Public in Late Capitalist Society

In an effort to articulate and mobilize public policy concerns from the private to the public sphere, Fraser (1989) identifies three key discursive strategies that are often utilized to politicize and depoliticize particular needs discourses within late capitalist society. She identifies these discourses as oppositional, reprivatization, and expert.

Oppositional discourses are needs articulated from "down below," rather than from "up above." These discourses are most commonly found in grassroots communities that are characterized by subordinated or disenfranchised groups. Needs become politicized as groups contest their subordinated identities and roles in society. These new social movements, like gay liberation and Aboriginal treaty rights, articulate their needs in calls for recognition and the legitimation of their previously depoliticized policy claims. Needs that were once relegated as private concerns are brought into the public realm by individuals and/or groups that articulate alternative narratives of their experiences in an effort to challenge hegemonic, and often stereotypical, interpretations that are in constant circulation and production to subordinate their identities and policy claims. Key politicization strategies include the creation of new languages, self-naming, and associated attempts to bring once private issues forward within multiple publics. These oppositional discourses become key strategies for gaining recognition, building collectivity, and developing solidarity within grassroots movements. Fraser describes these groups as a "discursively self-constituted public" (p. 172).

Reprivatization discourses are closely linked to the articulation of oppositional needs. Reprivatization strategies seek to contest the politicization of bottom-up discourses and their associated public policy claims by defining, and thus regulating, what can be considered a legitimate public policy concern. For example, the state will often invoke a series of binary operations to regulate and control which items are deemed as legitimate public policy concerns. These binaries include, but are not limited to: public/private; moral/immoral; human/savage; heterosexual/homosexual; nature/culture; male/female; self/other; government/family; religious/secular. Oppositional groups often attempt to counter this polarization by building broad coalitions of support to resist these attempts at depoliticization. However, once issues are successfully politicized and become recognized as a legitimate public policy concern a second reprivatization strategy is often invoked that attempts to co-opt or offer a competing framework for needs interpretation. For example, in the successful politicization of the legalization of same-sex marriage as a legitimate public policy concern, the fall back position espoused by the religious right has been to acquiesce and offer the alternative narrative of same-sex unions, which they position as having all the rights and privileges of marriage, except in name. This example illustrates the complex and multi-layered struggle to establish and then control the interpretive framework that will ultimately serve to impact and shape the public policy agenda and dialogue. Accordingly, any "solution" to a perceived public policy concern will depend greatly on which interpretive framework is embraced by the majority of publics that constitute the social realm.

The third interrelated category that Fraser proposes relies upon "expert" discourses that connect popular oppositional social movements to the state. Here the

focus is on solving the identified social problem that involves the state as the key policy

public. For oppositional groups, expert discourses are utilized to demonstrate the need for

public policy intervention. Importantly, both the state and oppositional groups use these

expert discourses to support and/or restrict claims from reaching the broader public

policy agenda. These expert discourses are closely linked with regulatory institutions that

produce knowledge and lend legitimacy to claims for policy intervention. Accordingly,

these expert discourses often include universities, think tanks, legal discourses,

professional bodies, administrative institutions, academic publications, and medical

authorities, all of which constitute "special publics" (Fraser, 1989). Fraser identifies how

these expert discourses are employed as "bridge" discourses, which are mobilized to link

oppositional needs with a demand for state intervention. When successful, policy claims

are often framed in such a way that they require some form of social service to be

provided by the state.

Unfortunately, instead of addressing the underlying root causes or systemic policy

concerns, the state often uses these expert discourses to provide administrative or

therapeutic intervention. In essence, they focus on fixing the perceived problem, rather

than addressing the underlying systemic problems or symptoms. This myopic approach

was apparent in the *Vriend* decision when the Government of Alberta was forced to read

sexual orientation into its human rights statute. Rather than incorporating this as a public

policy development opportunity to address the historic discrimination that the sexual

minority community has experienced, the Government of Alberta responded by only

meeting the minimum administrative standard of including sexual orientation as a

prohibited ground of discrimination among a list of other identified characteristics of

person. More than ten years after the *Vriend* decision was handed down by the Supreme Court of Canada, the Government of Alberta finally opted to "write in" sexual orientation into its provincial human rights statue, but not without first enshrining the right of parents to be able to opt their children out of any classroom discussions that featured planned curricular discussions of sexual orientation issues. The irony of this opt out clause is that no where in the Alberta Program of Studies is sexual orientation directly included as a curricular outcome to be taught in schools.

A case study will provide an illustrative example of how private concerns can become mobilized into public policy issues. Until 1998, sexual minority persons were not considered worthy of human rights protections in the province of Alberta. When gay and lesbian persons were spoken about publicly, it was often linked with discourses of deviance, pathology, moral panic, public menace and, in the late 1980s and early 1990s, with HIV/AIDS (Phair & Wells, 2006). However, with a supportive ruling from the Supreme Court of Canada in the *Vriend* decision, in 1998, a new form of public discourse and recognition emerged. Sexual minority issues were no longer principally defined in terms of the moral, but rather as a more political and pragmatic human rights issue. As such, a shift in public consciousness occurred that helped to move discourses of sexual identity out of the bedroom and into public workplaces and schools across the province.

For over a decade now, discrimination based on sexual orientation in the province of Alberta has no longer been framed solely as a private issue. It has now been increasingly acknowledged as a systemic, sociopolitical concern. Thus a politics of reinterpretation has been enacted that has shifted the discourse from a dismissive discourse of "special rights" to one of human rights. This interpretive shift has had a

significant ripple effect on a wide variety of public spheres. For example, in recognition

of the magnitude of these changes, the Premier of Alberta established a Ministerial Task

Force, in 1999, to "review the need for protection within various provincial Acts to

alleviate concerns the ruling [in *Vriend*] could have wider implications" (Government of

Alberta, 1999, p. 1). In further attempts to control the public sphere, the Premier also

charged the Task Force with the responsibility to "monitor cases before the courts and

Human Rights Commission to ensure rulings are not venturing beyond the scope of the

Human Rights Act" (Government of Alberta, 1999, p. 1). The Task Force investigated six

areas to determine if they were in violation of the Supreme Court of Canada's ruling with

regard to the Canadian *Charter of Rights and Freedoms.* These areas were identified as:

foster parenting, adoption, employee benefits, education, marriage, and benefits for

common law couples.

In its report, the Task Force highlighted findings from a 1998 survey of 1000

Albertans that was conducted to "obtain an indication of the views of Albertans on

various issues relating to homosexuals and same-sex couples" (p. 5). The findings of this

survey were, for the most part, kept private and not revealed to the public. The survey

results provide for a startling contradiction to Premier Klein's mythic, hegemonic

Albertan. The survey revealed:

- two-thirds of Albertan's thought the government should abide by the Supreme

  Court of Canada's decision;

- seventy-seven percent supported the right to be protected from discrimination on

  the ground of sexual orientation; and

- forty-seven percent agreed and 48 percent disagreed when asked if Alberta laws should treat "gay Albertans the same as everyone else when it comes to marriage, adoption, and foster parenting" (p. 5).

Of the Albertans surveyed, the most supportive of sexual minority inclusion were women, people in urban centres, younger Albertans, and people who had obtained a postsecondary education. Those least supportive were men, people in rural areas, older Albertans, and people with less education. Albertans also expressed fewer concerns with extending financial benefits (spousal benefits, pensions) than family matters (adoption, foster parenting, marriage). When surveyed about educational matters, 53% of respondents were *not* in favour of the government prohibiting discussions or the use of materials to talk about homosexuality. When asked directly about the school environment, 40% of respondents identified being in favour of including sexual minority issues in the Alberta K-12 curriculum. These statistics have important implications for the public education system that have yet to be fully addressed by the Alberta Ministry of Education.

In the report's conclusion the Task Force identified that a clear majority of Albertans did not support the use of the *Charter's* notwithstanding clause, and in an ominous stroke of foreshadowing, the report stated "currently [there] are a number of related court cases and federal initiatives under way. The outcome of those cases and initiatives will shape the legal environment on these issues and may influence public opinion" (p. 7). Interestingly, since this report was presented, the Government of Alberta has quietly made changes to legalize same-sex adoption and foster parenting and has extended government employee benefits and pensions to same-sex couples. Notably, the

145

two major areas where the government has failed (or refused) to take action are in the public realms of education and marriage, even though the government's own Ministerial review indicates that these changes are inevitable. In 2005, the Government of Alberta finally acquiesced and acknowledged the legalization of same-sex marriage in Canada.

Many of the government's quieter initiatives stem from the expert needs discourses that are premised in the belief of due process, which requires fair and equal treatment under the law. To mobilize these expert discourses new "subaltern counterpublics" (Fraser, 1997, p. 81) were created to provide much needed spaces for oppositional needs to be formulated, nurtured, and developed. Today, many of these important counterpublics are still in existence and were mobilized to denounce Section 11 of *Bill 44*. In Alberta, these counterpublics include groups such as Egale Canada, Sheldon Chumir Foundation, Alberta Civil Liberties Research Centre, University of Alberta's Institute for Sexual Minority Studies and Services, Alberta Teachers' Association's Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity Subcommittee, and gay-straight student alliances in high schools. These counterpublics have helped to develop new languages and theories of analysis that critique the structures of disavowal that permeate public institutions. Each of these groups, both individually and collectively, attempts to raise awareness, challenge oppressive stereotypes, and demonstrate that sexual orientation and gender identity issues are legitimate public policy concerns.

Mapping Sexual Minority and Gender Variant Educational Policy Publics

In this section I develop an analytic framework using aspects of queer criticality to investigate how four leading publics influence the ways in which concerns related to

sexual orientation and gender identity are politicized or depoliticized within K-12 schools and the larger provincial sociocultural milieu. These publics are broadly defined as institutions and interest groups, which include the Government of Alberta, Alberta's SMGV community, the public judiciary and legal system, and the Alberta Teachers' Association. To develop this mapping, I situate key needs discourses, highlight coalition-building strategies, explore interpretive frameworks, identify dominant metaphors, and develop a listing of selected key documents for each public that can be used as sites for queer critical analysis. This analytic mapping provides a partial attempt to identify the contested terrain of the policy development and implementation cycle that policy analysts and advocates can utilize to assess, plan, and mobilize critical interventions in the pursuit of social justice.

Government of Alberta: The Alberta Legislature is arguably the most important institution in the public policy development process. With the power to create laws and legislation, the government is considered the central force in setting policy agendas and determining policy outcomes. As a result, lobbyists often seek to develop spheres of influence within the government and the policy development cycle. The key needs discourse utilized by the government when confronted with SMGV issues is one of reprivatization, whereby the government has often sought to strategically characterize SMGV issues as "special rights" or private concerns, rather than as issues of public/educational policy or democratic personhood. The Government of Alberta, as evidenced by many of former Premier Klein's public comments, and current Premier Stelmach's de-listing of gender reassignment surgery as part of universal provincial health care coverage, have traditionally perceived legal judgments and discourses, such

147

as human rights tribunal decisions, as a threat to government control over the public sphere. Government bureaucrats often code the legal system as a vehicle for the marginalized to undermine the province's authority. Public comments from many government officials have invoked a "slippery slope" rights-based argument and have positioned the courts as contaminated with an activist judiciary.

In Alberta key coalition-building strategies have often included the religious right, neoliberal corporations, reform movements, and grassroots organizations committed to a return to "traditional values." The Government of Alberta often draws upon findings from the Fraser Institute to provide expert discourses that seek to depoliticize SMGV and other noncommercial issues from the public policy agenda. Coupled with these coalition-building strategies is a strict constructionist interpretive framework, which relies upon a literalist interpretation of the Christian bible for a morality-based interpretation of sexual orientation and gender identity. In the economic sphere this interpretation translates into a belief in deregulation and the competitiveness of the marketplace as determining policy factors. Dominant metaphors used in the politicization process include the "severely normal" Albertan and the specter of western alienation. Key documents for analysis include: *School Act* (Government of Alberta, n.d.); *Guide to Education: ECS to grade 12* (Government of Alberta, 2009), *Every child learns, every child succeeds: Report and recommendations* (Alberta's Commission on Learning, 2003); *Health and life skills: Kindergarten to grade 9* (Alberta Learning, 2002); *Alberta roundtable on family violence and bullying* (Government of Alberta, n.d.); *Alberta roundtable on family violence and bullying: Finding solutions together* (Government of Alberta, 2004a); *Framework for action: Moving community consultation to strategic action* (Government of Alberta,

2004b); *Achieving a violence-free Alberta is everybody's business.* (Government of Alberta, 2004c); *Report on education in Canada* (Council of Ministers of Education, Canada, 2001); *Framework for the future* (Council of Ministers of Education, Canada, 2003a); and *Canadian youth, sexual health and HIV/AIDS study: Factors influencing knowledge, attitudes and behaviours* (Council of Ministers of Education, Canada, 2003b). These documents are designed to set the context and future directions for public education in Alberta and Canada. As such, they provide critical sites of analysis to examine existing educational policies, policy frameworks, and future strategic directions for education in Alberta.

Sexual Minority and Gender Variant Community: Alberta's SMGV community strives to counter governmental privatization strategies by invoking an oppositional needs discourse. This discourse attempts to move issues related to sexual orientation and gender identity from the private to public sphere to inform inclusive policy development. Strategies include the development of an equal rights discourse encoded in the law. For example, issues of sexuality and gender are recast as a fundamental component of democratic citizenship, minority rights, and constitutionally granted protections. Media messaging is utilized to help fracture the dominant narrative mythology of the monolithic heterosexual Canadian identity. Local SMGV spokespersons include Michael Phair, former City Councillor; Julie Lloyd, human rights lawyer; and Murray Billett, former police commissioner and community activist. These key individuals strive to build coalitions with groups such as Egale Canada, labour/public service unions, and the Liberal Party and the New Democratic Party in Alberta. Attempts are also made to build coalitions with other minority groups and regulatory institutions (courts, schools, medical

149

community) to serve as experts that can advance their oppositional needs discourses. These activist strategies often incorporate lessons learned from earlier feminist and civil rights movements.

The dominant interpretive framework utilized by the SMGV community relies on the "living document" approach to interpreting biblical texts, rightist-community standards, and moral codes. To further their policy claims the SMGV community draws upon expert discourses in religion, science, medicine, and other professional disciplines to advocate for the inherent dignity and equal treatment of SMGV citizens. Key arguments for the inclusion of SMGV issues within the educational system often focus on the health and safety needs of youth in schools (e.g., bullying), rather than moral or religious arguments. The dominant narrative for their activism is often stated as "There can be no separate, but equal", and "Safe schools for *all* students". Key documents for policy analysis within the educational system include: *Youth speak up about homophobia and transphobia: The first national climate survey on homophobia in Canadian schools* (Egale, 2009), *Homosexuality and schools* (Focus on the Family, n.d.); *Challenging homophobia and heterosexism in schools* (2nd ed.) (GALE-BC, 2004a); *Getting an education in Edmonton, Alberta: The case of queer youth* (Grace & Wells, 2001); *The Marc Hall prom predicament: Queer individual rights v. institutional church rights in Canadian public education* (Grace & Wells, 2005); *Gay and bisexual male youth as educator activists and cultural workers: The critical praxis of three Canadian high-school students* (Grace & Wells, 2009)*; The charisma and deception of reparative therapies: When medical science beds religion* (Grace, 2008); *Queer judgments: Homosexuality, expression, and the courts in Canada* (MacDougall, 2000); *Are 'we'*

persons yet? Law and sexuality in Canada (Lahey, 1999); *Not yet equal: The health of lesbian, gay, & bisexual youth in BC* (Saewyc, et al., 2007); *Queer response to bashing: Legislating against hate* (Peterson, 1991); *Pink blood: Homophobic violence in Canada* (Janoff, 2005); *A new look at homophobia and heterosexism in Canada* (Ryan, 2003); *Expanding tolerance: Edmonton's LGBTQ community and the march towards full citizenship and social inclusion* (Phair & Wells, 2006); and *Never going back: A history of queer activism in Canada* (Warner, 2002).

Judiciary: The public judiciary is a critical policy public that is often called to provide an expert needs discourse. Frequently attempts are made to mobilize this expertise by both oppositional and reprivitization discourses. This is because the judiciary is considered to have far reaching influence into both the private and public spheres and is the dominant vehicle for regulating the state. As such, the judiciary serves as a key policy actor in moving policy issues from the private to public sphere. Leading spokespersons in support of sexual minority human and civil rights include retired Supreme Court Justice Madame Justice L'Heureux-Dube.

Rarely does the judiciary seek to build coalitions, as it must be viewed as independent and impartial. However, it does form informal coalitions with the Ministry of Justice, Parliament, and the Senate (Legislative branch of Government). In its broad interpretation of the law, the judiciary most often invokes a living document or post enlightenment interpretive strategy, which draws upon case law (which is historically based in biblical interpretation) to establish precedents that situate law within contemporary contexts. This strategy often relies upon a "community standards" approach to interpretation with decisions based primarily within secular and ethical

frameworks. Increasingly, the courts have positioned the Canadian *Charter of Rights and Freedoms* as a "living" document that requires a broad interpretation. Dominant interpretive metaphors include the "scales of justice" and the *Charter* as the living fabric of diversity that blankets the nation. Key documents for SMGV educational policy analysis include several pivotal legal decisions: *Vriend v. Alberta* (SCC, 1998); *British Columbia College of Teachers v. Trinity Western University* (SCC, 2001); *Chamberlain v. Surrey School District No. 36* (SSC, 2002); *Egan v. Canada* (SCC, 1995); *M. v. H.* (SCC, 1999); *Board of School Trustees of School District No. 44 (North Vancouver) v. Jubran et al.* (Supreme Court of British Columbia, 2003); *Smitherman v. Powers and the Durham Catholic District School* Board (MacKinnon, Justice R., 2002); *Sexual orientation and legal rights* (Library of Parliament, 2008); *Criminal Code of Canada* (Government of Canada, 2010); and Canadian *Charter of Rights and Freedoms* (Government of Canada, 1982).

Alberta Teachers' Association: Before 1998, the Alberta Teachers' Association had no policies in place that specifically addressed sexual orientation and gender identity. In the decade post-Vriend, the ATA is now recognized as an international educational leader for their progressive SMGV policies and resources (Sears, 2005). The ATA developed its policies in response to the *Vriend* decision and utilized an expert and oppositional needs discourse to advocate for the mandatory inclusion of diversity, equity, and human rights in educational curriculum and policy development. As a key educational interest group, the ATA is a frequent and vocal critic of the Government of Alberta's neoliberal/market driven approaches to education that ignore groups like SMGV persons in civil society. The ATA's leading spokespersons are its President, Carol Henderson and Executive

Secretary, Dr. Gordon Thomas. The ATA's coalition building strategies include alliances with other public sector unions and organizations. For example, the ATA often draws upon research from the Parkland Institute to support expert claims for the need for market intervention, social justice education, and educational activism.

As an organization charged with educating and caring for the province's school-aged children, the ATA utilizes a living document and post enlightenment interpretive strategy that focuses on the ethical, legal, and professional responsibilities of members to create safe, caring, and inclusive schools for all students, regardless of their actual or perceived differences. To help assist with this ethical and professional frame work, the ATA draws upon contemporary scientific, legal, and cultural discourses to advocate for the inclusion of SMGV issues within both public and Catholic schools. Dominant narratives include phrases such as "to promote and advance public education" and to "be there for every student." Key documents for SMGV policy advocacy include: *Opening doors in public education: A forum on diversity, equity and human rights* (ATA, 2001); *Alberta Teachers' Association: Policy and position papers* (ATA, 2010a); *Teaching in Alberta—A teacher education learning resource* (ATA, 2005); *Code of Professional Conduct* (ATA, 2010b); *Diversity, equity and human rights: Principles, definitions and fundamental elements* (ATA, 2005); *Sexual orientation and gender identity policy brochure* (ATA, 2010c); *Building safe, caring and inclusive schools for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender Students: Professional development workshop series for Alberta teachers* (Wells, 2003); *Sexual orientation and gender identity educational website* (Wells, 2010); *Gay-straight student alliances in Alberta schools: A guide for teachers* (2nd ed.) (Wells, 2006); *Seeing the rainbow: Teachers talk about bisexual, gay,*

lesbian, transgender and two-spirited realities (CTF & ETFO, 2003); and *Challenging silence, challenging censorship: Inclusive resources, strategies and policy directives for addressing BGLTT realities in school and public libraries* (Schrader & Wells, 2007).

From Private Identities to Public Rights:
The Challenge of Liberal Strategies of Recognition

In her influential text entitled, *Justice and the Politics of Difference*, Young (1990) puts forth a theory of justice that rejects assimilationist politics and, in its place, demands the recognition of difference as fundamental to the redistribution of equality. According to Young's liberal theory, group differences such as those found in the SMGV community should be conceptualized as cultural variations, rather than as differences from the social norm. In this sense, Young's perspective is in keeping with the tenets of critical theorizing that resists oppositional definitions constituted in relation to the regimes of the normal and status quo. Young terms this political project the "politics of recognition." Queer criticality attempts to challenge this traditional liberalism by calling into question the workings of both heteronormativity and homonormativity as instruments of neoliberal power and privilege. For example, Brown (2009) suggests that homonormativity and its associated forms of queer liberalism are inexplicably intertwined within the sexual politics of neoliberalism. In this discourse only some lesbians and gay men (read white, middle/upper class market consumers) are considered citizens worthy of full social inclusion. No longer deemed as outsiders, traditional community "aspirations for sexual liberation" have been replaced with calls for "full and equal citizenship" (p. 4). Notably, this privilege of neoliberal citizenship is almost

exclusively the domain of gay white males and lesbians who represent "a niche market waiting to be exploited" (p. 4). Queer criticality calls into question homonormativity (the way in which homosexuality has been unquestionably assimilated into mainstream culture and the workings of heteronormativity) and its assimilationist tendencies to offer a critique challenging normalizing discourses, impulses, and actions with the goal of keeping the regimes of the normal at the centre of analysis rather than claims for heteronormative rights and privileges.

In attempts to mobilize issues from the private to the public realm, it is this constant fight for the recognition of social group differences that undergirds the struggle for visibility, inclusion, and meaningful participation in the policy development cycle. In order to accomplish this task, Young calls for a "cultural revolution" that is necessary to break down the historically rooted oppressions of cultural imperialism. Here the task is to move away from monolithic portrayals of identity and culture to a cultural pluralism that embraces and affirms individual and group differences and avoids relativism. However, caution should be used when engaging this strategy in the SMGV community. Unlike new social movements founded in racial or cultural differences, queer criticality suggests that universializing categorizations serve to ignore or downplay intra group differences in sexual orientation and gender identity, and other relationships of power, that are especially unique to the SMGV community. For example, the SMGV community is constituted along axes of sex, sexual, and gender differences, and as such transcends a multiplicity of identity constituting categories complicated by history and culture.

Correspondingly, SMGV communities should be conceptualized as a distinct collective that is comprised of an array of racialized, gendered, and classed identities.

This plurality makes the task of group solidarity much more complex and challenging. For example, in reference to the legalization of same-sex marriage, many members of the gay and lesbian community were not in favour of legalization. For some, same-sex marriage goes directly against the conceptualization of being queer and the quest to debinarize sex, gender, and sexuality in an effort to prompt a more fluid, complex, and relational understanding of identities and relationships. Queer criticality questions how queer space can reinforce specific identities and discourses vis-à-vis intersections with race, class, ability, age, gender, and ethnicity. The power, and perhaps promise, of queer criticality is to challenge and deconstruct sex and gender binaries rather than attempt to maintain and reify them for the sake of intragroup coherence, social acceptance, and desired neoliberal policy outcomes.

Concluding Perspective

This research attempts to incorporate critical and queer perspectives to develop a theoretically informed, yet praxis-oriented way of thinking about SMGV educational and cultural policy analysis. From this perspective, I have explored how interpretive frameworks operate to produce particular subject positions and policy outcomes. In the process of this subjectification and politization of policy, spaces of resistance to hegemonic discourses and meta-policy narratives can be revealed. Through this dialectical theorizing, totalizing narratives can be critiqued, challenged, and redeployed in an effort to imagine new policies and possibilities that can provide for a more equitable, just, and humane world.

In pursuit of these empancipatory goals, I have outlined a meta-theoretical framework for a substantive policy analysis which can be used to investigate how SMGV teachers, students, and educational issues are politicized or depoliticized as legitimate public policy foci that should be meaningfully addressed in K-12 public schools. To support this investigation, I have developed a policy mapping, which utilizes document and discourse analysis, to investigate the source, scope, and pattern of policy development and spaces for contestation and resistance as critical strategies for social justice (Ozga, 2000).

One primary goal of this analysis is to deconstruct policies in an effort to develop or reveal counter narratives that can be translated into alternatives for potential resistance and action to address inequality and exclusion. In support of the pursuit of critical alternatives, I propose utilizing queer criticality as a method to link policy analysis to the development of an ethical practice that respects and accommodates SMGV persons. This pursuit becomes an ethical project, which entails the questioning of dominant policy narratives that are designed to advance the interests of state power in an effort to control the public and shape the social. As much as this is an ethical project, it is also a political one that strives to build an ethics of capacity to critique and challenge normative frameworks that engage in physical, cultural, and symbolic violence toward lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer persons in the province of Alberta. In a world increasingly marked by difference, I maintain that the public sphere ought to be an open space in which conflict and contestation can be engaged in an effort to enrich and deepen democracy.

References

Alberta's Commission on Learning. (2003). *Every child learns, every child succeeds: Report and recommendations.* Edmonton, AB: Alberta Learning.

Alberta Learning. (2002). *Health and life skills: Kindergarten to grade 9.* Edmonton, AB: Author.

Alberta Teachers' Association (ATA). (2001). *Opening doors in public education: A forum on diversity, equity and human rights*. Edmonton, AB: Author.

Alberta Teachers' Association (ATA). (2005). *Teaching in Alberta—A teacher education learning resource*. Edmonton, AB: Author.

Alberta Teachers' Association (ATA). (2005). *Diversity, equity and human rights: Principles, definitions and fundamental elements*. Retrieved from Alberta Teachers' Association website: www.teachers.ab.ca

Alberta Teachers' Association (ATA). (2010a). *Policy and position papers.* Retrieved from Alberta Teachers' Association website: www.teachers.ab.ca

Alberta Teachers' Association (ATA). (2010b). *Code of Professional Conduct.* Retrieved from Alberta Teachers' Association website: www.teachers.ab.ca

Alberta Teachers' Association (ATA). (2010c). *Sexual orientation and gender identity policy brochure*. Retrieved from Alberta Teachers' Association website: www.teachers.ab.ca

Birden, S., Gaither, L. L., & Laird, S. (2000). The struggle over the text: Compulsory heterosexuality and educational policy. *Educational Policy, 14*(5), 638-663. doi:10.1177/0895904800014005007

British Columbia College of Teachers (BCCT) v. Trinity Western University (TWU),
2001 SCC 31. Retrieved from

http://csc.lexum.umontreal.ca/en/2001/2001scc31/2001scc31.html

Brown, G. (2009). Thinking beyond homonormativity: Performative explorations of
diverse gay economies. *Environment and Planning.* Advance online publication.
doi:10.1068/a4162

Canadian Teachers' Federation (CTF), & Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario
(ETFO). (2003). *Seeing the rainbow: Teachers talk about bisexual, gay, lesbian,
transgender and two-spirited realities.* Ottawa, ON: Authors.

Chamberlain v. Surrey School District (SSD) No. 36. (2002). SCC 86. Retrieved from
http://scc.lexum.umontreal.ca/en/2002/2002scc86/2002scc86.html

Council of Ministers of Education, Canada (CMEC). (1998). *Report on education in
Canada.* Retrieved from CMEC website:

http://www.cmec.ca/Publications/Pages/default.aspx

Council of Ministers of Education, Canada (CMEC). (2001). *Education for peace, human
rights, democracy, international understanding and tolerance: Report of Canada.*
Retrieved from CMEC website:

http://www.cmec.ca/Publications/Pages/default.aspx

Council of Ministers of Education, Canada (CMEC). (2003a). *Framework for the future.*
Retrieved from CMEC website:

http://www.cmec.ca/Publications/Pages/default.aspx

Council of Ministers of Education, Canada (CMEC). (2003b). *Canadian youth, sexual
health and HIV/AIDS study: Factors influencing knowledge, attitudes and*

behaviours. Retrieved from CMEC website:

http://www.cmec.ca/Publications/Pages/default.aspx

Egale Canada. (2009). *Youth speak up about homophobia and transphobia: The first*

national climate survey on homophobia in Canadian schools. Retrieved from

Egale Canada website:

http://www.egale.ca/index.asp?lang=&menu=1&item=1401

Egan v. Canada. (1995). 2 SCR 513. Retrieved from

http://csc.lexum.umontreal.ca/en/1995/1995scr2-513/1995scr2-513.html

Focus on the Family (FOTF). (n.d.). *Homosexuality and schools.* Retrieved from

http://www.focusonthefamily.ca

Foucault, M. (1978). *The history of sexuality, Vol. 1: An introduction.* New York:

Vintage.

Fraser, N. (1989). *Unruly practices: Power, discourse and gender in contemporary social*

theory. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press.

Fraser, N. (1997). *Justice interruptus: Critical reflections on the "Postsocialist"*

condition. New York: Routledge.

Freire, P. (2005). *Pedagogy of indignation.* Herndon, VA: Paradigm Publishers.

Gale, T. (2001). Critical policy sociology: Historiography, archaeology and genealogy as

methods of policy analysis. *Journal of Education Policy, 16*(5), 379-393.

doi:10.1080/02680930110071002

Gay and Lesbian Educators of British Columbia (GALE-BC). (2004). *Challenging*

homophobia in schools (2nd ed.). Nelson Park, BC: Author.

Government of Alberta. (n.d.) *Alberta roundtable on family violence and bullying.*

Retrieved from http://www.familyviolenceroundtable.gov.ab.ca/

Government of Alberta. (n.d.). *School Act.* Retrieved from

http://www.qp.gov.ab.ca/Documents/acts/S03.CFM

Government of Alberta. (1999). *Report of the ministerial task force.* Alberta: Author.

Government of Alberta. (2004a). *Alberta roundtable on family violence and bullying:*

Finding solutions together. Retrieved from

http://www.familyviolenceroundtable.gov.ab.ca/finding_solutions.asp

Government of Alberta. (2004b). *Framework for action: Moving community consultation*

to strategic action. Edmonton, AB: Author.

Government of Alberta. (2004c). *Achieving a violence-free Alberta is everybody's*

business. Regional workshop guide and workbook. Edmonton, AB: Author.

Government of Alberta. (2009). *Guide to Education: ECS to grade 12.* Edmonton, AB:

Author.

Government of Canada. (2010). *Criminal Code of Canada.* Retrieved from

www.laws.justice.gc.ca/en/C-46

Government of Canada. (1982). *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.* Retrieved

from http://laws.justice.gc.ca/en/charter/

Grace, A. P. (2007). Envisioning a critical social pedagogy of learning and work in a

contemporary culture of cyclical lifelong learning. *Studies in Continuing Education,*

29(1), 85-103. doi:10.1080/01580370601146361

Grace, A. P. (2008). The charisma and deception of reparative therapies: When medical

science beds religion. *Journal of Homosexuality, 55*(4), 545-80.

doi:10.1080/00918360802421676

Grace, A. P., & Wells, K. (2001). Getting an education in Edmonton, Alberta: The case

of queer youth. *Torquere, Journal of the Canadian Lesbian and Gay Studies*

Association, 3, 137-151.

Grace, A. P., & Wells, K. (2005). The Marc Hall prom predicament: Queer individual rights

v. institutional church rights in Canadian public education. *Canadian Journal of*

Education, 28(3), 237-270. Retrieved from

http://www.csse.ca/CJE/Articles/FullText/CJE28-3/CJE28-3-gracewells.pdf

Grace, A. P., & Wells, K. (2006). The quest for a queer inclusive cultural ethics: Setting

directions for teachers' pre-service and continuing professional development. In R. J.

Hill (Ed.), *Challenging homophobia and heterosexism: Lesbian, gay, bisexual,*

transgender and queer issues in organizational settings (pp. 51-61). New Directions

for Adult and Continuing Education, no. 112. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Grace, A. P., & Wells, K. (2009). Gay and bisexual male youth as educator activists and

cultural workers: The critical praxis of three Canadian high-school students.

International Journal of Inclusive Education, 3(1), 23-44.

doi:10.1080/13603110701254121

House, E. R. (2005). Qualitative evaluation and changing social policy. In N. K. Denzin

& Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *Sage qualitative handbook of qualitative* research (3rd

ed.) (pp. 1069-1081). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Hoy, D. C. (2004). *Critical resistance: From poststructuralism to post-critique.* Cambridge,

MA: MIT Press.

Janoff, D. V. (2005). *Pink blood: Homophobic violence in Canada.* Toronto, ON: University of Toronto Press.

Kempling v. The British Columbia College of Teachers (BCCT). (2004). BCSC 133. Retrieved from http://www.courts.gov.bc.ca/Jdb-txt/SC/04/01/2004BCSC0133.htm

Kumashiro, K. K.(2009). Education policy and family values: A critical analysis of initiatives from 'the Right'. *Multicultural Perspectives, 11*(2), 72-79. doi:10.1080/15210960903028735

Ladson-Billings, G., & Tate, W. F. (1995). Toward a critical race theory of education. *Teachers College Record, 97*(1), 47-69. Retrieved from http://www.hs.iastate.edu/hiltonchair/2008-09-gladson-billings/documents/Toward_a_Critical_Race_Theory_of_Education.pdf

Landson-Billings, G., & Donnor, J. (2005). The moral activist role of critical race theory scholarship. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *Sage qualitative handbook of qualitative research* (3rd ed.) (pp. 279-301). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Lahey, K. (1999). *Are 'we' persons yet? Law and sexuality in Canada.* Toronto, ON: University of Toronto Press.

Lax, J. R., & Phillips, J. H. (2009). Gay rights in the states: Public opinion and policy responsiveness. *American Political Science Review, 103*(3), 367-386. doi:10.1017/S0003055409990050

Legislative Assembly of Alberta. (2009). *Bill 44: Human rights, citizenship, and*

    multiculturalism amendment act. Retrieved from

    http://www.assembly.ab.ca/bills/2009/pdf/bill-044.pdf

Library of Parliament. (2008). *Sexual orientation and legal rights.* Retrieved from

    http://www2.parl.gc.ca/Content/LOP/ResearchPublications/prb0849-e.htm

Lisac, M. (2004). *Alberta politics uncovered: Taking back our province.* Edmonton, AB:

    NeWest Press.

Lugg, C. A. (2003). Sissies, faggots, lezzies, and dykes: Gender, sexual orientation, and a

    new politics of education? *Educational Administration Quarterly, 39*(1), 95-134.

    doi:10.1177/0013161X02239762

Lugg, C. A. (2010). What's a nice dyke like you embracing this postmodern crap? In A.

    K. Tooms & C. Boske (Eds.), *Bridge leadership: Connecting educational*

    leadership and social justice to improve schools (pp. 59-94). Charlotte, NC:

    Information Age Publishing.

M. v. H. (1999). SCC 2. Retrieved from http://csc.lexum.umontreal.ca/en/1999/1999scr2-

    3/1999scr2-3.html

MacDougall, B. (2000). *Queer judgments: Homosexuality, expression, and the courts in*

    Canada. Toronto, ON: University of Toronto Press.

MacKinnon, Justice R. (2002, May 10). *Smitherman v. Powers and the Durham Catholic*

    Distract School Board. (Court File No. 12-CV-227705CM3). Whitby, ON:

    Ontario Superior Court of Justice.

Marshall, C. (1997). Dismantling and reconstructing policy analysis. In C. Marshall

(Ed.), *Feminist critical policy analysis: A perspective from primary and*

secondary schooling (pp. 1-39). Washington, DC: The Falmer Press.

Marshall, C. (1999). Researching the margins: Feminist critical policy analysis.

Educational Policy, 13, 59-76. doi:10.1177/0895904899131006

Ozga, J. (2000). *Policy research in educational settings: Contested terrain.* Philadelphia,

PA: Open University Press.

Pal, L. A. (2001). *Beyond policy analysis: Public issue management in turbulent times*

(2nd ed.). Scarborough, ON: Nelson Thompson Learning.

Phair, M., & Wells, K. (2006). Expanding tolerance: Edmonton's LGBTQ community

and the march towards full citizenship and social inclusion. *Canadian Review of*

Social Policy, 56, 149-156. Retrieved from

www.ismss.ualberta.ca/.../Expanding_Tolerance_Phair_Wells_2006.pdf

Ryan, B. (2003). *A new look at homophobia and heterosexism in Canada*. Retrieved from

http://www.cdnaids.ca/web/repguide.nsf/Pages/cas-rep-0188

Saewyc, E., Poon, C., Wang, N., Homma, Y., Smith, A., & the McCreary Centre Society.

(2007). *Not yet equal: The health of lesbian, gay, & bisexual youth in BC*.

Vancouver, BC: McCreary Centre Society.

Schrader, A. M., & Wells, K. (2007). *Challenging silence, challenging censorship: Inclusive*

resources, strategies and policy directives for addressing BGLTT realities in school

and public libraries. Ottawa, ON: Canadian Teachers' Federation

Sears, J. T. (Ed.). (2005). *Youth, education, and sexualities: An international encyclopedia*

(Vol. 1). Westport, CT: Greenwood Press.

Sedgwick, E. K. (1990). *Epistemology of the closet.* Berkeley: University of California

      Press.

Supreme Court of British Columbia. (2003). *Board of School Trustees of School District*

      No. 44 (North Vancouver) v. Jubran et al. Retrieved from

      http://www.canlii.org/en/bc/bcsc/doc/2003/2003bcsc6/2003bcsc6.html

Troyna, B. (1994). Critical social research and education policy. *British Journal of*

      Educational Studies, 42(1), 70-84. Retrieved from

      http://www.jstor.org/pss/3122221

Vriend v. Alberta. (1998). *SCC 493.* Retrieved from

      http://scc.lexum.umontreal.ca/en/1998/1998scr1-493/1998scr1-493.html

Warner, T. (2002). *Never going back: A history of queer activism in Canada.* Toronto,

      ON: Toronto University Press.

Wells, K. (2003). *Building safe, caring and inclusive schools for lesbian, gay, bisexual*

      and transgender Students: Professional development workshop series for Alberta

      teachers. Edmonton, AB: Alberta Teachers' Association.

Wells, K. (2006). *Gay-straight student alliances in Alberta schools: A guide for teachers*

      (2nd ed.). Edmonton, AB: Alberta Teachers' Association.

Wells, K. (2010). *Sexual orientation and gender identity educational website.* Retrieved

      from Alberta Teachers' Association website: www.teachers.ab.ca

Wells, K., & Chamberlain, J. (2009, September). Alberta's Bill 44 restricts professional

      autonomy. *Teacher: Newsmagazine of the BC Teachers' Federation, 22*(1), 5.

Wild Rose Alliance. (2010). *Our vision for Alberta.* Retrieved Wild Rose Alliance

      website: http://www.wildrosealliance.ca/home/our-vision-for-alberta

Young, I. (1990). *Justice and the politics of difference.* Princeton: Princeton University

    Press.

Young, R. (2003). Habermas's postmodernism. In M. Peters, C. Lankshear, & M. Olsen

    (Eds.), *Critical theory and the human condition: Founders and praxis* (pp. 114-129).

    New York: Peter Lang.

Essay Three
Sexual Minority Teachers as Activist-Educators for Social Justice

We spend our life in a place that is so miserable for the first eighteen years, and then we end up being teachers. Perhaps…. it's because we wanted to change…. When you think about trying to change the world, I always thought one way to do it would be through teaching.
– Gerard Cormier, Executive Staff Officer, Nova Scotia Teachers' Union

Historically, North American lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer teachers have been considered a "problem" for K-12 education (Blount, 2005; Harbeck, 1992, 1997; Jackson, 2007; Kissen, 1996; Sanlo, 1999; Singer, 1999). In his epic study of lesbian and gay activism in Canada, Warner (2002) identifies how "homophobic remarks and harassment, ostracism, vulnerability, and fear of coming out remain [central] features of Canada's schools" (p. 340). Correspondingly, the Surrey Teachers' Association (2000) suggests public education may well be the last bastion of state sanctioned homophobia.

Thanks in large part to protections guaranteed by the Canadian *Charter of Rights and Freedoms*, sexual minority teachers are increasingly on the frontlines of the perennial fight to eradicate homophobia, heterosexism, and transphobia in Canadian K-12 public schools (Grace & Wells, 2006). Public education has become the new battleground in today's sexuality and gender culture wars, which interrogate the role that morality, religion, and parental influence should play within a public secular school system. As Warner (2002) points out, "fighting homophobia and heterosexism in schools and the education system is quickly moving to the forefront of lesbian and gay organizing" (p. 342). Over the past two decades, it has been sexual minority youth and their allies who have largely been at the centre of these culture wars as they fight for their right to attend schools that are safe, inclusive, and accommodating of their diverse sexual orientations

and gender identities (Grace & Wells, 2005, 2009). In light of this increasing sexual minority educational activism, Harbeck (1997) identifies a challenging contradiction, sexual minority and gender variant (SMGV) youth who "are coming out of the closet at a significant rate, [are thus] forcing adults to come to terms with their visibility and existence. Ironically, but not surprisingly, many GLBT educators are fearful of these public GLBT youth" (p. 34). Why are these SMGV educators so afraid of out, proud, and visible youth? What allows some teachers and students to transcend homophobic, transphobic, and heterosexist environments to become leaders in their schools and communities? What are the risks associated with being an "out" and visible sexual minority teacher who advocates for SMGV inclusive education? Why are some educators afraid to talk about SMGV issues? What empowers other educators to overcome these fears to become agents for SMGV inclusive education?

This essay attempts to address these compelling questions, by engaging key informant interviews with four sexual minority Canadian activist-educators, all of whom have worked tirelessly (within their classrooms, teacher association, and, in some cases, courtrooms) to live out a vision of public education that is inclusive of and accountable to all teachers and students regardless of their differences. These activist-educators are on the frontlines of a new culture war in schools that assert queer visibility, reject heteronormative assumptions and exclusions, challenge discrimination, fight against fundamentalist religious ideology, and demand the right to full personhood in their schools and communities (Lahey, 1999; Warner, 2002).

While research on sexual minority youth has been ongoing since the 1970s, research on the experiences of SMGV teachers is a relatively new area of study (Savin-

Williams, 2005; Sears, 2005). This paucity of SMGV teacher research is especially apparent when examining the scant literature available in educational and professional research journals. What is most noticeably absent is empirical research exploring the impact of homophobia, transphobia, and heteronormativity on SMGV K-12 teachers (Duke, 2007). The interviews presented in this research attempt to add to this small, yet growing empirical discourse on the lives, motivations, and experiences of sexual minority educators (Harris & Bliss, 1998; Blount, 1996; Khayatt, 1992; Olson, 1987; Rensbrink, 1996; Jackson, 2007). The interviews were part of a larger SSHRC-funded research study conducted by Dr. André P. Grace. In this national study, we interviewed 53 self-identified SMGV teachers from every province and territory in Canada. These educators ranged from pre-service, practicing (at school, district, and teacher association levels), and retired teachers in K-12 public, separate, and private school settings. The four teacher narratives presented in this research essay were selected as illustrative examples of how some educators sought to move beyond the classroom closet to advocate for institutional, cultural, and social change. In Freirean terms, these educators strived to become cultural workers who denounced conditions of oppression and, in turn, announced new possibilities for inclusive social change (Freire, 2004). Ultimately, these teachers became activist-educators who engaged in a critically queer educational praxis, which sought to align their personal beliefs and life experiences within a public ethical practice.

In Canada, with increasing incremental changes to law and legislation, SMGV educators now have legal protections to prevent them from being fired from their jobs, and most teacher associations also have policies in place to prevent these educators from workplace and/or collegial harassment (Grace & Wells, 2006). In the United States,

although twenty-one states prohibit discrimination based on sexual orientation, and thirteen of these states also include protections related to gender identity and expression, currently, there are no federal laws protecting teachers from discrimination on the basis of their actual or perceived gender identity or sexual orientation (National Gay and Lesbian Taskforce, 2009). Despite movement towards inclusive law, legislation, and professional protections, these incremental changes, on both sides of the border, have been slow to translate into the everyday lived realities of SMGV teachers. Throughout history, including present day realities, many out SMGV teachers have "risk[ed] ostracism, parental outrage, punishment, and even dismissal" (Blount, 2005, p. 1). Schools as "gender-polarized" (p. 1) spaces have seldom been supportive of SMGV teachers who openly transgress sex, sexual, and gender norms.

Towards a Critically Queer Ethnography

Using a historical analysis of sexual minority teachers in public education, this research is an accounting of a Foucauldian inspired "history of the present" and is intended to prompt a dialogue across historical texts, time, and the researching of ourselves as public educators (Lather, 2007). This critically-informed inquiry asks what does it mean to draw upon the past to study the present and inform the future of public education? It seeks a "new Enlightenment of testimony and witness that differs from the authoritative voice of verification, proof, or demonstration" (p. 7). The role of the researcher in this postfoundational work is to bear witness, resist normalization and authority, and to embrace a practice of uncertainty and not-knowing. A turn to a critically queer ethnography as methodology examines the messy production of an everyday life

and identity by those who are "othered" through power, history, sexuality, gender, and ontological certainty (Grace & Wells, 2007). As Lather asks, "What does ethnography give us to hear and understand about the force needed to arrive at the change to come, that which is, perhaps, underway?" (Lather, 2007, p. 9). This critically queer ethnography subjects sexuality and its institutional regulation to postfoundational analysis, which strives to produce counter narratives to dominant discourses that reveal a heteronormative-inspired politics of truth and concomitant insidious sexual and gender regulation. Fontana (2001) describes this form of research as focusing on "smaller parcels of knowledge; we study society in fragments, in its daily details" (p. 161). Realities and small truths are exposed as heteronormativity is interrogated.

This quest for "after truth" strives to trouble knowledge practices or, as Lather (2007) posits, takes up the "ruins of ethnography" (p. 9), which is increasingly pressured by neoliberal forces to prioritize research methods grounded in evidence-based practices that produce technoscientized, linear outcomes. A critically queer ethnography does not call for the "end of science, but the end of a narrow scientificity" (p. 2), and what counts as authorized knowledge and research. Thus one key product of this kind of postfoundational research is to work towards "discovering the rules by which truth is produced" (p. 11). In general, and applicable here, postfoundational inquiry engages with an "ontology that circumvents foundations…" as it strives towards an "open-endedness of practical action as a structure of praxis and ethics" (p. 13).

This is not a process of writing the "other." Instead it is an attempt to engage with the crisis of representation by placing concerted attention on the "complexity of what we try to know and understand" (p. 13), which includes what is not said, what cannot be

known, and what cannot be foretold. This is an attempt at producing different forms of knowledge, which challenge the processes of colonization through research (Tuhiwai-Smith, 1999). This is a "thinking and doing otherwise" (Lather, 2007, p. 13) inspired by Freire's (2004) call for a pedagogy of humanization. Rather than attempting to develop a recipe for a critical praxis, this work explores the making of an impossible praxis that seeks moments of interruption rather than attempts at closure, certainty, and salvation. This impossibility of praxis seeks to uncover counter narratives and counter practices that reveal, produce, subvert, and learn from the fissures, ruptures, absences, silences, failures, breaks, and refusals to be found in postfoundational work. From this vantage point, it is a breaking of what Foucault (1978) described as the production of secrecy and silence that surrounds sexuality. This educational praxis is no longer a call to invent or incite new ways of being, doing, or thinking differently, rather it is conceptualized as a "material force to identify and amplify what is already begun toward a practice of living on" (Lather, 2007, p. 16). In relation to the sexual minority teachers in this study, it is an attempt to explore a critically queer methodology that asks what makes our lives knowable and livable within the past, present, and future of public education.

Methods

This essay considers how four public school teachers – Murray Corren, an elementary school teacher from Vancouver, British Columbia; James Chamberlain, a former elementary school teacher who is now a staff officer with the British Columbia Teachers' Federation; Gerard Cormier, a former Francophone high school teacher and current equity staff officer with the Nova Scotia Teachers' Union; and Joan Beecroft, an

elementary teacher from Owen Sound, Ontario – became activist-educators for SMGV inclusion in Canada. I chose to focus specifically on these four teachers, as each had undertaken significant actions, on their own impetus, to challenge the institutional workings of homophobia, transphobia, heterosexism, and heteronormativity present within their educational environments. Their critically queer educational praxis involved analyzing, strategizing, and taking action to advance SMGV inclusion in their local schools and communities.

To engage in this critically queer ethnographic research, I explored various materials including correspondence, website materials, curriculum documents, legal decisions, and educational policies that each research participant had utilized in their educational activism and cultural work. These documents helped to contextualize their activism and provided critical insights into the development of their activist work. As part of the larger welfare and work research study, Dr. Grace and I conducted two-hour, open-ended interviews with each of these research participants, which enabled us to explore the historical, contextual, situational, and relational complexities of their educational activism. To begin the interviews, we were interested in engaging each research participant in conversation within a dialogic relationship. Our goal was to facilitate the conditions for building a polyphonic knowledge through exchanging our individual and collective experiences as sexual minority public school teachers in Canada. It was our hope that this reciprocal, dialogical approach would help to produce "knowledge as a socially and historically contextualized mode of understanding and acting in the social world" (Tanggaard, 2009, p. 1513).

The four open-ended interviews were recorded and transcribed. All research participants had the opportunity to review their interview transcripts, which involved them in an iterative process of co-constructing meaning in which their edits, feedback, and interpretations were taken into account during the editing and writing process. In recognition of their significant activist work within their local schools and communities, none of the research participants wanted to be identified using pseudonyms. Instead they requested that their full names be included as a way to acknowledge and historically account for their diverse contributions in striving to develop an inclusive and ethically responsible public educational system for all students and teachers. Far too often these teachers reported attempts at being silenced by oppressive regulatory institutions that sought to deny, hide, or erase their identities and positionalities as sexual minority persons. They were clear that they did not want this research to contribute to their further silencing. Rather, they suggested that they wanted to participate in this research as a vehicle and method to share their stories as a way to give testimony to the daily struggles, resistances, and triumphs of sexual minority teachers across Canada.

The ethnographic vignettes presented in this essay attempt to honour this request by representing our conversations as a form of co-constructed narrative (Ellis & Berger, 2003), which provides for a multi-textured account of their critically queer educational praxis. While significant research has explored the benefits and challenges of being an "out" educator, and the politics of coming out in the classroom (Khayatt, 1997, 1998; Rasmussen, 2004), this article explores the experiences of these four teachers and how they transcended the classroom closet to become educator-activists for educational, social, and cultural change. Through a series of dialogic qualitative interviews, I explored

the impetus and conditions that drove these teachers to become activist-educators in their K-12 schools, their motivations for coming out in heteronormative educational environments, the ensuing backlash they experienced during their efforts at promoting educational and cultural change, their individual processes in becoming change agents, and the educational strategies and tactics they developed from years of activist work within their schools.

From Classroom Closets to Courthouse Challenges: A Short History of Sexual Minority Teachers in North America

Michel Foucault (1978) in his now classic study of the history of sexuality describes the epistemological project of the 19th century as an attempt to produce an ordered system of knowledge and an accounting of a uniform version of "truth". Thus began the modern era of empiricism, interrogation, causality, and taxonomy. A scientific discursivity was born with the intention to classify, regulate, and control bodies *and* knowledge. Under this scientific regime, sex came to be understood as more than a simple reproductive drive, but as a "general signification, a universal secret, an omnipresent cause, a fear that never ends" (p. 69). And so, this question of sex and, in turn, the regulation of sexuality became not only about the control, subjugation, and fear of the body, but also about discourse and the production of heteronormative knowledge, subjectivity, and identity. In essence, sex was a technology of control and a process of (hetero)normalization.

To account for a history of the present status of teacher identity, we need to understand the history of its past and its infiltration of the present. Even today, sexuality is still considered to be a fugitive secret that is seldom discussed in North American

classrooms. As Foucault posits, sex and sexuality are never outside of discourse, and as such require "an incitement to discourse" as a method in which "breaking the secret, can clear the way leading to it, [which] is precisely what needs to be examined" (p. 34). Correspondingly, in an attempt to understand the current experiences of sexual minority educators, we need to turn to the past to identify how these identities were made (un)intelligible and the effects this gender and sexual regulation have on the lives of teachers in the present moment of the 21st century.

With the turn of the 20th century, along came a remarkable shift in the nature and composition of public school teaching. As Blount's cogent historical analysis suggests, in the 1800s teaching was primarily a masculinized and male-dominated profession. However, by the 1900s, women would dramatically account for more than two-thirds of all teachers in the United States (p. 13). For example, "in 1920, women accounted for 86% of all teachers…. 91% [of whom were] single, widowed or divorced" (p. 59). Along with this demographic shift, also came the de-professionalization of teaching and the commonly held belief that teaching was "women's work" (Grumet, 1988). Likewise, Acker's (1983) historical analysis suggests, "teaching [was] not really considered to be a labour or a profession, rather, it [was] what (generally) women do just because they want to help" (p. 125). Even with the few men who did remain in the profession in the 1900s, a clear gender hierarchy was institutionalized: Men became the administrators and women were designated as the subordinate caregivers and classroom teachers.

Increasingly, during the rapid industrialization of the 20th century, schools were charged with the responsibility to assist in nation building and to serve as surrogate parents to students. With the advent of compulsory schooling, the role and expectation of

schools had changed. Schools were now expected to focus their efforts on the production

of workers and patriotic citizens who would fit into mainstream society, which meant an

explicit and implicit adherence to strict gendered roles, sexual norms, and a Protestant

work ethic (Quinn & Meiners, 2009). In effect, schools were charged with the task of

regulating compulsory heterosexuality, gender hierarchy, and white supremacy. As a

result, teachers (who were predominantly white women) were held to a higher

community standard with the expectation that they were to become exemplary (gendered)

role models. These teachers, without question, were presumed and expected to be white,

heterosexual, and of upstanding moral character. They were "recruited to do the work of

spreading [dominant societal] ideologies through curriculum and teaching" (Quinn &

Meiners, 2009, p. 63).

       In the early 1900s, for any women with same-sex attractions, personal choices and

life possibilities were extremely limited. To escape the confines of marriage, and to retain

any claims to independence, women had few options. Perhaps, the most compelling

choice was to enter the teaching profession, where women could and, indeed, were

expected to remain single. However, during the Great Depression, the once valued

"spinster" teacher began to be looked upon with suspicion. Under the specter of increased

gender surveillance, many women with same-sex attractions had little choice but to marry

to keep their jobs. The tide had turned and the virtue of the single teacher to her charges

and profession was now cast as a threat to the gender order whereby a spinster or

"mannish" women was seen to turn impressionable young boys into "mollycoddles" and

girls into unmarriable goods (p. 61). By the 1930s, teaching quickly turned into a

profession dominated by married women. As Blount (2005) highlights, "Women who

made good teachers shared the same quality as good wives: They were attractive to men, compliant, and dependent. Women with qualities likely to result in marriage would, with all probability, also succeed in educational work" (p. 75).

With the Great Depression ending, and industrialization now in full force, another option became available for unmarried women; they could now enlist in the military as a means to escape gender normativity and sexual regulation (Blount, 2005; Quinn & Meiners, 2009). These newfound roles afforded lesbian and bisexual women the independence and financial security (albeit extremely limited) to create a life of new possibilities that could be found outside of the male-dominated household. In many ways, these emerging career options forged and strengthened lesbian identities and the founding of a possible life outside of the dominant heterosexual matrix.

In contrast, many men sought to avoid the teaching profession altogether due to its semi-professional status, low wages, and constant supervision, which were collectively perceived as a threat to their dominant sex role status. Paradoxically, for many gay males, teaching became a natural vocation as they saw the feminization of teaching as a possibility to escape a totalizing hegemonic masculinity. During this era, the teaching profession was increasingly viewed as a rising threat to a man's masculinity. As a result, any male teachers who were suspected of being gay were immediately placed under constant surveillance and expected to abide by a rigidly enforced compulsory heterosexuality. Despite the overwhelming shortage of male teachers, should they become too feminized in manner or appearance, these suspected homosexuals were to be purged from the educational system. However, as Blount (2005) identifies, in some communities these men were given more latitude to deviate from gender norms, such as

remaining unmarried. This discretion was largely enabled due to the fear that the entire teaching profession would be lost to women.

To keep men interested in the profession, a niche had to be developed within the school system by focusing on the development and delivery of hyper-masculine subjects such as athletics, trades, high school mathematics, natural sciences, and administration (p. 26). These positions allowed men to retain their masculinity in an otherwise feminized profession. For example, the field of administration represented a "socially created boundary separating feminine and masculine realms" (Blount, 2005, p. 27). This boundary became so institutionalized and internalized that, even today, very few school administrators, especially at senior administration levels, are publicly out in their positions. The regulatory effects of heterosexism, gender normativity, and white privilege remain almost exclusively intact within the modern day educational system. As Quinn and Meiners (2009) reveal, in the United States "teaching continues to be a feminized and predominantly white field; in 2005, 82% of the public school teachers were female… [of which,] approximately 17% were of color, compared to an overall U.S. population of color of about 34%" (p. 63).

After World War II, employment restrictions governing the hiring of unmarried women were increasingly lifted, partly due to the fact that fewer single women wanted to pursue teaching. For example, the war had afforded many single women with the opportunity to enter into military-related industries, where they earned higher wages and faced less scrutiny and surveillance than they had experienced as teachers. These external market forces and occupational changes were coupled by aspirational changes reducing the number of single women in public education. At mid-century, a stunning reversal had

occurred, due in large part to the moral panic of spinster teachers and the specter of lesbianism. By the 1960s, only 30% of the teaching population was now composed of single women. The "monogamous, married heterosexual" woman became the idealized teacher who would establish and enforce gender norms and expected standards of conduct (p. 78). A movement in education, mirrored in the larger society (e.g., McCarthyism), to purge homosexuals from societal institutions was well underway – forcing sexual minority teachers deep into the recesses of the closet (Biegel, 2010; Harbeck, 1997). Heterosexuality now had to be clearly demonstrated as a necessary job requirement.

Strikingly, Willard Waller, in his educational treatise entitled "The Sociology of Teaching" (1932), identified homosexuality as a contagion (Tierney & Dilley, 1998). Homosexuals were to be actively sought out and rooted out of the educational system as a "moral menace to our youth" (Blount, 2005, p. 80). Homosexuality was deemed as a pathogen that threatened the social order. A scourge to eradicate sexual minority teachers from North American schools began in full force. Unmarried teachers once again risked the suspicion of homosexuality. In the McCarthy era, school administrators screened teachers for signs of homosexuality and rigidly enforced gender codes and norms. Men were designated to traditionally masculine positions such as administration, coaching, and vocational education, while women teachers were relegated to elementary schools and teaching home economics (Blount, 2005, p. 81). Teachers have always been subject to higher moral standards, but now the crusade was underway to expose and dismiss any teacher with perceived homosexual tendencies whether exposed through sexual desire or gender nonconformity in their professional *or* personal lives. The surveillance was

constant and intense. Marriages of convenience became common and necessary as methods to pass as heterosexual. Schools became the primary battleground in the moral, political, and cultural war against homosexuality.

At the height of McCarthyism, even the military undertook a pernicious campaign to root out homosexuals. In Canada, this sex panic was also prevalent with the invention of the "fruit machine", which was devised as a way to detect gays and lesbians lurking within the Canadian public service (Kinsmen & Gentile, 2010). In Los Angeles, "legislation passed after WWII required the police to notify both the State license board and local superintendents when homosexual sting operations netted teachers. Such teachers lost their jobs immediately, even if the charges later proved to be false or there was no evidence" (Blount, 2005, p. 99). Still, despite this post-WWII sexual hysteria and systematic persecution, large sexual minority communities managed to exist, and in some cases thrive. A newfound sexual minority subculture started to emerge in large metropolises and port cities as sexual minorities devised covert ways to meet and socialize with each other.

By the late 1960s, a more visible and vocal gay and lesbian grassroots movement began to develop out of these fugitive subcultures. Many historians mark the 1969 Stonewall Riots in New York City as the epicenter of this gay liberation movement in North America (Duberman, 1993). A once repressive environment towards sexual minority and gender variant people began to clash with notions of egalitarianism and debates on civil liberties, which began to emerge strongly during the zeitgeist of the 1960s and 1970s. This was a period of unprecedented social and cultural upheaval in North American society. Marginalized individuals, sex and gender outlaws, and so-called

social deviants began to assert their rights through collective action and, in the case of sexual minorities, also through the courts. The consciousness of a new generation was born.

With this newfound visibility, and the rise of supportive community organizations and social networks, sexual minority teachers who were fired solely because of their suspected homosexuality began to find the courage to fight back against their wrongful dismissal (Harbeck, 1997). Sexual minority concerns were finally becoming understood as civil and human rights issues. This shift from the framing of sexual rights to civil rights represented an important educational turning point that would see more and more teachers begin to challenge their school boards in courts as they lobbied for the inclusion of sexual orientation as a protected ground against discrimination in their school board policies. For example, in San Francisco, in 1975, a principal when tabling a resolution to include sexual orientation in the Board's non-discrimination policy, recounted the story of a group of high school boys who started the "Queer Hunters Club," with the sole purpose of "preying on and attacking gays" (Blount, 2005, p. 128). As Blount recounts, "They found one teacher they considered gay waiting for a streetcar and attacked him and threw him on the tracks where he was run over and killed" (p. 128). In Canada, in 1985, Ken Zeller, a teacher with the Toronto District School Board, was brutally beaten and murdered in a local park by a group of five male high school students. Testimony during the trial revealed that the youth were heard saying they were going to the park to "beat up a fag" (Peterson, 1991, p. 246). The murder prompted the Toronto School Board to begin to formally address sexual orientation issues within its district.

Against this history of defilement, sexual minority teachers have long argued that their basic human, civil, and employment rights must be recognized and protected if they are expected to intervene in schools rife with homophobic language and discrimination. How can these teachers be expected to function as professionals when they have no supports or protections in place to keep them safe and cared for in their very own schools and communities? While some progress has been made for sexual minority teachers in terms of increased visibility, policy protections, and community-based support groups, the project is far from accomplished. With movements forward and increased visibility there is always a backlash. For example, the 1980s and 1990s marked yet another turning point with a distinct political shift to the conservative right, profoundly evident in the United States, that was accompanied by a call for a return to so called "traditional values." This was exacerbated by a serious social and cultural backlash with the dawning of the HIV/AIDS crisis. Fuelled by stereotypes, the spectre of pedophilia, and the panic of contagion, primacy was placed on the family, morality, and the "subjugation of personal freedoms for the public good" during these decades (Harbeck, 1997, p. 20). At the heart of this newfound moral crisis was the debate over gay and lesbian issues and, in turn, a sex panic surrounding gay and lesbian teachers in public schools (Silin, 1995). Once again, it was a dangerous time to be an out gay, lesbian, or bisexual educator, or even simply to be suspected as one. Many sexual minority teachers were now thrust back into the closet for fear of losing their jobs should their non-heterosexual identities be revealed (Harbeck, 1997). After years of many hard won battles, sexual minority teachers were now caught in a double-bind: they had to come out to access newfound human

rights and employment protections, and yet by coming out they became vulnerable to stereotypes, harassment, and, in some cases, dismissal.

As an illustration of the formative stages of this moral panic, in 1972, James M. Gaylord was fired by the Tacoma School Board No. 10 for being a homosexual teacher. Gaylord appealed his dismissal to the school board, Washington Superior Court, and ultimately to the Supreme Court of Washington, which upheld Gaylord's dismissal and found him guilty of immorality (Rubinstein & Fry, 1981). By all accounts, Mr. Gaylord was an outstanding social studies teacher, with over twelve years of teaching experience, a master's degree in librarianship, and numerous citations for teaching excellence. Despite his excellent and unblemished teaching record, the Supreme Court of Washington found Mr. Gaylord to be an "unfit teacher" (p. 3). Mr. Gaylord appealed this decision to The United States Supreme Court, which in 1977 refused to hear his petition.

More than thirty-five years later, the focal argument central to Gaylord's landmark case of professional conduct vs. personal beliefs is still relevant to sexual minority teachers. Ultimately, the courts ruled that because of his "homosexual lifestyle", which Gaylord never refuted, he was not to be considered a person under the law and thereby was not afforded constitutional rights and protections. In 2010, the question of good moral character still dominates discussions of teacher professionalism, community standards, and public education. As the history of teacher education, and the Gaylord decision attest, teachers must "exemplify not merely the mores of the community, but its ideals" (Rubinstein & Fry, 1981, p. 20). In Gaylord's case, the connection between homosexuality and immorality was deemed to be a clear and present danger to students and society. The courts asserted that Gaylord made a choice to become homosexual and

therefore he must be held accountable for his immoral actions. The supposition arising from the Supreme Court of Washington's decision, and the United States Supreme Court's refusal to hear Gaylord's appeal, is that Gaylord, through his mere presence in the classroom, implicitly embodied and taught immorality.

While there have been significant legal advances in the rights and protections of sexual minorities in both Canada and the United States, the question of full personhood, as raised in the Gaylord decision, is still very much in question today (Lahey, 1999). In relation to public education Olson (1987) identifies, "of all the professions, education is probably the most discriminatory against homosexual individuals" (p. 73). Not surprisingly, most sexual minority educators remain invisible in their schools due to hostility, discrimination, and internalized homophobia (Harbeck, 1997).

Now as we enter into the 21st Century, as Blount (2005) suggests, "just as they were 100 years ago, school workers today are [still] hired in part to model and preserve normative sexuality and gender" (p. 182). However, it would seem that at least in Canada some progress has been made in terms of the accommodation and acceptance of SMGV teachers. For example, most teacher associations in Canada now have policies and protections in place that actively or passively include and protect sexual minority teachers in their professional codes of conduct. Also, in Canada, transgender teachers have fared much better than their American colleagues within public schools. In the United States, very few transgender teachers who have transitioned genders have managed to keep their jobs, whereas in Canada, many transgender teachers report not only successful transitions, but also support from their school districts throughout the transition process (Roberts, Allan, & Wells, 2007).

On both sides of the border, conditions still remain particularly difficult for SMGV administrators as they frequently face intense scrutiny from parents and their school boards. However, at least in Canada, because school administrators are generally members of their teacher unions, they have considerably more protection and support than their American colleagues who serve at the leisure of their school boards (Blount, 2005). As Harbeck (1997) astutely suggests, "prejudice, hatred, ignorance, and violence hurt us all, especially if they occur in our major social institutions of family, school, and church…. You can measure the health of an institution by how [well] it protects its most vulnerable members (pp. 10-11). In this light, how SMGV teachers fair within the public educational system should be considered a bellwether of just how far society has actually progressed in terms of full equality for all of its citizens. The next section of this essay explores this proposition by investigating how four Canadian educators assess and address the risks and realities of being out in their schools as sexual minority educators and advocates working for SMGV inclusion in the 21st century.

Coming Out: Impetus for Activism and Social Change

"To come out, how to come out, when to come out, and why to do so, remain difficult questions." – Mintz & Rothblum, 2009, p. 222

Much has been written, and not without considerable controversy, on the politics of coming out in the classroom, including personal reflection (Jennings, 1994), theoretical debates (Khayatt, 1997, 1999; Rasmussen, 2006; Silin, 1999), and some limited empirical research (Blount, 2005; DeJean, 2007; Duke, 2007; Jackson, 2007; Olson, 1987). Still, the question of whether to come out, or not, has no definitive answer. As Clarke and Braun (2009) posit, "Coming out remains an ongoing concern for many

LGBTQ educators" (p. 176). The decision to come out or not often depends on matters of context. As a result, rather than establishing a simple in/out dichotomy, it becomes critical to consider how the intersectionality of identities and concomitant relationships of power and privilege or subjugation intertwine. For example, how do sexuality, gender, ethnicity, culture, race, class, ability, religion, gender identity, age, teaching experience, and geographic location mesh to complicate the politics of coming out? Should only non-heterosexual educators come out? Or should heterosexual educators "come out" as straight as a method to question and interrogate heterosexist privilege and heteronormative school cultures? What are the risks of coming out within these exclusionary environments?

Early accounts of teachers coming out in the classroom often focused on feelings of fear, invisibility, and silence (Jennings, 1994). These same emotions are no less important or real for many contemporary educators in today's classrooms. The theme of visibility, most notably evident in feminist, critical, and queer scholarship, remains central to many of the motivations and discussions surrounding the issue of coming out. This is especially evident within queer theory in terms of the importance of coming out as a method to contribute to SMGV visibility in education and culture in general, and "how one's own (in)visibility as queer or transgender challenges or affirms heterosexist assumptions about LGBTQ people" (Clarke & Braun, 2009, pp. 177-178). The narrative vignettes provided by Murray, James, Gerard, and Joan attest to the ways in which they chose or were required to be out in their schools, and how their formative experiences served as catalysts in setting the foundation for their activist work. From this perspective, being out and visible represents an important political and pedagogical strategy from

which they were able to challenge stereotypes, dismantle prejudices, and drive social

change. For example, for Murray, coming out was based on his formative experiences

with discrimination. It served as an important way to challenge the politics of invisibility

in schools. Coming out was also a deliberate strategy to help engender concerted

collective action to combat prejudice and discrimination.

> Peter [my husband] and I have lived together going on 34 years. Peter is physically disabled; he walks with crutches and he's faced a lot of discrimination around that. Having lived in South Africa, during the era when Apartheid was coming to an end – probably the most dangerous time to be there – we saw what it was like to be a black person living in a really oppressive regime…. I think those kinds of experiences helped raise our awareness around what it is to be part of an oppressed [sexual] minority. We were never interested in trying to hide…. I was probably the first primary teacher in British Columbia to be so [visibly] out. I just assumed, naively, that if I just brought this issue forward, people would see that we needed to do something and they would do something. I had no idea about the kind of backlash that coming out might engender. I understand the dilemma that gay teachers find themselves in, because there's always a fear that by being out they're going to be shunned and probably never end up getting a job. That's a huge concern…. I don't believe our school system is open and accepting enough for teachers to feel safe enough to be out, either in their training, or in the interim between the time they finish their teacher training and their being appointed to a full-time, permanent position. I try to provide, as many people do, role models for people to say, "Look, I'm out. There are challenges around that, but the sky didn't fall."

Murray goes on to relate a critical incident, which motivated his educational activism,

and prompted his desire to be more vocal and visible.

> It was in the summer of 1996, when we were in San Francisco for the Pride Parade that marked a turning point. At the time, I was involved with the Gay and Lesbian Teachers of British Columbia. Peter and I were standing watching this parade go by, and there was a point where the Gay and Lesbian Educators of the Bay Area were marching past, and so I said to Peter, "Would you mind if I marched with them to the end of the parade route?" He said, "No, of course, go ahead." So, I joined them and introduced myself. We were marching past thousands of people who were all cheering and clapping for teachers who were out there and then suddenly out of the crowd a young man shouted, "Where were you when I needed you?" That really struck me. I came home, and throughout the rest of the summer, I kept thinking, "You know you have a choice here: I can go through the rest of my career being silent around this issue and doing nothing, and

then having to live with that for the rest of my life, or I could stand and try to do something."

For Murray, coming out and actively breaking the silence around SMGV issues in his school emphasizes the importance of being visible and taking action. The youth's resounding query, "Where were you when I needed you?" served as a haunting provocation for Murray to become more vocal and visible as a means to advocate and offer support for troubled SMGV youth in schools. In addition, Murray's previous experience of living in South Africa during the oppressive period of Apartheid suggests that the subjectivity of his life as an oppressed minority cannot be separated from his experience as a teacher, lover, or activist. His ability to transfer formative experiences of discrimination (e.g., the racial discrimination and ableism he and his partner witnessed or directly experienced) to his ethical responsibility as a teacher, compel him to understand education as a political act.

When describing his formative teaching experiences as a gay male kindergarten teacher, James' positionality embodies coming out as a pedagogical necessity. He intuitively understands that his very bodily presence as a visibly out gay man is read as a dangerous text, which immediately confronts and challenges the heteronormative status quo. James relates how his administration failed to support him when parents requested their child be removed from his classroom. Rather than succumb to this assault on his professionalism and retreat back into the closet, he chose to grow into resilience as he educated himself about his rights as a teacher.

> I started teaching in 1992. I've been teaching kindergarten and grade one for the past ten years, and I've been teaching ESL kindergarten for the past three years. I've taught in quite diverse populations in terms of cultures in schools. [As an out primary teacher,] I've had situations where parents have refused to have their kids in my classroom. It actually comes up almost every year. I'm really firm with

them now. Years ago, I used to be less forceful than I am now. Basically, I tell them they can't pick their child's classroom teacher, and if they don't want me as their child's teacher, they can find another school. I take that tact because I find that administrators won't actually say it that 'cut and dried'. They try and tip-toe around things to placate the parents. In our district, I won a grievance against my board for discrimination based on sexual orientation when the board did move a child from my class, saying it was in the best interest of the family…. … I'm out and very open. I'm a strong personality. But I think that LGBT teachers that may not be as resilient as I am, and not as out as I am, could face big problems in terms of conflict with parents. I've basically had to become very in tune with what protections the collective agreement in my district provides me with, and what my union will and will not back me up on…. Basically, I've had to educate myself on what my rights are as a teacher.

James' queer presence and refusal to abdicate his professional responsibilities serve to validate the role and relationship that diversity and difference ought to play within the public educational system. For James, bodies do matter in the classroom, especially when teachers are expected to serve as mentors and role models to their students. James refuses to cover his queer identity or pass as heterosexual to placate parents, despite facing enormous administrative pressure designed to regulate sex and gender norms in schools. As a result, James' visible queer body stands as a direct counter narrative to a compulsory heterosexual agenda promulgated through the formal and non-formal educational curriculum. James has learned to rely on his knowledge of his professional rights to protect himself, rather than having to rely on unsympathetic and uninformed administrators.

For Gerard, coming out has been less of a political act. As Gerard describes his relationship to the students in his classroom, he highlights how the act of coming out can be performative rather than declarative. For Gerard, coming out is unnecessary, as he relates how students already read him as gay.

People don't need to out themselves because the kids figure you're gay in the first five minutes they meet you. It's not that I'm really flamboyant, but I mean the

way I dress, the way I act, I guess we would call it an assumption that I'm probably gay – which never did bother me. I never, ever mentioned the fact that I was gay to any of my students in the thirteen years that I was there. However, apparently according to the gym teacher there was talk in the locker room about the fact that I was gay. I never had an incident with it as far as parents and students. Lord knows you're talked about behind your back…. I would probably feel safe in saying that no one asked me – because they all knew…. When you're gay, that's sort of an added burden you carry around in the sense that you have to make sure you deal with that as far as classroom management is concerned. A lot of the gay teachers I know, males anyways, are very strict. We have to be because if you're not – Lord knows where things will go…. I was probably the strictest staff member on the staff. I had the best reputation with the parents for having a classroom where no one would make fun of you.

Willman (2009) describes this form of performative strategy as "coming out as 'already out,'" which provides for an important pedagogical moment in which Gerard can challenge assumptions about heteronormativity (p. 223). Many teachers, like Gerard, who have been out their entire professional careers, or out personally for as long as they can remember, feel that it is redundant to have to "come out" in the classroom. However, in Gerard's narrative, this performativity also becomes directed at his teaching practice as he describes how he and other gay teachers must become "strict" masters of classroom management as a method of survival for not only themselves, but also for the students who might also be read or perceived to be non-heterosexual. Unfortunately, this zero tolerance classroom approach cannot prevent comments and innuendo from seeping into the locker room, highlighting how homophobia is constant and permeable and can never be completely restrained.

Joan's narrative highlights the complex and intertwined relationship of sexuality and gender. Both subject positions become sites in which power and control are exerted over her multiple and fractured identities.

When I was teaching in the Catholic system, I would say the most challenging part wasn't about my sexuality. I came to the board as a single parent. The biggest

issue was that I was a divorcee and my kids were not in French immersion…. I was encouraged to have my marriage annulled…. That was the last straw between me and them, I guess…. Since coming to the public board, I've been here since '92, I've come totally out, including most recently to my students and to the community as a whole. I've been absolutely welcomed by the senior administration….. It's so much more comfortable [being out]. It seems so normal and natural now. I don't have to think about things like pronouns and changing stories when I'm talking to the kids or to the staff…. The kids are fine. The local administration is fine. It's only the parents I worry about.

For Joan, the power of the Catholic school board, which deems her to be an unfit teacher because of her divorced, single parent status, compelled her to switch to the public school system where she can be "totally out" in all aspects of her life. This newfound freedom helped to lift the tremendous psychic burden of having to continually manage and negotiate all of her multiple identities inside and outside of the classroom. She can now use the energy she had to spend hiding to channel into her teaching. However, despite receiving support from her colleagues and district, Joan has learned to remain cautious of how her lesbian body is constructed, deconstructed, and reconstituted by the parents in her district. The specter of lesbianism is continually present.

As these narratives attest, the personal coming out and the coming to terms processes for these teachers, and the ways in which these disclosures or performative readings are taken up by colleagues, students, and parents comprise a complex and often emotionally fraught process. However, for each of these teachers, being out and visible in their schools also set the critical foundation and impetus for them to move their activism from the personal to political realm. As Clarke and Braun (2009) attest, "Our identity [is] a crucial component of how we can, and do teach: the *personal* is the political" (emphasis in original, p. 175).

Murray, James, Gerard, and Joan provide narratives that, in sum, demonstrate how the dynamics of the coming out process will never be the same for any two individual teachers. As Mayo (2007) relates, "for some [educators], being out means provocation and disruption, for others being out represents an authentic expression of one aspect of their sense of self" (p. 83). Similarly, Clarke and Braun (2009) suggest that the act of disclosure represents a longstanding tradition within critical and feminist pedagogy as "a way of teaching that bridges the personal and the academic, humanizes the teacher and personalizes the teaching process" (p. 175). DeJean (2007) concurs and identifies how "being out within one's own classroom can be defined as an act of 'radical honesty' (p. 63). In his study of out educators, DeJean relates that this radical honesty is achieved by teachers who conduct "their professional responsibilities in a way that consistently reveal the truth about their lives" (p. 63). For Rasmussen (2006), the notion of a teacher "coming out" is much more problematic as it essentializes an identity as fixed, which queer theory would argue is always in flux and transition.

However, within regulatory institutions such as schools, coming out, as in the case of Murray, James, Gerard, and Joan, can serve as an important reverse discourse, which challenges the processes of normalization and the invisibility of queer identities. As Bromley (2005) argues, "to identify as 'queer' in school is to fight against societal norms of the heterosexual world" (p. 84). Concomitantly, Mayo (2007) builds on this argument and suggests that the "decision [for teachers and students] to be out changes not only their relationship to themselves and their negotiation of spaces, but it also changes their feeling of belonging to the school community" (p. 89). For the educators in this study, being out was a critical step in the reclamation of their personal authenticity and

impetus for their own survival, personal education, and later activist work. The longstanding feminist philosophy of making the personal political was central to these educators' consciousness-raising strategies. This mantra is echoed in Freire's (2004) critical scholarship when he states how "We must make an effort, humbly so, to narrow the distance between what we say and what we do as much as possible" (p. xxiii). In Freiriean terms, the educator-activists I interviewed sought to develop a "critical understanding of their presence in the world" (Freire, 2004, p. 74), and worked consciously to intervene and change oppressive conditions, however, they did not accomplish this work without tremendous personal risk.

Coming to Terms and the Backlash to Visibility: The Personal and Professional Costs of Being Out

Many sexual minority educators have to engage a double consciousness in which they must "work to hide and hide to work" (Frank, 1996, p. 1). The teachers in this study have worked on both a personal and professional basis to transcend the classroom closet and overcome the continual fear that somehow their "secret" would be discovered. Rather than engaging in perpetual self-protection strategies to stay closeted out of fear of backlash, these teachers sought to become authentic role models and educational leaders who chose to stay and work within heteronormative institutions as a way to hold them accountable, and as a strategic method to facilitate social change. However, as the experiences of Murray, James, Gerard, and Joan attest, there are significant personal and professional costs associated with this journey towards teacher authenticity, consciousness-raising, and their ensuing educational activism. To illustrate these

challenges, Murray relates the impact that being out can play on a teacher's individual

wellbeing and future career prospects.

> When I started my teaching career as a substitute teacher, I was completely out in my social life. However, I had to make completely certain that people who were making decisions about the advancement of my career knew nothing about the fact that I was gay…. After I had been teaching for six or seven years, I brought the issue [of sexual minority inclusion] forward to the Coquitlam School District and from there [my activism] just sort of mushroomed. I was one of the original members of the Gay and Lesbian Educators of British Columbia and we were instrumental in getting a resolution brought forward to the 1997 Annual General Meeting of the British Columbia Teachers' Federation to establish a program to combat homophobia and heterosexism in the public school system. That became a huge media circus… there were demonstrations outside the [conference] hotel. The visibility was quite a shock; particularly to the parents of the kids I was teaching…. I remember one parent who kept putting little prayers on my desk…. I also received death threats in the mail and abusive phone calls.

As Murray's vignette accentuates, sexual minority teachers at the beginning of

their career are in an extremely tenuous position, as they often must navigate their

personal and professional lives as two distinct and separate worlds. For Murray, teaching

was a return to the closet after so many years of being out and visible in his community.

Only after the relative security of receiving professional tenure was he able to finally

bring the personal and professional together as a means for advocating for sexual

minority inclusion. However, through his educational activism, this newfound visibility

also placed him directly at the centre of moral controversy. Clarke (1999) describes such

controversy as the construction of a morality argument in which, "if homosexuality is

[viewed] as immoral, then homosexual school teachers cannot fulfill their legal and moral

duty to serve as exemplars for their students" (p. 72). In this context, as Sparkes (1994)

posits, "issues of sexual identity are commonly assumed to be 'private' affairs that should

not be brought into the public and professional world of work" (p. 111). If these private

affairs are made public, there will most certainly be a price that has to be paid.

196

In this next vignette, Murray relates how his increased visibility as an educator-activist, and his attempts to normalize homosexuality through various court challenges, became a form of public pedagogy designed to call into question the primacy of the heterosexual nuclear family and the privileging of Judaeo-Christian values within the school system. However, because of this highly visible public challenge, he also experienced direct fallout from parents and the realization of potential limitations on his career as a public educator.

> As a result of all this visibility, and from our involvement with the Surrey School Board case, and our case against the Federal Government suing them for the right to marry, a parent in my school went to my principal and said that she wanted her child removed from my classroom. My principal convinced me that it would be the best interest of the child that he be moved to another teacher's classroom, because it would be a confidence issue with the parents and with the child and with me. And so, the child was removed from my classroom.

Joan also highlights the power and influence of parents as moral guardians, when she describes the backlash she experienced when she introduced anti-homophobia education into her elementary classroom.

> In doing this [anti-homophobia] work, I've had some negative repercussions from parents. I think there were four or perhaps five letters and phone calls last year…. I'm sure most parents know better than to say, "Don't put my kid in with that dyke." They'd probably say, "I want a more organized classroom or something else like that."…. I think many principals, including my own, will waffle when a parent says they don't want so-and-so as a teacher. Parents are the last stone walls, so to speak. That said, possibilities are way more open now than they once were. I think people are starting to get it – That we're not after their kids – I think that's probably parent's biggest fear.

As Brickmore (1999) suggests, "elementary schools are places where young people's identities are formed, as individuals and as citizens" (p. 15). As public schools charged with the responsibility to transmit society's dominant values, elementary classrooms become risky spaces for teachers who wish to challenge the heteronormative

status quo. Sadly, the cost of this challenge is often paid in the form of malicious stereotypes of recruitment and the suspicion of pedophilia that surreptitiously target any teacher that dares discuss (homo)sexuality in the elementary classroom.

By calling into question the dominant set of organizing relations, both Murray and Joan have actively challenged an educational system that would render non-heterosexual lives as immoral, invisible, and absent within educational discourse. This politicization of sexuality from a private to public concern resulted in concomitant backlash from parents who implicitly targeted Murray and Joan as inappropriate teacher role models for their children. Unfortunately, rather than challenge the assumption that sexual minority teachers are immoral leaders, their principals acquiesced to parental demands and therefore served to perpetuate the belief that sexual minority educators are somehow deviant or unfit teachers. As Brickmore (1999) states, "moral precepts are indeed taught in the elementary schools, but (by virtue of being implicit and avoiding controversy) they tend to reinforce dominant viewpoints and narrow notions of normalcy, thereby minimizing the possibility of democratic social change" (p. 18). Public education is by necessity a pluralistic space, in which we ought to be encouraging students to address issues of diversity and difference as part of responsible and respectful citizenship.

For Murray, the lack of administrative support he experienced and the institutionalized belief that sexual minority educators are somehow inappropriate classroom role models placed him under continual suspicion and surveillance and foreclosed his opportunity for advancement within the educational system.

> Over the years, I had fully intended to go into Administration. At one time, I was even doing graduate courses at Simon Fraser University, however, I realized that I wasn't prepared to be silenced for the sake of moving into Administration. So, I made the decision that I would not pursue that career path.

This implicit "pink ceiling" places limits on potential career advancement possibilities for out and visible sexual minority teachers within a system that seeks to maintain, rather than question and challenge, the heteronormative status quo. For Murray, silence for the sake of career advancement, would be too high a price to pay.

James, like Murray, identifies the power and hold heteronormativity has over beginning teachers and how he had to become resilient very early in his career in order to stay within the profession.

> Personally, I think I've paid quite a big cost in being so visible. Early in my career, I had long-term and short-term contracts, but I never seemed to get hired permanently…. In my first year of subbing, one thing that I had to do as kind of a survival mechanism, just to stay in the profession, was to go for counseling. Another thing I had to do in terms of my survival was to legally change my name, because my last name used to be Cox. I didn't want to sub with that last name when I started my teaching career.

James goes on to relate how his previous experiences with homophobic bullying have profoundly impacted his career options as a public educator.

> [When I began teaching,] I had a lot of nightmares of how I was treated as a kid…. Even to this day, I know that I will never teach secondary school, because I'm still triggered by teenagers and the way in which they relate to one another. I still feel fearful when I walk into a high school, even when I do anti-homophobia workshops for teachers. I feel fearful walking down the hallways…. Out on the street, if I see a group of teens, I always cross over to the other side. It's just a natural reaction from me to keep my distance.

For James, his experiences with homophobia as a student, and the post-traumatic stress he experienced into his adulthood, drive his educational work. Like many sexual-minority teachers, he needed to develop survival strategies as a way to strengthen his personal and professional resilience.

> I think the reason that I have been able to withstand what I have teaching in my district, is partially my personality and partially what I went through as a child…. Basically, I was the victim of homophobia from grade three onwards. It was a

pretty harsh period. Because of those experiences, somehow – and I still don't know how until this day – I survived all of that and turned into more of a fighter than a fleer…. There are still triggers for me, but, because of my childhood experiences, I'm motivated to do this work. That's what helps keep me so tenacious…. I think all of these experiences helped mold me into the person that I am today. They made me resilient.

Despite his experiences with homophobia, as both a student and teacher, James refuses to be defined as a victim by refusing to remain silent, invisible, and complicit with acts of discrimination.

Like James, Gerard draws upon his experiences as a gay youth to serve as a motivation for his educational work. Gerard speaks to the challenges of surviving as a gay educator within a heteronormative educational system.

In order to survive, when I was in high school in the mid-seventies, you had to run…. I had an awful schooling experience, as most gay people my age have had, because we went to school in areas where being gay couldn't be talked about. You were made fun of. Once you made it out and became whatever it is that you're going to be – for me it was becoming a teacher. I think that's the only way I could survive. I didn't try to commit suicide like so many others have. I decided to trudge on and make something of my life…. So when I got into my teaching career, I was still in survival mode. I figured I wasn't going to go all that way for nothing. I think the reason why many gay teachers are so strict and don't accept homophobia in the classroom is because of the fact that we grew up in classrooms where misbehaviour was aimed at us all the time. I think back to my teachers that I had and I sometimes feel offended that they never protected me. I never wanted students in my classes to be treated the way I was.

Gerard's narrative indicates how he utilizes a strict classroom management style as a form of survival strategy. While he may not be able to control the homophobia that runs rampant in the school hallways, or in larger society, he can control what happens in his classroom. As a result of his own experiences as a youth, and the teachers who failed to protect him from abuse and harassment, Gerard vows to ensure that his classroom will always be a safe space. For Gerard, teaching is a vocation and an opportunity to make high school life a better experience for the next generation of students.

Out sexual minority teachers not only have to deal with backlash from parents and students, but many also have to deal with the reality of unsupportive or unsympathetic colleagues. In Joan's narrative, while she did ultimately receive support from her principal, and a few teacher colleagues, she identifies the implicit collegial silence that surrounds discussions of sexual orientation and gender identity in elementary schools. She also attests to the added difficulty of implementing anti-homophobia education in rural and remote communities where there are seldom supports, networks, or colleagues who are engaged in this work. The pervasive discourse that commonly operates in these communities is often one of fear, isolation, and alienation.

> In terms of my colleagues, by now they know better than to say anything directly to me. When I was doing an anti-homophobia presentation to a mixed staff – teachers from various schools in the district – there were some homophobic comments made. One teacher was very clear that she didn't think that teaching about sexual orientation was right, and it didn't belong in schools…. My principal was supportive [of me] and there were two or three other colleagues who were vocally supportive, but the others seemed to prefer not to talk about it…. I think it's still probably hardest for people in small towns and rural or remote areas. The *Charter* read-in has changed a lot. That said, I know there are gay teachers out in my district who choose not to become involved… I tend not to socialize with them because they're not comfortable with, say, going to dinner with a group of women, because they might be tagged as a lesbian.

Not only does Joan have to deal with direct challenges from her teacher colleagues to her pedagogical work, but she also faces the stark reality that her public visibility and vocality are viewed as direct threats to other sexual minority teachers who strive to remain hidden and invisible within the school district. Joan's very presence as an "out" lesbian, within a rural teaching community, represents an obstacle to these teachers sense of personal and professional security. As a result, Joan is seen as a dangerous contagion that must be kept at a careful distance, lest they become contaminated by her queerness.

As the narratives from Joan, James, Gerard, and Murray attest, defining a teachers' sexual identity solely as a personal and private matter, denies educators authenticity and serves to deflect institutions from taking responsibility and ownership in supporting anti-homophobia education. As a result of this denial, "institutional forces that shape and define oppression are not questioned… and the onus of change is placed on the individual and not the system" (Woods & Harbeck, 1992, pp. 114-115). However, the teachers interviewed in this research project are not without agency. They seek to break new ground and disrupt the very structures of disavowal as they strive to challenge the foundations and moral precepts of public education by delving into issues of power, privilege, and heterosexism as regulatory operations of heteronormativity. These educators actively resist compulsory heterosexuality by directly challenging and attempting to change their exclusionary school environments. As Quinn and Meiners (2009) so eloquently state and these teacher narratives attest,

> We become public educators, in part, to create schools that are not only healthy
> and safe spaces for all students [and teachers], but also joyous, creative, and
> vibrant zones where all kinds of people encounter and learn from each other. We
> know that is possible and that is public education at its best. (p. 27)

Educating the Educators: Becoming Change Agents

Schneider and Dimito (2008) suggest that more in depth qualitative research is needed to explore the experiences of those teachers who have actively addressed SMGV issues in their schools. The authors, who engaged in quantitative survey research involving 132 LGBT and heterosexual K-12 teachers in Ontario schools, cite an

interesting dialectic: those teachers who experienced direct harassment were *more likely* to be involved in direct advocacy efforts in their schools. Yet, little is known about their motivations for overcoming homophobia and heterosexism to become change agents. As a result, Schneider and Dimito call for qualitative research investigations to identify and analyze the perceived barriers, risks, and strategies that these educators experience and utilize when they participate in SMGV educational initiatives.

In this section Gerard, James, Joan, and Murray speak to some of the key educational strategies they have undertaken to create a critically queer educational praxis in their public schools. As Gerard narrates, his critical praxis involved strategic assmilationist tactics to gain access to heteronormative structures of power and privilege.

> I call it infiltration almost. I don't think the best progress is always made by parading and marching. I know there is a time for that. But I think some of our progress is made by interacting with people, and many people knowing that we're just as human as they are…. The people that you want to affect the most a lot of times won't even listen to you because you never interact with them – you're left standing outside with a placard. When you infiltrate the system, you're one of them, you're one of the old boys. If you become part of them, and you explain to them the need for it [anti-homophobia education], there will be less reticence… [For example,] when I got the equity portfolio [at the teachers' union], my boss told me, "You are the person to do this because you wear various minority hats". Slowly, but surely we've made some progress in the gay and lesbian question, the women in leadership question, and the Francophone question. … I didn't start out doing what I do from a strategic point of view, I just do who I am. I always tell people, "I'm not a gay teacher. I am a teacher who happens to be gay". For example, the women on staff told me that they think I've been accepted because I live in a matter of fact way. They told me, "You just act normal."

Gerard's educational activism involved a pedagogy of humanization. As Freire (2004) elucidates, "It is from the starting point of this fundamental knowing that changing is difficult, but it is possible, that we will plan out our political, pedagogical action" (p. 62). Gerard's goal was to humanize sexual minority teachers and issues by normalizing their experiences. For Gerard, it was imperative that he became part of the decision-making

process to help sensitize his colleagues to SMGV issues. Rather than engage in a combative or confrontational approach in which rights are demanded, Gerard focused on incremental change, which was enabled through relationship-building and consciousness-raising strategies designed to educate his colleagues around the purpose and need for anti-homophobia education, including policy development, professional development training, and supportive curricular resources. To facilitate his public pedagogy, Gerard engaged in an equity-seeking approach in which he attempted to link together the "isms" (racism, sexism, and heterosexism) and the need for protections and programs, which reflected minoritized subjectivities such as Francophone language/identity, gender issues, and sexual orientation. For an organization such as the Nova Scotia Teachers' Union, which was in the midst of developing an evolving equity portfolio, Gerard's assimilationist approach was productive. Today, the NSTU has adopted an anti-homophobia and anti-heterosexism policy, held a provincial conference on SMGV issues, and published resources in support of sexual minority students, teachers, and same-sex parented families. However, this homonormative (e.g., assimilationist) approach is not without critique as it does not directly challenge heteronormative assumptions and the dominant power of institutions to control and regulate queer lives. From this perspective, only polite and docile queers are given space at the table, and then only if they do not agitate or say too much.

In contrast, Murray's activism involved a more direct and combative approach in which he sought to focus on systemic change by holding the educational system accountable for its pedagogy of negation. The only way in which SMGV issues were made intelligible within the K-12 educational system in British Columbia were through

their very absence. Through this absence, the dominant teaching evident was that SMGV issues should remain invisible, hidden, and stigmatized. Frankham (2001) refers to the dialectic of the present/absent as a policing of the mind and body through silence and erasure. Frankham encourages critical educators to examine not only the spoken word (e.g., curricular texts), but also silences and absences, which "illuminate how marginality and power are played out in individuals' struggle to find a place for themselves through language" (p. 457). Through acts of pedagogical silence and curricular omission, SMGV persons become the "unimaginable other" (p. 460). This silence promotes stigmatization and shame that are designed to keep (homo)sexuality as a private issue and therefore beyond the scope of public education. If sexuality were to become a public pedagogical issue, the fear would be that it could not be controlled or contained and a moral/sex panic would ensue. Therefore, as Foucault (1978) suggests, (homo)sexuality must be continually repressed to maintain its very control. This institutional repression not only "operate[s] as a sentence to disappear, but also as an injunction to silence, an affirmation of nonexistence, and, by implication, an admission that there [is] nothing to say about such things, nothing to see, and nothing to know" (Foucault, 1978, p. 4). By keeping homosexuality repressed and hidden, the educational system absolves itself of responsibility to protect sexual minority students and teachers and reinforces the belief that all topics associated with homosexuality are dangerous, deviant, and destructive to the heteronormative operations of power and privilege, which are taught and enforced through the ideology of a neoliberal and heteronormative school system. As Murray relates, his critically queer praxis centres on holding the educational system accountable for the erasure and violence it inflicts on queer lives.

Our adopted son experienced a lot of discrimination and even violence in his high school in Coquitlam. At one point, he had to leave the public system and attend an alternative school because he wasn't safe in the public school system. When he came into our foster care, I went to the principal and said, "You know, this young man has a *right* to attend public school and to be safe." … We've gone on to file [human rights] complaints, including against the Surrey School Board, which went to the Supreme Court of Canada and against the Ministry of Education for failing to make the curriculum inclusive of queers…. Look it's all very well to have policy on paper, but you have to make it a reality. It's been quite a process.

By challenging legislation, such as the Canadian *Charter of Rights and Freedoms* to be instilled into everyday educational practice, Murray is mounting resistance to the subjugation and regulation of queer lives by invoking an oppositional strategy not only to challenge, but also to expose and undermine the dominant heteronormative discourse authorized and regulated through the approved and hidden curriculum taught in public schools.

While Murray's public pedagogy focused most prominently on educational change through the courts, James worked on a multitude of levels, which included grassroots community organizing, direct teaching through anti-homophobia workshops, and utilizing SMGV inclusive curricular materials in his classroom. Through engagement in this multi-pronged activism, James identifies how most educators strive to maintain the status quo out of fear of parental backlash, lack of administrative support, and generally being unaware of their rights and ethical responsibilities. In essence these teachers opt for the status quo, rather than risk being seen as disruptive or "bad teachers". In contrast, as Quinn & Meiners (2009) suggest, being seen as "a good teacher [represents] the desire to unquestioningly do the work of the State…. To not ask too many questions. To sit tight and hold still for patriarchy, white supremacy, and other inhumanities" (p. 69).

Over the years, I've chaired a committee in my union on anti-homophobia education, worked with the Gay and Lesbian Educators of British Columbia, gone

to the Supreme Court of Canada, and now I work for the BCTF…. Through all of this, my sense is that teachers avoid the topic of anti-homophobia education, because they want a harmonious relationship with their administrator, with their staff, and with parents. They're afraid to rock the boat or to have someone challenge them or their teaching practice. Also, it comes to their discomfort with issues around sexuality and not knowing what to do or say. So it's a combination of not knowing what their rights are, wanting to keep things harmonious, and not feeling comfortable with the topic.

James' comments highlight the need for activist work to include the development of concrete and tangible strategies to help teachers know their rights, learn how to gain support from colleagues and administrators and how to effectively respond to parents who might challenge SMGV inclusive education. Administrators and parents are influential gatekeepers. As James attests, without the support of administrators, very little progress can be made within the school, especially when outside forces attempt to apply heteronormative pressure. For many individuals, discussions of sexuality, in general, and homosexuality, in particular, represent a direct threat to the traditional moral authority of parents and the cultural ideology of "family values" promulgated in schools. James relates:

Those people who've had the most problems with anti-homophobia education are from outside the school trying to come in and make trouble – either picketing the school, or writing nasty things about me in the local paper – that's happened many times, countless times where I have been accused of being a pedophile, or recruiting children into homosexuality. The ignorance on the part of parents who are the most opposed has been the ones that have strong religious beliefs or who are from different cultural backgrounds. It's about explaining to them what anti-homophobia education is and what it is not…. They need to be reassured that you teach the provincial curriculum, and that you aren't teaching something that the teacher next door isn't or couldn't teach…. I've also worked in schools where my colleagues have been the biggest barriers to anti-homophobia education…. Now, [when I go to a new school,] I treat an interview with a principal more as me interviewing them. I ask them very pointed questions about what they would do if a parent accused me of something or if someone had a concern with me being gay. I want to be very careful where I move.

In his narrative, James highlights one of the very real tensions evident in queer theory and queer pedagogy and their translation into inclusive practice. If, as queer theory suggests, we are to "take seriously the ways in which identities are fluid and contextually bound," we must also realize that they "have very real consequences for careers in teaching" (Renn, 2010, p. 136). James expresses this tension when he describes needing to be careful when deciding what school to move to and just how critical it is to have his administrator's support for his anti-homophobia educational work. For James, the pedagogical is always intertwined with the political in the manifestations of his critically queer praxis.

For Joan, her activist work has focused primarily within her remote community on a school-by-school and teacher-by-teacher basis.

> Early on, I started a rural chapter of the now defunct Rainbow Classroom Network. Our local teachers' federation president offered to have us be a group under the Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario umbrella so we could do more for schools. We now have a human rights committee and I would say 85% of its focus is on LGBT issues. We have a kit of resources that we put together with grants from various groups to buy books. The ETFO, locally, has been hugely supportive. I'd like to see every school use our kit, or something like it, and do direct [anti-homophobia] teaching. I'd like to see more direct instruction, from kindergarten right on up. Right now, we have a few more schools borrow our kits, but it's very slow. More teachers need to start using the lesson plans because they are connected to the Ontario curriculum. In some of the activities students write a letter to a main character [in an LGBT-themes picture book or novel]. They talk about artwork. There's about seven or eight different activities…. We often go and present the kits to anyone who will listen. We've presented to the stewards of each school. We've presented to the administrators of each school, the senior admin, and all the other employee groups. We've just met with the principals' group, and all of this was mostly at the initiation of this supportive superintendent…. Out next step, we hope, is to have a regional conference around LGBT issues.

Joan uses an inclusive educational approach by linking SMGV issues with clear curricular expectations and outcomes. This strategy of curricular accommodation is

supported through direct education in which Joan and the district's human rights committee create resources and provide in-service opportunities for teachers to develop knowledge, instructional skill, and the personal comfort necessary to effectively address SMGV issues. Joan also highlights how important it is to have the support of her Federation and superintendent. By having institutional gatekeepers supporting her work, she is able to branch out from an individual school level to work towards district-wide systemic change by working with groups of administrators, district employees, and union stewards.

Looking Back, Thinking Forward: Strategies for Change

As Quinn and Meiners (2009) posit, "Making heteronormativity or queerness visible in educational spaces incites a range of emotional responses: disgust, hostility, outrage, and charges of being 'inappropriate'…. [However,] the work of building and sustaining an 'audacious democracy' must be collective and must be done in public" (p. 101). As the experiences of Murray, James, Gerard, and Joan have demonstrated, sexual minority teachers, youth, and same-sex parented families are excluded from what counts as legitimate knowledge, bodies, and identities within public education. Under this pedagogy of negation, sexual identity is constructed as a private choice, pathology, sin, or deviant identity that is beyond the bounds of public concern. As the never-ending work of Murray, James, Gerard, and Joan so profoundly demonstrates, "Ignorances [and silences] can be cultivated, produced, and actively maintained, and they can also be challenged"(Quinn & Meiners, 2009, p. 94). The experiences of the activist-educators I interviewed, represents a call for all educators and administrators to think about their

work and teaching differently. Rather than attempting to define, delimit, and control difference and diversity, educators ought to "teach and learn how difference is produced and how…. difference is linked to power and the ways that society notes (and marks) difference is always political (Quinn & Meiners, 2009, pp. 89-90). In this light, teachers need to develop their own self-awareness as political actors and how knowledge and identities are born out of history and power. Teachers who are committed to social justice must position themselves as agents for social change. This active positioning implies a conviction for identifying and "overcoming injustices, which requires transforming the inequitable structures of society. [This] implies the articulated exercise of imagining a less ugly, less cruel world. It implies a world we dream of, a world that is not yet, one different from the world that is, and a world to which we need to give form" (Freire, 2004, p. 14). In Cornell West's (1997) words, this is the making of an "audacious democracy" in which all bodies, voices, and knowledges matter.

In the narratives that follow, James, Gerard, Murray, and Joan speak to their personal resiliency and courageous hope for the future of public education within such an audacious democracy. They articulate this hope as a committed and active struggle that is necessary to put the "public" back into a truly public education that is inclusive of everyone regardless of their differences.

In this narrative vignette, James attests to what makes him resilient in the face of the daily struggle against heteronormativity and the tools and strategies that help him in his activist work for social justice.

> If I hadn't connected with LGBT educators so early in my career, I wouldn't have continued to teach. I would have left the profession. I think it's critical to have a really strong support network of friends. Some of those friends also need to be teachers who can actually relate to what your experiences are on a day-to-day

basis. I also think it's really helpful to have straight allies who are supportive of the work you do…. Another good strategy, or support for survival, is to have a good sense of humour. If you are very passionate about the work, it can eat you up. If you don't have a good sense of humour, you're dead in the water…. Also, for me personally, my partner was the "Rock of Gibraltar" for me at times in my career. Without him, I don't think I would have been able to put so much time and energy into this work. I think you also need to have a desire to be political, because it is very, very political work. Schools are political places just by their very nature…. You also need to have a core group of like-minded individuals, even if it's only two or three people. You need a core group of people you can work with and bounce things off. If you can maintain a working relationship and political activism with them over a multi-year period, it will make the work actually quite easy to do over time.

Reflecting back on his experiences, James identifies the challenges he experienced in his activist work and the supports that are needed in contesting heteronormativity within public schools. As James suggests in the continuing narrative below, there is no one strategy that can be implemented; rather social justice work is always a consideration of how power and privilege operate to valorize some identities, and subjugate others.

> In terms of recommendations for teachers, I think that's a tough question. The work looks different for different people. Teachers will respond within the realm of their own comfort level. For some, it may be just sort of empathizing and they may not move beyond that…. For others, it might be putting up an anti-homophobia poster in their classroom…. There are only a couple of straight allies that I can think of who've done this work, and they became close personal friends. They got fed up with what was going on in their own schools and started to rattle their own schools on LGBT issues…. I would also say, that you shouldn't do this work until you have a continuing contract. Don't try it in your first year of teaching. Wait until you've got the job security, no matter what district you're in. I think it's a question of protecting yourself to be in the career [for the long-term] to do the work…. My other advice is to have a strong support network of friends, family, and colleagues. I think one thing that's missing for young or new LGBT teachers is the lack of a mentorship program. They don't have LGBT mentors to guide them and give them help or suggestions. They need role models as they enter the profession. Also, there are almost no openly [queer] LGBT administrators out there. There are, however, quite a number of closeted ones. There are very few principals who will stand up and say that they're queer to parents and to teachers. That's a huge problem. The same goes for senior management in school boards. If there were people in the highest positions of

authority and power saying anti-homophobia education needs to occur, or that "I'm LGBT", then I think that would have a huge impact on the system.

For James, his activist educational work is a refusal to be defined as a victim, and a refusal to have SMGV issues and identities kept silent and rendered invisible. Gerard shares this concern as he suggests that increased visibility, changing social norms, and strategic knowledge-building activities are all critical factors in promoting the awareness of SMGV persons and issues. It is the systemic isolation and alienation that keep sexual minority teachers afraid and vulnerable. Gerard highlights how queer teachers are taught to become unintelligible to themselves, which dictates an unimaginable future, that is delimited by institutional barriers, which keep SMGV teachers safely locked away in the educational closet.

> Not only do we need to help gay students in our classrooms, but we also need a support system for our gay teachers…. I think people also need to put a face on discrimination… as there are always people out there fighting against any progress we may make socially. Although, there is a division of religion and state, you still have that whole morality concept to deal with. I think television and media have surpassed society in a lot of ways, especially here in Nova Scotia. Students go home and put on *Will & Grace*. Children are coming to school and talking about things that a lot of teachers are not equipped to deal with because they're from another generation. This is why we need sufficient workshops and information available for teachers to deal with issues that have been buried for so long…. I'm always looking for something for teachers. I think there are a lot of teachers who are gay that are teaching and don't know what to do. They feel they're all alone. If somehow through this work, we can actually reach out to them it will certainly have been worthwhile for everyone. We're all so isolated. There is no infrastructure really for us. We have a Women in Education Committee, but there's no gay committee.

Like Gerard, the issue of morality is also central to Murray's educational concerns. In this narrative, Murray calls into question the fundamentalist tactic of labeling sexual minority concerns as "sensitive issues," which are best left to the discretion of parents as moral guardians of their children. Murray asks whether faculties

of education are preparing student teachers to understand how the pedagogical always

intersects with the political and the moral. He questions the degree to which we are

preparing pre-service teachers to fulfill their role as public educators who are compelled

to identify and challenge heterosexist assumptions in an effort to make schools safer

spaces for SMGV students, teachers, and same-sex parented families. Murray's

comments highlight how sexuality vis-à-vis a "family values" discourse continues to set

limits to what is deemed to be appropriate for public education.

> The whole idea of sexual orientation, gender identity, and same-sex families being considered as sensitive issues is frequently used by fundamentalists who do not want their children exposed to any of this in school. For example, there is little being done in teacher education around these issues and something needs to be done….. I've done these workshops for teachers-in-training and there have always been a number of them who question why we should be doing this anti-homophobia work. They say that they don't think this should be dealt with in schools, that this issue is something that should be dealt with by parents at home. They see it as a moral issue with parents having the right to teach their children moral views and so on. It concerns me that we are graduating student teachers who have these very closed minds. They are going into our school system with views like that.

Ultimately, before any educator can begin this work they must first address their

own fears and resistances. As Joan suggests, internalized homophobia is a powerful force

that keeps many sexual minority teachers from being visible or engaging in anti-

homophobia education in their schools. Developing supports and strategies is critical to

help overcome the shame, stigma, and invisibility that many sexual minority teachers and

students experience in their schools. Difference does matter. To ignore it is to mark it as

deviant. As Joan shares, explicit inclusion in policy, visible and vocal support from senior

administration, and direct education on SMGV issues and concerns are critical in

signaling how a school district values or diminishes the value of diversity in our schools.

We ought to learn to acknowledge and deal with our differences in positive and respectful

ways, lest we continue to contribute to the oppression of others, and unwittingly to our own erasure, as Joan observes.

> I think our own internalized homophobia is a big barrier. I think this is why so few gay teachers out there choose not to become involved. I think the main way we can support ourselves is through networking…. Other big supports are having policy and a proactive senior administration. We're really lucky to have a supportive superintendent. Direct education would also be at the top of my wish list, locally. I'd also like to see every school doing direct teaching and responding to epithets in the hallways. Provincially, I'd like to see a [anti-homophobia] policy in every board…. As my superintendent says, and I love to quote this line, "There's so little visible difference in our part of the country that we've chosen to highlight sexual orientation differences as a means of teaching about diversity."

Joan, James, Gerard, and Murray's narratives indicate how they have an acute understanding of the perceived risks and barriers in doing this activist work. They have also articulated how personal beliefs, public ethics, curricular resources, institutional supports, inclusive policy, and anti-homophobia educational strategies are all linked together in the development of a critically queer praxis. Through their educational activism, they have outlined the critical need for formal training on SMGV issues, which includes dedicated SMGV training for pre-service teachers, and ongoing professional development for administrators, superintendents, and board trustees. They have also identified the need to develop concrete and tangible strategies and professional networks to learn how to gain support from other queer and allied colleagues to resist the forces of heteronormativity, especially when challenged by fundamentalist parents and outside interest groups.

The critically queer praxis that Joan, Gerard, James, and Murray utilize is firmly rooted within a contestation of the deliberate separation of the private and the public. This is not only a present day contestation, but also a historical one rooted in systemic and deeply structural issues of power, gender, white supremacy, sexuality, and the

subordination of teachers' rights, roles, and responsibilities. For too long, queer issues have been deemed to be too confrontational and too sensational for public educational discourse. Ultimately, the educational and activist work of these teachers is grounded in a critically queer praxis that intersects the private and the public and is designed "to expose fissures in power that make institutions vulnerable and build communities of resistance along the way to change" (Quinn and Meiners, 2009, p. 12). These actions are grounded in the critical hope and hard work needed to bring about an audacious democracy that asks what are the different ways of teaching, living, and learning about the human and the sexual within public education.

Concluding Perspective

This chapter explored the conditions and experiences of how four diverse Canadian educators transcended heteronormative educational environments to become activist-educators for SMGV inclusion in their schools and communities. Joan, James, Gerard, and Murray each apprehended and challenged injustice in their schools and communities. For these activist educators, the future is not viewed as fatalistic, nor pre-determined, but is lived as possibility. They actively work to denounce the structures of oppression, while at the same time announcing new possibilities for a more just world (Freire, 2004). Preserving the status quo is not an option for these critically queer educators, rather the status quo is an affront to their public pedagogy of hope and possibility. Public education for these activist-educators is more than a potentially dehumanizing process, but a practice of liberation and transformation. Their critically

queer praxis represents what Freire (2004) holds true: change may be difficult, but it is indeed possible.

Smith (2004) describes this kind of critical educational activist work as a new form of social movement that occurs inside social institutions, which often make these movements less politically and culturally visible. However, these movements are no less important than traditional social movements, such as Civil Rights and Gay Liberation, as they attempt to work within and actively subvert regulatory institutions. These institutional social movements do not generally take overt political stances such as the tactics used by Queer Nation, which held "die ins" on the street to protest the inadequate response to the HIV/AIDS crisis by the Government of the United States. Rather, these new social movements, particularly as they operate within K-12 public schools, work to challenge and change institutions from the inside out, instead of mirroring traditional social movements that worked from the outside in. The four activist-educators discussed here all sought to challenge and change the heteronormative institutions they worked for and strived to use their lived experiences to advance curricular and policy reform as a means of asserting their rights to full personhood within their school environments. These activist-educators used different forms of subtle, direct, and indirect activism coupled with a pedagogy of humanization, which Freire (2004) describes as a process whereby subjects "become conscious about their presence in the world – the way they act and think when they develop all of their capacities, taking into consideration their needs, but also the needs and aspirations of others" (p. xx). Within a public educational context, the purpose of this pedagogy of humanization is to "create educational structures" that enable teachers and students "to equip themselves with the necessary critical tools to unveil the

root causes of oppression" (p. xx). To assist in this denouncing of the structures of

disavowal, and the announcing of new forms of hope and possibility, these activist-

educators engaged in three distinct types of educational activism: (1) personal activism,

which focused on the individual classroom, creation of safe spaces, and the development

of inclusive curriculum; (2) institutional activism, which focused on organizational

policy, procedure, and cultural change, and (3) judicial activism, which represented a

direct challenge to the educational system and the workings of state power and

heteronormativity. As hooks (1994) suggests, these teachers were "teaching to

transgress" (p. 1) oppressive conditions by engaging in a transformative educational

process whereby public education could be understood as "the practice of freedom" (p.

4). This educational activism is in keeping with the belief that confronting heterosexism,

homophobia, and transphobia in schools "will not be won principally by citing equality

arguments, or [by] resorting to the *Charter of Rights and Freedoms*. These issues relate to

values and morals, and to which voices will be heard…" and to which voices will be

silenced in our public schools (Warner, 2002, p. 342).

    As Joan, James, Gerard, and Murray attest, while some progress towards SMGV

equality has been made within the public educational system in Canada, there is still

much work to be done. It all starts with the knowledge that "tomorrow is a possibility we

need to work out, and, above all, one we must fight to build [today]" (Freire, 2004, p. 59).

> **Gerard:** We're living in a dream world if we think we're all going to be
> loved by everyone tomorrow morning…. If you have tolerance, you may
> be able to build on that later. We still tread lightly – it's sex, politics, and
> religion that you always tread lightly on…. I always think that you have to
> look at society and where we are. I look at women and how they have
> been fighting for equality for many, many years…. I think, as far as gay
> rights, the whole movement has been so much quicker, like all of a
> sudden. I never, ever thought I would be talking to you about getting

married and about being a staff officer in the NSTU. For the first time, we're looking at gay and lesbian issues in Nova Scotia classrooms. It's very small, but it's a start.

Murray: When I think back to 1997 when we brought the [British Columbia Teachers' Federation] resolution forward, there was basically total silence in the public school system around this issue. Today, there's still a feeling that maybe more could be done, but at least it's out in the open and people are publicly talking about it. So that's a big leap forward.

James: The challenges are ongoing and don't really disappear. Although they can't fire you because of your sexual orientation, they can make life so miserable for sexual minority teachers, in a variety of covert ways, until they leave the system.... We've got a lot of work to do, still.

Joan: Looking back, I've always had a pretty strong sense of social justice in all kinds of areas. I always knew I didn't fit the mold…. You hear all of these dreadful stories across Ontario, and in other places too. I think we need to do more and be more visible for our kids, for each other, and for the world.

References

Acker, S. (1983). Women and teaching: A semi-detached sociology of a semi-profession. In S. Walker & L. Barton (Eds.), *Gender, class, and education* (pp. 123-139). Barcombe, UK: Falmer Press.

Biegel, S. (2010). *The right to be out: Sexual orientation and gender identity in America's public schools.* Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press.

Blount, J. M. (1996). Manly men and womanly women: Deviance, gender role polarization, and the shift in women's school employment, 1900-1976. *Harvard Educational Review, 66*(2), 318-338.

Blount, J. M. (2005). *Fit to teach: Same-sex desire, gender, and school work in the twentieth century.* Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.

Brickmore, K. (1999). Why discuss sexuality in elementary school? In J. T. Sears & W. J.

Letts (Eds.), *Queering elementary education: Advancing the dialogue about sexualities and schooling* (pp. 15-25). New York: Rowman & Littlefield.

Bromley, R. (2005). Authors' reactions. In J. T. Sears (Ed.), *Gay, lesbian, and transgender issues in education: Programs, policies, and practices* (p. 30). New York: Harrington Park Press.

Clarke, P. (1999). Toward an inclusive community: Protecting the human and constitutional rights of homosexual educators in public schools. *Journal of Educational Administration and Foundations, 14*(1), pp. 58-100.

Clarke, V., & Braun, V. (2009). Editor's introduction: Is the personal pedagogical? Sexualities and genders in the higher education classroom. *Feminism & Psychology, 19*(2), 175-180. doi:10.1177/0959353509102186

DeJean, W. (2007). Out gay and lesbian K-12 educators: A study in radical honesty. *Journal of Gay & Lesbian Issues in Education*, 4(4), 59-72. doi:10.1300/J367v04n04_05

Duberman, M. B. (1993). *Stonewall.* New York: Penguin.

Duke, T. S. (2007). Hidden, invisible, marginalized, ignored: A critical review of the professional and empirical literature (or lack there of) on gay and lesbian teachers in the United States. *Journal of Gay & Lesbian Issues in Education, 4*(4), 19-38. doi:10.1300/J367v04n04_03

Ellis, C. & Berger, L. (2003). Their story/my story/our story: Including the researcher's experience in interview research. In J. A. Holstein & J. F. Gubrium (Eds.), *Inside interviewing: New lenses, new concerns* (pp. 467–493). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Fontana, A. (2001). Postmodern interviewing trends. In J. F. Gubrium & J. A. Holstein (Eds.), *Handbook of interview research: Context and method* (pp. 161-175). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Foucault, M. (1978). *The history of sexuality. Volume 1: An introduction.* Pantheon Books: New York.

Frank, B. (1996). *Hiding to work/working to hide: Gay men in teaching.* Paper presented at the Conference of Atlantic Educators, Wolfville, NS.

Frankham, J. (2001). The "open secret": Limitations on the expression of same-sex desire. *Qualitative Studies in Education, 14*(4), 457-469. doi:10.1080/095183901100446-9

Freire, P. (2004). *Pedagogy of indignation.* London: Paradigm.

Grace, A. P., & Wells, K. (2005). The Marc Hall prom predicament: Queer individual rights v. institutional church rights in Canadian public education. *Canadian Journal of Education, 28*(3), 237-270.

Grace, A. P., & Wells, K. (2006). The quest for a queer inclusive cultural ethics: Setting directions for teachers' pre-service and continuing professional development. In R. J. Hill (Ed.), *Challenging homophobia and heterosexism: Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer issues in organizational settings* (pp. 51-61). New Directions for Adult and Continuing Education, no. 112. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Grace, A. P., & Wells, K. (2007). Using Freirean pedagogy of just ire to inform critical social learning in arts-informed community education for sexual minorities. *Adult Education Quarterly, 57*(2), 95-114. doi:10.1177/ 0741713606294539

Grace, A. P., & Wells, K. (2009). Gay and bisexual male youth as educator activists and

      cultural workers: The critical praxis of three Canadian high-school students.

      International Journal of Inclusive Education, 3(1), 23-44.

      doi:10.1080/13603110701254121

Grumet, M. R. (1988). *Bitter milk: Women and teaching.* Boston: University of

      Massachusetts Press.

Harbeck, K. M. (Ed.). (1992). *Coming out of the classroom closet: Gay and lesbian

      students, teachers, and curricula.* Binghamton, NY: Haworth Press.

Harbeck, K. M. (1997). *Gay and lesbian educators: Personal freedoms, public

      constraints.* Malden, MA: Amethyst Press.

Harris, M. B., & Bliss, G. K. (1998). Coming out in a school setting: Former students'

      experiences and opinions about disclosure. *Journal of Gay & Lesbian Social

      Services, 7*(4), 85-100. doi:10.1300/J041v07n04_06

hooks, b. (1994). *Teaching to transgress: Education as the practice of freedom.* New

      York: Routledge.

Jackson, J. (2007). *Unmasking identities: An exploration of the lives of gay and lesbian

      teachers.* Lanham, MD: Lexington Books.

Jennings, K. (Ed.) (1994). *One teacher in 10: LGBT educators share their stories.* Los

      Angeles, CA: Alyson.

Khayatt, D. M. (1992). *Lesbian teachers: An invisible presence.* Albany, NY: State

      University of New York Press.

Khayatt, D. M. (1997). Sex and the teacher: Should we come out in class. *Harvard

      Educational Review*, 67(1), 126-143.

Khayatt, D. M. (1998). Paradoxes of the closet: Beyond the classroom assignment of in

   or out. In J. L. Ristock & C. G. Taylor (Eds.), *Inside the academy and out:*

   Lesbian/gay/queer studies and social action (pp. 31-47). Toronto: University of

   Toronto Press.

Khayatt, D. M. (1999). Sex and pedagogy: Performing sexualities in the classroom. *GLQ:*

   A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies, 5(1), 107-113. doi:10.1215/10642684-5-1-

   107

Kinsmen, G., & Gentile, P. (2010). *The Canadian war on queers: National security as*

   sexual regulation. Vancouver: UBC Press.

Kissen, R. M. (1996). *The last closet: The real lives of lesbian and gay teachers.*

   Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Lahey, K. A. (1999). *Are we 'persons' yet?: Law and sexuality in Canada.* Toronto:

   Thompson.

Lather, P. (2007). *Getting lost: Feminist efforts toward a double(d) science.* Albany, NY:

   State University of New York Press.

Mayo C. (2007). Queering foundations: Queer and lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender

   educational research. *Review of Research in Education*, *31*, 79-94. doi:10.3102/

   0091732X07300046078

Mintz, B., & Rothblum, E. (2009). Commentary: The more things change. *Feminism &*

   Psychology, 19(2), 221-223. doi:10.1177/0959353509102217

National Gay and Lesbian Task Force. (2009). *State non-discrimination laws in the US.*

   Retrieved from

   http://www.thetaskforce.org/downloads/reports/issue_maps/non_discrimination_7

_09.pdf

Olson, M. R. (1987). A study of gay and lesbian teachers. *Journal of Homosexuality,*
13(4), 73-81. doi:10.1300/J082v13n04_04

Peterson, C. (1991). Queer response to bashing: Legislating against hate. *Queen's Law*
Journal, 16, 237-246.

Quinn, T., & Meiners, E. R. (2009). *Flaunt it! Queers organizing for public education*
and justice. New York: Peter Lang.

Ramussen, M. L. (2004). The problem of coming out. *Theory Into Practice, 43*(2), 144-
150. doi:10.1353/tip.2004.0025

Renn, K. A. (2010). LGBT and queer research in higher education: The state and status
of the field. *Educational Researcher, 39*, 132-141.
doi:10.3102/0013189X10362579

Rensenbrink, C. (1996). What difference does it make?: The story of a lesbian teacher.
Harvard Educational Review, 66(2), 257-270.

Roberts, G., Allan, C., & Wells, K. (2007). Understanding gender identity in K-12 Schools.
Journal of Gay and Lesbian Issues in Education, 4(4), 119-129.
doi:10.1300/J367v04n04_08

Rubinstein, R. A., & Fry, P. B. (1981). *Of a homosexual teacher: Beneath the mainstream of*
constitutional equalities. Frederick, MD: University Publications of America.

Sanlo, R. (1999). *Unheard voices: The effects of silence on lesbian and gay educators.*
Westport, CT: Bergin & Garvey.

Savin-Williams, R. (2005). *The new gay teenager.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University
Press.

Schneider, M. S., & Dimito, A. (2008). Educators' beliefs about raising lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender issues in schools: The experience in Ontario, Canada. *Journal of LGBT Youth, 5*(4), 49-71. doi:10.1080/19361650802223003

Sears, J. T. (Ed.). (2005). *Gay, lesbian, and transgender issues in education: Programs, policies, and practices.* New York: Harrington Park Press.

Silin, J. G. (1995). *Sex, death, and the education of children: our passion for ignorance in the age of AIDS.* New York: Teachers College Press.

Silin, J. G. (1999). Teaching as a gay man: Pedagogical resistance or public spectacle? *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies, 5*(1), 95-106. doi:10.1215/10642684-5-1-95

Singer, S. E. (1999). Hide-and-seek: Stories from the lives of six lesbian teachers. In A. Neilsen (Ed.), *Daily meaning: Counternarratives of teachers' work* (pp. 135-153). Mill Bay, BC: Bendall Books.

Smith, M. (2004). Questioning heteronormativity: Lesbian and gay challenges to education practice in British Columbia, Canada. *Social Movement Studies, 3*(2), 131-145. doi:10.1080/1474283042000266092

Sparkes, A. G. (1994). Self, silence, and invisibility as a beginning teacher: A life history of lesbian experience. *British Journal of Sociology of Education, 15*(1), 93-118. doi:10.1080/0142569940150106

Surrey Teachers' Association (STA). (2000). *Moving beyond silence: Addressing homophobia in elementary schools.* Surrey, BC: STA.

Tanggaard, L. (2009). The research interview as dialogical context for the production of social life and personal narratives. *Qualitative Inquiry, 15*(9), 1498-1515.

doi:10.1177/1077800409343063

Tierney W. G., & Dilley P. (1998). Constructing knowledge: Educational research and gay and lesbian studies. In W. F. Pinar (Ed.), *Queer theory in education* (pp. 49–72). New York: Routledge.

Tuhiwai-Smith, L. (1999). *Decolonizing methodologies: Research and indigenous peoples.* London: Zed Books.

Walker, W. (1932). *The sociology of teaching.* New York: Russell & Russell.

Warner, T. (2002). Nev*er going back: A history of queer activism in Canada.* Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

West, C. (1997). Audacious democrats. In S. Fraser & J. Freeman (Eds.), *Audacious democracy: Labor, intellectuals, and the social reconstruction of America* (pp. 262-270). Boston, MA: Mariner.

Willman, R. K. (2009). Coming when you're not really in: Coming out as a teachable moment. *Feminism & Psychology, 19*(2), 205-209. doi:10.1177/0959353509102205

Woods, S., & Harbeck, K. (1992). Living in two worlds: The identity management strategies used by lesbian physical educators. In K. Harbeck (Ed.), *Coming out of the classroom closet: Gay and lesbian students, teachers, and curricula* (pp. 141-66). Binghamton, NY: Haworth Press.

Essay Four
Transsexual Teachers: The Personal, Pedagogical, and Political

The study and exploration of transgender issues represents a history steeped in psychology, literary criticism, queer theory, and feminism, but has yet to have been taken up significantly within K-12 public education, especially as it pertains to the empirical study of the needs and concerns of transsexual teachers. As an emerging theoretical construct, language and meaning are particularly important in identity formation and analysis. A person's sex refers to one's biological or natal sex, which is by convention typically male or female and represented by our physiological make up, which is comprised of genetic, chromosomal, gonadal, hormonal, biochemical, anatomical, and morphological influences (Gherovici, 2010). Correspondingly, our sense of gender represents the psychological, social, and cultural aspects of maleness and femaleness, whether perceived as a binary, mixed, or fluid. Likewise, our gender identity is our internal sense of how we identify ourselves as male, female, or in between. Gender expression relates to how a person presents his or her sense of maleness or femaleness, historically and typically along stereotypical binary lines, to the larger society. Gender identity and gender expression are often closely linked with the term transgender. Transgender is often used as a pangender umbrella category designed to include all individuals "who fall anywhere within the spectrum of gender-variant identity, whether in feelings or behavior, and whether or not the person publicly or privately crosses or transcends traditional boundaries of gender expression" (Samons, 2009, p. 3). For example, the term transgender encompasses drag kings, drag queens, cross dressers, transsexuals, intersexuals, masculine women ("butches"), effeminate men ("sissies"), and anyone else who does not stereotypically identify as male or female (Stryker, 2006a). For

most individuals, their gender identity and assigned gender role are consistent with their natal sex. However, for transsexuals there is a persistent sense of psychological and emotional incongruity between their natal sex, gender identity, and assigned gender role. These individuals often find this incongruence confusing, emotionally painful, and increasingly difficult to carry on over time. As a result, some transsexuals in an attempt to achieve this congruency will transition genders utilizing hormone therapy, which may be followed up with sex-reassignment surgery, to bring their body more closely in alignment with his or her actual gender identity.

While the journey of each transgender person is unique, transgender studies emerged as a collective field of critical study to examine the relationships between the body, sex, gender, and (mis)representation and the battle against heteronormative regimes of power and truth (Stryker, 2006a). As Stryker (2006a) relates, transgender studies as a theoretical discipline asks "Why it should matter, ethically and morally, that people experience and express their gender in fundamentally different ways" (p. 3). Likewise, Whittle (2006a) suggests how "the struggles of trans people could have significant impact on all of our freedoms, depending on who wins the war of ideologies surrounding the meaning of gender and sex" (p. xiv). Accordingly, Whittle calls for researchers, activists, transgender and transsexual people, and allies to "reposition the power of gender… and [allow] more of us to have a say in what gender means, and in what its powers should be" (p. xiv). It is in this light that transgender studies calls into question the universality of the categories of what it means to be a "man" or "woman," and in doing so brings forth new analyses to explore questions of gender relations, power, and inequality.

Concomitantly, empirical research on transsexual teachers explores these questions through an examination of gender within the hegemony of heteronormativity and how a particular set of gendered social, political, and cultural norms are (re)produced and continually (re)enforced within regulatory institutions such as K-12 public schools. These systems of heteronormative operations "produce various possibilities for viable personhood, and eliminate others" (Stryker, 2006a, p. 3). For example, as Stryker (2006b) argues, transgender identities have been historically created as the monstrous other. As one consequence, in K-12 public education the transsexual teacher is constructed as an unknowable "skeleton that has no flesh, no passion, no eros" (Huffer, 2010, p. 67). From this perspective, the transsexual teacher is deemed to have no legitimated existence; the only possibility for recognition exists within the shadows of intelligibility. In other words, as Butler (2004) relates, even to become "oppressed one first must [struggle to] become intelligible. To find that one is fundamentally unintelligible… is to find that one has not yet achieved access to the human" (p. 218). However, as Stryker (2006b) identifies, even inhuman "monsters, like angels, function as messengers and heralds of the extraordinary. They serve to announce impending revelation, saying, in effect, 'pay attention,' something of profound importance is happening" (p. 247).

This research takes up Stryker's call to reveal the extraordinary and examines how transsexual teachers have been created as a monstrous other, which public education cannot bear to recognize or come to know. "Just as the words 'dyke,' 'fag,' 'queer' have been reclaimed… words like 'creature,' 'monster,' and 'unnatural' [also] need to be reclaimed by the transgendered" (Stryker, 2006b, p. 246). The conditions, discourses, and discursive practices that create this otherness ought to be examined critically and

challenged in an effort to ask "why certain humans are recognized as less than human, and [how] that [usually uninterrogated] form of qualified recognition does not lead to a viable life" (Butler, 2004, p. 2). If we are critical educators concerned with social justice, human rights, and the creation of a Just Society, then we need to struggle to expand and open up the possibility for different ways of living the radical and the sexual or, as Butler (2004) suggests, we need to work "not [merely] to celebrate difference as such but [also] to establish more inclusive conditions for sheltering and maintaining life that resists modes of assimilation" (p. 4). This critical resistance is at the heart of a queer criticality, which calls into question the mission, vision, and purpose of public education that fails to recognize, respect, and accommodate all students and teachers regardless of their sexual and gender differences.

Gender, which is always historical and performative, shifts and changes meaning throughout time, place, race, class, and culture. Transsexual teachers can be said to live "outside history" (Butler, 2004, p. 230), as there is little documented research into their experiences and only a scant record of their existence. Whittle (2006b) shares concern regarding this lack of history as he highlights and questions the "ongoing paucity of empirical analysis of gender diversity" (p. xiv) within academe.

This essay attempts to address this critical erasure by exploring the experiences of three male-to-female transsexual teachers who transitioned genders while actively teaching within Canadian K-12 schools. Carol Allan taught at elementary, junior, and senior high schools in Alberta for 31 years. She transitioned from male-to-female in 1988. Carol taught as a male for 12 years, and as a female for the remaining 19 years of her public school teaching career. Gayle Roberts began teaching high school in British

Columbia in 1983. She transitioned from male-to-female in 1995. Gayle taught for 12 years as a male, spent the rest of her teaching career as a female, and retired from active teaching in 2002. Angela Dekort began teaching junior high school in Alberta in 1996. She transitioned from male-to-female in 2004 and now teaches in an elementary school. Carol, Gayle, and Angela transitioned over the course of three different decades (1980s, 1990s, and 2000s), yet each had to contest and resist imposed gender norms in which they struggled to (re)make and (re)define their personal and professional identities. Each had to create a new commensurability between their identities of "teacher" and "transsexual" in an effort to become intelligible to themselves and to their schools.

Through this identity-constituting process, a transsexual identity ceases to become a representation of the monstrous other and, in turn, the possibility for a different understanding of transsexuality can emerge. A focus on the lived experiences of transsexual teachers can help to demonstrate how transgressing gender norms can work to reveal how specific gender regulations are produced, disciplined, and maintained within public schools. This process of transsexual embodiment demonstrates "the complex ways in which sexuality and gender are embodied, enacted, disciplined, and imagined otherwise" within public schools (Rasmussen, 2009, p. 442). As a result, the very processes of *becoming* a female teacher are more important to investigate, instead of attempting to arrive at or analyze a final gender state, essentialized identity, or rigid understanding of what gender means or represents.

This research is an attempt to resist the fixity of the category of sex and the equation that biology is somehow gender's destiny. As Rasmussen (2009) argues, "feminist theory in education has only recently begun to seriously grapple with issues

pertinent to subjects whose lives are profoundly and often injuriously impacted by the instability of gender identity… [namely] transsexual, transgender, gender queer, and intersex" lives (p. 434). Accordingly, gender identity becomes a critical "category of analysis within the field of gender theory and research in education" (Rasmussen, 2009, p. 431). For queer poststructural researchers like Rasmussen, gender is not something to be eradicated from the classroom, rather it is something that simply cannot be avoided, "freed from" or eschewed (p. 439). Likewise, Ellsworth (2005) challenges "educators to shift how we make bodies matter in pedagogy" (p. 17). Pedagogy like gender is not a still moment. As critical educators, the goal is not to know or to teach gender, but to engage and respond to it as it is performed. Gender is an ongoing event, one that needs to be constantly challenged and questioned through its lived encounter. This becomes the true experience of learning—a learning that is always in the making. When gender is constructed as a site of learning, a key question arises: What is there to be learned (beyond the taken-for-granted) and, in turn, what needs to be unlearned? Transsexual teachers invite us into the space of lived experience to build our understanding of gender as a continual and never-ending process. It is knowledge always in the making and waiting to be discovered.

By utilizing their real names in this research, each of the research participants wanted to be recognized publicly as a transsexual teacher. They did not want their hard won identities erased, nor did they want to disappear from the research in the form of a pseudonym. Indeed, each participant expressed a clear interest in wanting to help to teach others about transsexual issues through their own unique lived experiences. As Jan Morris noted of the transsexual experience and the fight for self-determination in her

famous autobiography entitled *Conundrum*, "We are the most resolute. Nothing will stop us, no fear of ridicule or poverty, no threat of isolation, not even the prospect of death itself" (as cited in Gherovici, 2010, p. 244). Through their participation in this research, these transsexual teachers are resolute persons and educators helping to question and reveal the instability and regulatory functions of hegemonic sex and gender taxonomies. These transsexual teachers are resilient survivors and pioneers in education who have transgressed a culturally engrained pedagogy of impossibility in order to transform bodies, identities, and minds. This counter-pedagogical encounter constitutes an endeavor to unhinge gender from its dimorphic form in an attempt to transform the conditions of its social existence. It is pedagogical and cultural work that Ellsworth (2005) describes as cogent strategizing "to put inner thoughts, memories, ways of knowing and being, fears, and desires in relation to outside others, events, history, culture, and socially constructed ideas" (p. 46). Through this pedagogical address, transsexual teachers can come to be seen as more than objects; they can become subjects who help us to know and understand gender in public schools.

The overarching purpose of this empirical research is to examine the personal, pedagogical, and political experiences of transsexual teachers in Canadian K-12 schools. For more than three decades, postmodern/poststructural deconstruction has enabled researchers to call into question and interrogate essentialized categories of sex, sexuality, and gender and, in turn, to disrupt these fixed identities as naturalized or pre-given (Foucault, 1978; Lyotard, 1984). In this work, qualitative life history interviews have served as a postfoundational method of inquiry designed to help give voice to self-acknowledged subjectivities of transsexual teachers, which are always situated within

individual, historical, cultural, and political experiences. In the same way that sexuality discourses started giving voice as a way to name one's subjective experience and, in turn, to challenge the violence done by the rigidity of compulsory heterosexuality, these transsexual teacher narratives analyze and interrogate how gender is experienced, performed, and maintained within the rigidity of the male/female binary in public education. Schools, as regulatory institutions, have traditionally sought to maintain (hetero)normative, dichotomous gender performances, which is indicated, for example, by a medicalized narrative of transsexualism. This narrative enforces gender conformity and transgender invisibility and stands in direct contrast to queer strategies of subversion that call into question the maintenance and regulation of the sex and gender order in schools (Jagose, 1996, 2009; Quinn & Meiners, 2009). As a result of this mandated invisibility, schools are maintained as heteronormative and distinctly non-trans environments. Accordingly, without visibility and dialogue there is no commitment given to the right of gender self-determination or respect afforded to the wide variety of gender expression in public schools. In these regulatory spaces, gender is taken for granted as strictly male or female, with no in-between spaces allowed for variation in gender identities and/or performances.

While many transsexual teachers may wish to transgress a rigid gender binary system, the schools in which they teach often provide them with little choice since there is the hegemonic expectation of strict adherence to the ways in which schools and the larger culture position and understand gender in distinctly dichotomous and heterosexual terms. Indeed strict adherence to a dimorphic heteronormative model of gender is requisite if transsexual teachers wish to be seen as "good teachers," or perhaps more

telling, if they wish to remain as teachers at all (Atkinson & DePalma, 2009; Quinn & Meiners, 2009). Moreover, as Spade (2006) suggests, "a successful [male-to-female] transition hinges upon full participation in the normative, sexist, oppressive performance of [the category of] 'woman'" (p. 323). This gender performance requires an allegiance to be "even more 'normal' than 'normal people' when it comes to gender presentation, and discourages [any] gender disruptive behaviour" at all (Spade, 2006, p. 323). Wilchins (2006) highlights that the very "purpose of a gender regime is to regulate these meanings and to punish those who transgress them" (p. 549). Accordingly, the classroom is a crucial space where the world of gender theory and its practice become one. Jamison (2006) relates that "in order to be a good–or successful–transsexual person, one is not supposed to be a transsexual person at all" (p. 501). In essence, transsexual teachers are forced to remain in a transsexual closet that conceals one's gendered past before transitioning (Green, 2006). The figuration of the closet requires a teacher to hide, to remain secret, to stay invisible, and to feel shame for one's identity. The paradox of the closet is to always risk disclosure. The result is to constantly police one's very body lest it give away the secret. This burden of secrecy is maintained by an enforced invisibility. In order to be a "successful" transsexual person, you are required to forget or erase your opposite gendered past – in essence, to be without history – but how does one erase years of an embodied and lived teaching experience?

To answer these and other questions, Dr. André P. Grace and I conducted two-hour, in-depth individual life history interviews with Carol, Gayle, and Angela. These three self-identified transsexual research participants were selected from Dr. Grace's larger national study on the welfare and work experiences of LGBTQ teachers in Canada.

Each interview was open-ended and we invited the research participants to engage in a polyphonic, reciprocal conversation. Research participants were also invited to share any writings, drawings, poems, or artwork that they felt might contribute to and enrich this sense-making experience. Some of these drawings and writings are included as inter-texts in this essay. The interviews were individually recorded, transcribed, and shared with each research participant as part of an iterative process of co-constructing meaning in which their edits, comments, and interpretations were taken into account during the overall editing and writing process. Each transcript underwent a thematic analysis, and I composed storylines to represent dominant life experiences, which are presented as co-constructed narratives using the personal, pedagogical, and political as overarching themes for investigation.

Using Storylines as a Poststructural Method of Inquiry

Poststructural empirical analysis draws upon interdisciplinary research methods and practices in an attempt to reveal and study "patterns of sociocultural interaction and identity projects" (Sondergaard, 2002, p. 187). Such an approach to research and analysis examines the role and "status of truth claims which take poststructural insights on discursive practices into account" (p. 187). In other words, poststructural researchers investigate how truth claims are substantiated through the effects of regulatory power and how social, cultural, and linguistic practices are inculcated in the processes of subjectification. They explore how transgressive or "othered" identities are most often constructed through the processes of exclusion. For example, research questions germane to this kind of empirical study include: How are transsexual, gay, lesbian, and bisexual

bodies spoken into existence? Through which discourses and discursive practices are these identities rendered intelligible? How are the categories and binary codifications of sex/gender; heterosexual/homosexual; male/female; and normal/abnormal constituted and regulated in cultural spaces like K-12 public schools? How do these constructions impact the possibility for transsexual teacher identities to become visible? Are the identities of teacher and transsexual commensurable?

Ultimately, the goal of the poststructural researcher is to "interpret the discursive practices that he or she has access to" in interrogative processes (Sondergaard, 2002, p. 190). Access can be achieved through open-ended interview methods; critical analysis of public documents such as media reports and newspaper articles; and study of cultural objects such as films, television, photographs, literature, poetry, paintings, and drawings. However, what concerns poststructural researchers most is a thick bioethnographic description of how the research participant's life is lived and/or deemed to be livable. In other words, poststructural researchers interrogate the materiality of everyday life and the ways in which these understandings are lived on the body, mind, and spirit, ultimately asking what makes us human. Sondergaard (2002) summarizes:

> The idea [for poststrucural researchers] is to make the processes of constitution explicit, processes that usually are regarded as natural and taken for granted in our discourses and practices which silently require us to create ourselves and each other (our own and others' identities) within frameworks of accessible discursive categories and storylines. (p. 191)

This form of bioethnographic research constitutes an effort to make what is implicit explicit as a means "to destabilize what is taken for granted and to expose it for

reflection" (p. 191). This research is a deliberate attempt to look for the ruptures, fissures, absences, and silences that surround transsexual teacher identities in an effort to learn from them. Bioethnographic research is particularly well-suited to postfoundational research such as that framed within queer criticality since both the method and the theoretical framework are concerned with (1) questioning the ability to discern or capture objective truth, and (2) interrogating cultural classification systems or taxonomies as methods to elucidate or establish an individual's motivations, practices, or knowledge. Queer theory, in particular, focuses on the ruptures or gaps that exist between these normative categories and an individual's lived experience (Valocchi, 2005). Queer criticality interrogates how this newfound knowledge can be translated into ethical, democratic, and socially just action for personal and cultural change (Grace, 2009).

Accordingly, a postfoundational approach to life history and identity-based research focuses on exploring a storyline, which "refers to a course of events, a sequence of actions that, just as with categories, creates identities through inclusive and exclusive discursive moments" (p. 191). These storylines are often fragmented as subjects work back through their lived experiences to create narrative meaning. As a result, through research these storylines become a collective re-telling and sense making experience, which reflects how the participant's subjectivity has come to be made known to themselves and others. As such, these storylines become explanatory opportunities to reveal how particular identities may become foreclosed or opened up depending upon specific institutional and socio-cultural practices. Thus in my empirical study I ask: What are the storylines available in the (re)construction of transsexual teacher identities? Traditionally, transsexuals were created and narrated as monstrous others who

represented an aberration of nature and a threat to the perceived dominant naturalized sex and gender order that is propagated through the formal and hidden curriculum taught in schools.

How then do subjects, in this case transsexual teachers, understand, take up, resist, and/or redeploy various subject positions in their personal and professional lives? What are the personal, pedagogical, and political costs? Or, as Sondergaard (2002) asks, "Who can we be if we understand (either on reflection or otherwise) that some particular acts and expressions that we desire are undesirable and must remain invisible for the very subjects of the category that we are identified as belonging to?" (p. 194). Stated more directly in relation to this research: Is there a space or vocabulary for transsexual teacher identities so they can name themselves and exist beyond the male/female binary in public schools? What are the costs of this binary refusal? What other storylines are possible? What other lives are imaginable? Whose lives are deemed to be livable? What alternatives are possible for living outside of the sex/gender binary in which biology is seen as destiny? How might one challenge the dominance and regulatory power of biology and the binary categories it perpetuates? These all become challenging analytical questions that serve as springboards to explore the lived realities of transsexual teachers within public schools.

Within this research, it is important to study and understand transsexual teachers' personal storylines of what it means to be a considered a man or woman and a masculine or feminine teacher. It is also important to investigate and comprehend how these storylines are caught up and implicated in the collective storyline of what our society suggests is acceptable in prescribing the categories of man and woman. When there is a

disconnect between the individual and collective storyline one can expect ruptures along with feelings of disillusionment, anxiety, and fear as hegemonic categories once thought to be truths are revealed to be exclusionary fictions. Through the process of rupturing, these alternative storylines become amplified and once thought of impossibilities reveal themselves within possible new horizons for living. It is this "disruption of the taken-for-granted discursive practices and categories that reveals new untold possibilities" (Sondergaard, 2002, p. 196). This alienation becomes revealed in the creation of alternative or counter narratives in which *biology is not destiny*.

Identity formation is a continual process of (re)construction and negotiation. The goal of postfoundational analysis is to disrupt this construction as pre-given or naturalized (Lather, 2007; St. Pierre & Pillow, 2000). This disruption challenges a presumed natural coherence like the male/female binary in an effort to deconstruct, examine, and redeploy specific historical, political, and cultural discourses that have rendered sexual minority and gender variant lives unlivable. It contests essentialism and gendered truth claims, which seek to privilege some bodies and identities and subject others. By re-narrating transsexual teacher identities as intelligible, "their stories can be used to make visible the boundaries and practices of naturalized and essentialized expressions of sex/gender" (Sondergaard, 2002, p. 199).

Taking Gender into Account:
Intersections between Queer, Feminist, and Transgender Theory

Queer theory has evolved to focus on the "materiality of gender and sexuality and the role of institutional power in the construction of identities" (Valocchi, 2005, p. 751). Accordingly, queer theory challenges the belief that binaries such as male/female,

masculine/feminine, heterosexual/homosexual are somehow normative or naturalized phenomena. As a counterhegemonic theory, it treats these binaries as ideologically created constructs. Queer theory also examines how normative categories assert power and control over individuals, especially those who are on the perceived lesser end of the binary, or those individuals, like some gender queer people, who wish to live outside the gender binary altogether. At its heart, queer theory works to challenge a modernist belief in a unitary, coherent self. Thus it focuses on deconstructing sex, gender, and sexuality related classifications and dominant taxonomies in an effort to subvert normative alignments that reify heterosexuality and marginalize those bodies and identities that define themselves outside what is considered normal. These naturalized binaries and normalizing constructs, if left unchallenged, become dominant and taken-for-granted ways of organizing knowledge, regulating public space, arranging social life, and controlling public discourse. As a result of these processes of normalization, Warner (2005) suggests that queers and other sex and gender outlaws get regulated to the margins and end up creating their own counterpublics as a means to find and create outsider communities of difference. Historically, within these counterpublics, a much needed space has been created for the rise of queer politics and activism and its associated focus on "post identity sexual politics" (Stryker, 2006a, p. 7), which is based in opposition to heteronormativity, rather than heterosexuality. As a result of this activism, a queer critical space is emerging for the articulation of transgender concerns as part of the battle against heteronormative regimes of truth and power. The emergence of transgender theory is demonstrating that "gender is not as clear or as univocal as we are sometimes led to believe…. [Transgenderism] combats forms of essentialism which claimed that gender is

a truth that is somehow there, interior to the body, as a core or as an internal essence, something that we cannot deny, something which, natural or not, is treated as a given" (Butler, 2004, p. 212).

Given this analysis of gender, queer theory as a multiperspective theoretical framework builds on earlier feminist theorizing that called into question a unitary understanding of the category of "woman" and, in turn, called for the creation of multiple feminisms in an attempt to address relationships of power and the intersectionality of race, culture, class, ability, gender, and sexuality (Lather, 1991; Lather & Smithies, 1997). For example, both queer theory and poststructural feminist theory examine the limitations of an identity-based theory of analysis and strive to embrace the complexity and messiness of multiple and fragmented identities (Butler, 1989; de Lauretis, 1991; Sedgwick, 1990). Given these mutual interests, Whittle (2006b) suggests how "trans studies [can be understood] as a true linking of feminist and queer theory" (p. xii). The deliberate questioning of sex and gender that transsexuals bring forth in their daily realities calls into question the coherence of all identities and affords a challenge "to all those who place their confidence in the binary rules of sexed lives: man/woman, male/female, masculine/feminine, straight/gay" (p. xiii). Likewise, Butler (2004) also sees an alliance between transgender, queer, and feminist theory as "feminism has always countered violence against women, sexual and nonsexual, [which] ought to serve as a basis for alliance with these other movements, since phobic violence against bodies is part of what joins antihomophobic, antiracist, feminist, trans, and intersex activism" (p. 9).

Historically, transgender studies and feminism have not always been understood as complementary theoretical perspectives. As Stryker (2006a) reminds us, second wave feminists launched a rigorous critique of transsexuals who claimed to be women. These second wave feminists understood the categories of "female, femininity, and woman [to] appear as stable and conjoined through their opposition to male, masculinity, and man" (Prosser, 2006, p. 263). As a result, they claimed that by altering their bodies "transsexuals alienated themselves from their own lived history, and placed themselves in an inauthentic position that misrepresented their 'true selves' to others" (Stryker, 2006a, p. 4). In response, transgender theory has demonstrated, for example, how a male-to-female transsexual should not be considered an appropriation or affront to femininity, as some earlier feminists have suggested. Rather, from a queered perspective, transsexual identities can be understood as a critique or challenge to presumed anatomy, gender role, and expression. From this perspective, gender is understood as fluid, and anatomy and the prescribed category of sex is revealed as culturally framed and normatively proscribed. Butler (2004) concurs:

> Terms such as "masculine" and "feminine" are notoriously changeable; there are social histories for each term; their meanings change radically depending upon geopolitical boundaries and cultural constraints on who is imagining whom, and for what purpose…. Terms of gender designation are thus never settled once and for all but are constantly in the process of being remade. (p. 10)

Likewise, as Whittle (2006a) reminds us, more recent third wave feminists have moved beyond this essentialism and are calling for different forms of feminism to be representative of a "better set of values in which gender loses some of its power of

oppression, in which separate and distinct voices are not only heard but also listened to, and in which a better set of values is followed. That is what we who are trans can gain from them – but perhaps much more importantly now, it is also something we can give back to them" (p. 202).

For transgender theory, it is not the lived experience of being a woman that is critical; instead, what is vital is an embodied materialism, which represents "the desire to match the surface of the body to those corporeal feelings that are both the generative ground and logic of transsexual" (Kaufmann, 2010, p. 110). This reading of embodiment allows transsexualism to be understood as the "embodied experience of difference without relying on social norms of gender" (p. 110). Likewise, as Kaufmann suggests, there is a strong affinity among queer theory, poststructural feminism, and transgender studies in the ways in which they understand "the male-female binary as socially constructed and gender as performative, fluid, fictitious, and/or unnecessary" (p. 103). However, transsubjectivity, which focuses on the feeling of difference, presents a challenge to queer theory, which is grounded in destabilizing or subverting sex and gender: "This feeling of difference, therefore, has the possibility of becoming the generative principal of transsexual rather than sex and gender" (Kaufmann, 2010, p. 112). Similarly, Prosser (2006) asserts how transgender studies can be understood as "a queer transgressive force … in the consistent decoding of 'trans' as [an] incessant destabilizing movement between sexual and gender identities" (p. 259).

Historically, there have always been tensions between queer theory and transgender activism, which both call into question an essentialized understanding of sex and gender. Throughout its activist evolution, queer theory has rejected essentialism and,

instead, has promoted the fluidity of sex and gender (Hall, 2003; Warner, 2005). As a result of this anti-essentialism and hybridity, queer theory opposes rigid identity claims based on a natural dimorphism (that is, the sex/gender binary), which should be maintained at all costs. In this regard, transsexualism would seem to be at odds with queer theory, as it often seeks a stable sex assignment (Kaufmann, 2010; Valocchi, 2005). However, as Butler (2004) maintains, this sex assignment is not just a "simple desire to conform to established identity categories" (p. 8); it is about seeking a livable and intelligible life given available social norms. This is not about an *either/or* binary. Butler (2004) asserts, "What is most important is to cease legislating for all lives what is livable only for some, and similarly, to refrain from proscribing for all lives what is unlivable for some" (p. 8). The common ground between these postfoundational theories is their critique of the forces of normalization. In this sense, the common question becomes what choices and available discourses maximize "the possibility for a livable life, [and] what minimizes the possibility of [an] unbearable life, or indeed, social, or literal death" (Butler, 2004, p. 8). Concomitantly, transgender studies, feminist scholarship, and queer theory all call for an analysis of how systems of power and privilege play out on actual or real bodies, which are "capable of producing pain and pleasure, health and sickness, punishment and reward, life and death" (Stryker, 2006a, p. 3).

Trans-representation in Media, Culture, and Public Schools

Increasingly, transgender and transsexual issues have become more visible within mainstream popular culture and media. These depictions have ranged from controversial portrayals in movies such as *Silence of the Lambs* and the *Crying Game*, to mainstream

inclusion in nevertheless provocative social dramas such as *Boys Don't Cry* and *TransAmerica*, to more comical portrayals in films such as *Mrs. Doubtfire* and *Priscilla: Queen of the Desert*. Compelling television portrayals have also included trans coming out narratives on *Oprah*, childhood conversations with *Barbara Walters*, and freak show style depictions on tabloid television shows such as *Geraldo* and *Jerry Springer* (Gherovici, 2010; Stryker & Whittle, 2006). However, despite these variously educative and sometimes sensational portrayals, the daily realities of transgendered people are fraught with risk, discrimination, and violence (Namaste, 2006).

Over 100 colleges and universities in the United States now include gender identity and gender expression in their non-discrimination policies (Gherovici, 2010). Concomitantly, some schools have replaced gendered pronouns in all official documents with the word "student;" other schools have re-designated unisex bathrooms to "all gender;" and still other schools have shifted from single-sex to co-ed dorm rooms. It is clear, at least on college and university campuses, that a new generation of youth is breaking down long established sex-role barriers as part of an emerging culture war premised on the complex intersections of gender and identity. Slowly, this movement is making its way toward K-12 public education, with the development, albeit still limited, of gender identity inclusive non-discrimination policies, resources to support transitioning students, and co-ed gym classes and integrated team sports. Yet, despite these progressive steps, there is limited support for transsexual teachers and even fewer resources designed to met their unique needs.

While some university and college students directly challenge the gender binary by identifying as "gender queer," "ominsexual," and "pangender," and utilize gender

neutral names and pronouns such as "hir," "ze," and "s/he," K-12 public schools do not allow for this same kind of gender fluidity (Gherovici, 2010). Instead, public schools force students into "gender straight jackets" (Pollack, 2005), which allow no room for so called gender transgressors or troublemakers (Gherovici, 2010). Indeed, any student whose gender role or performance is challenged may also have his or her sexuality questioned through their labeling such as a "faggot" or "dyke," which are used as weapons of compulsory gender regulation. This complex interweaving of sexism, patriarchy, and homophobia serves as a regulatory weapon in the arsenal of (hetero)normativity. Today the battle ground for this defilement is clearly demarcated: it is public schools. For example, Lawrence "Larry" King was a 15-year-old junior high school student in Oxnard, California. Larry was adopted at age two, and had a history of being bullied at his school for his effeminacy, cross dressing, and openness about being gay. Larry came out when he was 10-years-old, and at age 14 was struggling both personally and academically; he ended up living in a group home. All Larry wanted was to be accepted by his friends, his family, and his classmates. While living at the group home, they gave him a $75.00 gift card for Christmas. Larry spent the money on a pair of brown stiletto shoes (Setoodeh, 2008). In January, Larry started to express his inner gender identity and attended school dressed as a girl. On February 10, 2008, Larry, while playing a schoolyard game of "Who will be your valentine?", asked 14-year-old Brandon McInerney to be his valentine. At the end of the lunch break, Brandon is reported to have told a student: "Say goodbye to Larry, because you will never see him again" (Setoodeh, 2008, p. 7). Two days later, while working on a history assignment in his computer classroom, Brandon pulled out a handgun and shot Larry twice in the head. Larry had

signed his final history paper as "Leticia King" (Setoodeh, 2008, p. 7). Larry died two days later, while on life support in intensive care. On February 14th, Valentine's Day, Larry's organs were harvested, including his heart, which now beats inside the chest of a 10-year-old girl (Setoodeh, 2008). In death, Larry got to be the girl he could never be in life. Brandon is still awaiting trial for his murder, which is being prosecuted as a hate crime (Saillant & Covarrubias, 2008).

In the fall of 2010, within a few short weeks, four U.S. gay male youth committed suicide. While these suicides were unrelated to each other, homophobic bullying and harassment prompted them all. One of these youth, 13-year-old Asher Brown from Houston, Texas is reported to have experienced ongoing anti-gay harassment in his junior high school. On the morning of Thursday, September 23, 2010, Asher mustered the courage to come out to his parents. Later that same day, Asher shot and killed himself in his home (O'Hare, 2010). On Sunday, September 19th, 2010, 13-year-old Seth Walsh of Tehachapi, California, hanged himself from a tree in his backyard after years of homophobic bullying. He died after nine days on life support, despite the emotional videotaped pleas from his younger sister asking for him to get better and come home. Despite the anti-gay taunts that Seth endured the day of his suicide attempt, the police have stated that they do not consider his bullying to be a crime (Martinez, 2010). On September 9th, 2010, after being persistently picked on and called a "fag," 15-year-old Billy Lucas of Greensburg, Indiana hung himself in his family's barn. Earlier that same day, students at his school were reported to have told Billy to kill himself (Brooks, 2010). On Wednesday, September 22, 2010, Tyler Clementi, an 18-year-old budding virtuoso violinist at Rutgers University, jumped off a bridge to his death after his roommate

secretly filmed him having sex with a man and live streamed the video on the Internet (Weiner-Bronner, 2010).

Clearly, sexual minority youth are at significant and increasing risk in their K-12 schools and other educational institutions, with transgender and transsexual youth being amongst the students most at risk in today's public schools (Kosciw, et al., 2010; Taylor & Peter, in press). For example, in a recent 2009 National Safe Schools Survey conducted by Egale Canada, 74.2% of transgender students surveyed reported experiencing verbal harassment because of their gender expression (Taylor & Peter, in press). Transgender students in Canada also experienced higher rates of physical harassment and assault than both their lesbian, gay, bisexual, and heterosexual peers (Taylor & Peter, in press). Despite this growing evidence of harassment and violence, K-12 transgender students and teachers in Canada are only explicitly protected against discrimination within codes of professional conduct and declarations of teachers' rights and responsibilities in Alberta, British Columbia, and Nova Scotia. While sexual orientation has been read into the Canadian *Charter of Rights and Freedoms*, gender identity and expression have no similar explicit constitutional protection based on a Supreme Court of Canada decision. The issue of transgender rights and representation can be equated to how sexual orientation was understood 30 years ago in Canada – as a pathology in need of specialized medical intervention and treatment as outlined in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders produced by the American Psychiatric Association (Grace, 2008; Spade, 2006). This model of disease and sickness is highly contested and controversial, both within the medical and transgender and transsexual communities. While this essay does not explore these debates in depth, like

societal understanding of sexual orientation 30 years ago, it is clear that with continued transgender stigmatization comes shame, and with shame comes silence and enforced invisibility. This essay explores these themes in the context of public education and the formation of the transsexual closet, which is designed to keep transsexuality as the secret that public education cannot bear to know.

The Personal: The Quest for Authenticity and Trans Personhood

While being straight, gay, lesbian, or bisexual is often construed as a person's sexual orientation, being transgender or transsexual is ultimately about a person's intrinsic sense of their gender identity. Every individual has a gender identity, which is separate from a person's sex and sexual orientation. Gherovici (2010) posits, "Only when technology developed to the point that clinicians could intervene at the level of the body did the term *sex* begin to refer exclusively to the biological realm" (p. 31, emphasis in original). Through this medicalized process, as Prosser (2006) highlights, "sex, gender, and desire [became] unified through the representation of heterosexuality as primary and foundational" (p. 263). In essence, the category of sex gained its regulatory power through its constant citation in forms like female = woman = heterosexual. However, as postfoundational theorists argue, "Gender is not a teleological narrative of ontology at all, with the sexed body (female) as [the] recognizable beginning and gender identity (woman) as [the] clear-cut ending" (Prosser, 2006, p. 263). Accordingly, there is no essentialized truth to gender, suggesting there should not be a mandatory or required gender performance.

In the storylines that follow, Carol, Angela, and Gayle demonstrate this false narrative of ontology as they discuss the challenges, ambiguities, and complexities of their pre-transition lives as men. These storied experiences contest any pre-conceived or essentialized notions of a natural congruency between sex and gender. These personal storylines also highlight the enormity of the silence, denial, risk, and emotional turmoil that Carol, Angela, and Gayle experienced in their attempts to re-envision their lives as something more authentic and livable. By sharing their personal, and at times painful lived experiences, Carol, Angela, and Gayle are each reconstructing a history to avoid their erasure as transsexual teachers who are deemed to be without a past. These teachers do not want to live surreptitious lives marked by a refusal to disclose their transgendered histories. Instead they are "reappropriating difference and reclaiming power of the refigured and reinscribed body" (Stone, 2006, p. 232). This is a body, which refuses to carry the stigma of silence, invisibility, shame, and denial. Not only is this transition a desire for recognition, but it is also a quest for the right to personhood (Lahey, 1999). As Butler (2004) posits, "When we struggle for rights, we are not simply struggling for rights that attach to [a] person, but we are struggling to be *conceived as persons*" (p. 32, emphasis in original). For the transsexual teachers interviewed in this research, their transition represents the opportunity to become intelligible and, in turn, fully human. This transformation constitutes "a loss, a disorientation, but one in which the human stands a chance of coming into being a new" (Butler, 2004, p. 39).

Carol relates to her journey to trans personhood as an intense conflict within a heteronormative and religious discourse in which no other possibility for a differently gendered existence was plausible or livable.

The time before was a very confused time. That whole period of life prior to the transition process was such a difficult existence. My dad, who has since passed on, spent his entire life as an evangelical, born-again, Baptist minister. Mom and Dad were very, very strict. I was in my early years of teaching and feeling this gender strain, and a sense that I didn't belong, so I got married to a girl in Church. After all, I was supposed to get married. This whole topsy-turvy life was uncomfortable in every sense. Everything about it, even being a male teacher was wrong. The despair started to build up on top of me like layers of debris that were getting weightier and weightier.

To compensate for this unlivable reality, the only alternative available for Carol was to reinscribe a dominant masculinity as a gender façade to keep the projection of heteronormative coherence intact.

I remember feeling the pain of having, for the sake of my marriage and teaching career, to appear as normal as I could. I would try and over do it with gestures and how I walked. I tried to look tough. I grew a mustache and beard. I was trying to do whatever I could to cover what I didn't want to be. I hated the covers more and more each day.

Carol's attempt to cover or pass as male are represented in what she describes as a "gender fog," which signifies something ethereal, vacuous, yet omnipresent. Likewise, her attempts at constructing a hyper-masculinity represent the results of dominant social and familial pressures bearing down to suppress her inner femininity and gendered desires. For Carol, this was a time of immense turmoil and confusion in the process of achieving her potential to become something other than a so-called monster or gender freak.

Looking back, I could tell you a whole story on how many people I went to in order to clear myself of this gender fog. I went to the Christian psychologists and even to a Pentecostal Church Minister who had worked as a missionary in Africa with people possessed by demons. I wanted everyone's opinion. Some supported me and others didn't. I kept thinking, "How can I ruin Dad's ministry?" I probably would have gone through my transition in my twenties, except for Mom and Dad, so I waited.

Yet, in this time of confusion and despair, ruptures appeared in which hope for the

otherwise imagined appeared possible.

> As I waited, there were little things that stood out in my mind like brilliant flashes of sunshine. In my sixth year of teaching, I took my class swimming. One of the girls said, "Mr. H., you have lady legs. How come you're a guy and you have legs that look like a ladies?" I remember that as a precious moment. I was being given recognition for exactly what I wanted – to become female.

With this accidental recognition, came a glimpse of potential personhood, and the

possibility for a new life that could one day be fully realized. However, the closer Carol

came to her dream of transition, the darker the times became.

> I remember as I came closer to transition that there were some real black days and months during that time. I remember thinking, "How am I going to get the energy to get through another day?" It became so heavy and unbearable. It felt impossible to go on. There were some real horrible times before I finally stepped over the line and said I'm going for it.

With the decision made to transition, Carol relates how a surprising return to history,

although difficult, brought a sense of unity and purpose to her life journey.

> My Mom had told me all my life that I was supposed to be born her "little Gracey." I was supposed to be her daughter. When I told my Mom that I was getting divorced, I said here's the reason why: "I'm going to become your Gracey." Mom and Dad couldn't handle what I was telling them. I told my brother and it took him 15 years to speak to me again. My younger sister said, "Give me a year, I can't handle this." I wondered how I would get the energy to teach one more day.
>   Once I crossed the line and said "I'm going for it now," things got better. I started taking hormones. It was now the joy of becoming that gave me life and energy. I started to live as Carol. Thanks to the hormones, I saw changes occurring. I was starting to come out of the depths of despair and starting to grow.

> Angela, like Carol, describes the intense inner and psychic turmoil she

experienced prior to her transition. Both Angela and Carol describe their individual path

as a journey and as a process of reconciliation between faith, family, and survival.

> When I turned 30, I started to realize that how I was living was not going to be possible to continue for much longer. My journey started with being able to

reconcile my religious beliefs with the fact that I was a transgendered person. For several years prior to that, I tried to deny and tried to repress it. I questioned myself. What was I going to do with the fact that I'm transgendered? How was I going to deal with making a living, dealing with my family, and all that sort of stuff? I ended up contacting more than one psychologist and more than one psychiatrist. One thing led to another, and eventually I made the decision to transition. After that, I started making very concrete plans to transition and deciding when to tell people and when I was going to start taking various steps.

For Gayle, the possibility of transitioning was conflicted with the profound fear of loss.

> I started teaching in 1983 in the school that I retired from. It was also the school where I began my transition. By 1990, my gender dysphoria was becoming more and more intense, and it was becoming more and more difficult to deal with. In a sense, I didn't really wish to transition. I was very concerned about losing my job, losing my wife – basically, losing everything. I'd seen so many people have that kind of experience and I really fought it long and hard.

Despite these fears, ultimately, it was Gayle's body that made the final decision, as she was unable to continue to function due to the enormous psychic distress she experienced.

> By 1996, I was unable to function as a teacher, and, in fact, almost became unable to function at all. I was under so much stress that I'd come home and fall asleep on the sofa. All I wanted to do was sleep, because I couldn't stand the psychic pain of dealing with it…. I was the head of the science department of my high school. I just got so exhausted trying to focus on teaching that I couldn't do it anymore. I finally had to go on sick leave during the third week of September. I had arranged to go to the gender clinic and I talked to the area school superintendent, so they were aware of my situation. In the process of taking a sick leave, I wrote a letter to the staff telling them what I was going to do. As soon as I made the decision to transition, a lot of pain was gone. I felt great. It's amazing once that decision is made.

Gayle, Angela, and Carol's storylines all demonstrate the enormous emotional, physical, and psychic toll they each experienced prior to their transition. All worried about their abilities to keep their job as teachers after their transitions. For each, the pain and gendered discomfort eventually intensified and became too unbearable to withstand. Without any reassurance for the future of their careers, and continued relationships with their families and friends, they each came to the realization that their very survival was at

stake. The choice not to transition would mean a continued unmanageable despair, or ultimately the very real possibility of death. In the end, each came to the determination that no other choice could be made, but to transition, despite any potential risks or personal costs they might incur.

In recounting storylines such as these, Prosser (1998) describes how, "every transsexual is originally an autobiographer" (p. 101). The stories they tell are a "kind of second skin… [they] must weave around the body in order that his [or her] body may be read" (Prosser, 1998, p. 101). In Lacanian terms, Gherovici (2010) describes this as a sinthome, which is "a self-created fiction that allows one to live" (p. 216). This sinthome highlights how gender is always an ongoing necessary fiction that we narrate. However, the story is never final and can always be re-made and re-told when gender is understood as a process of becoming, rather than as a fixed state of being. From this perspective, Carol, Angela, and Gayle are postmodern autobiographers who are cast as "knowing subjects" that refuse to be "erased from the social world" simply because they do not fit within the proscribed sex/gender binary (Shelley, 2008, p. 27). Instead, they invent new and more complex narratives to give meaning and coherence to their true gendered selves, and, at the same time, place traditional understandings of gender under scrutiny. By sharing their lived experiences, they create a "gender ripple," which makes other sex and gender relations visible, and, in turn, possible (Reeser, 2010, p. 134).

Intertext I

This drawing was done in 1987, before I transitioned in 1988. There were so many unknowns in my life at that time. I was wondering if I would have my teaching career after transitioning and, if I did have my teaching career, how different it might be. If I lost my career after transitioning, what would I do? I wondered if my family would slowly become more accepting of me… so many unknowns.

In this drawing, the subterranean world represents how I felt that I was coming out of the depths, out of chaos, starting to see the sunshine once again, feeling as though I could hope that life might continue after transition. – Carol

The Pedagogical

Navigating the Transition Experience

Once the decision to transition was made, and facing an uncertain future ahead, Carol, Gayle, and Angela each had to face the daunting prospect of how to inform their school districts about their gender change and concomitant desire to remain teaching. Given the three different decades in which they transitioned (1980s, 1990s, 2000s), each went through a very different process ranging from no support, to limited support, to increased support. For example, Carol's transition occurred in 1988, which was a time when there was very little social or cultural understanding of transgender issues. Carol's transition was also at the zenith of the HIV/AIDS crisis and its ensuing public sex panic, which looked at any non-normative sexual or gender identity with suspicion, ridicule, and contempt. As a result, Carol became a brave pioneer who, without knowing, was at the forefront of a larger transgender educational movement. Because of societal ignorance and backlash, Carol had to enlist the support of a lawyer to negotiate for her right to transition and keep her job. This fight would continue well beyond her transition as she continued to be marginalized within an educational system that had learned to fear the woman she had become.

In the 1990s, with awareness about transgender issues slowly building, public schools still remained staunchly conservative. In this milieu, Gayle's approach was to assert her gender transition as a medical necessity and part of an approved treatment for gender identity disorder, which is a psychiatric disorder identified in the American Psychiatric Association's *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (APA, 2000). Gayle's strategic use of the discourse of medical accommodation allowed her to

be open and honest about her gender identity, rather than having to keep it secretive or hidden. Gayle's transition marks a generation of transsexual teachers who began to be publicly "out" for the first time in their schools.

Angela's transition, which occurred in 2004, reflects the wave of an increasingly diverse postmodern society in which difference is becoming more acceptable. Angela, like Gayle, also utilized a medicalized discourse to frame her transition and, in turn, enlisted the direct support of her school district's health recovery specialist. What marks Angela's transition as extraordinary, is the high level of support she received from her school district's senior administration. Still far from being considered a "normal" occurrence in K-12 schools, Angela's transition demonstrates how transsexual and transgender issues are slowly emerging out of the educational closet.

By no means can these individual experiences be generalized to the experiences of all transsexual or transgender teachers. In Carol, Gayle, and Angela's situations, despite transitioning in different decades, they all had tremendous personal fortitude and persistence that enabled them to survive and transition successfully. They were also fortunate in transitioning within urban and relatively large public school districts that had access to resources and professional supports. It could also be postulated that despite their gender transition, their original foundation of White male privilege could have been a significant factor in how their schools responded to their gender change (Reeser, 2010). Accordingly, more empirical research is needed to explore the experiences of transsexual teachers from different racial, ethnic, disability, and class backgrounds. Research exploring the experiences of teachers who are transitioning from female-to-male would also be helpful in exploring different life pathways and in providing a deeper analysis of

the role of masculinities and femininities in education. In addition, the experiences of pre-service transsexual teachers and transsexual teachers working within Catholic and other religiously-based schools would significantly add to our understanding of this emerging phenomena within K-12 schools in North America.

As the storylines of Carol, Gayle, and Angela relate, the transition process is often a time fraught within uncertainty, hyper-awareness, and fear. For Carol, her school-based transition was an added source of conflict and stress. Carol relates the challenges of this personal and professional journey.

> In the spring of 1988, I started to call around to find a lawyer. My lawyer and I went to the district office and I told them that I wanted to teach as Carol in the fall. I remember the laughter, and when I started to say something in reaction, my lawyer told me to be quiet and in a matter-of-fact way stated that she had searched through legal cases and hadn't found a precedent in Canada, but she was willing to take my case forward and make a Canadian precedent out of it. And they stopped laughing.
>
> I had a strong teaching record, so they couldn't really say anything bad about me. I had been teaching for twelve years and I had been an acting principal in two different schools. Communications went back and forth over a period of several months and they offered to buy me out of my contract. First, they offered a payout of $20,000 then it went up to $35,000. Finally, when they realized that I couldn't be bought out, they decided to put me in an ESL classroom where I would be teaching adults who didn't know English. Basically, they kept me out of the regular system. For the next several years, I was bounced around from one school to the next. During this time, I kept saying these words over and over in my mind, "I will teach in a deep, dank dungeon next to hell, but I will teach. I will continue teaching. I will keep my salary and I will keep my job." These were difficult times, but I took the attitude that I will fight and I will succeed.
>
> Over time, I started to grow in terms of feeling stronger about myself. I was focused on the kids, so much so that some parents got together and nominated me for an Excellence in Teaching Award. I had a goal in mind to keep teaching until my little house was paid off. Once that eventually happened, I started to slowly let my colours come out. I talked about being transgendered and in a lesbian relationship. Then I took a sabbatical and went back to university to do a Master's degree. Now, I'm fully retired and doing a doctorate in gender studies in education. If I had lost my teaching job when I transitioned, life could have ended up very differently. No doubt about it.

Carol's transition story is one of remarkable fortitude and resilience. With virtually no public knowledge available, outside of deviant stereotypes, Carol had only one alternative available – she had to fight to keep her job. By engaging legal counsel, she was able to negotiate a zone of tolerance in which the school district agreed to provide her with minimal accommodation. The school district's refusal to assign Carol to a regular K-12 teaching assignment is indicative of how they viewed Carol as a monstrous other who they were legally required to tolerate, but not support or approve. As a result of this feigned tolerance, Carol was placed under constant supervision, her access to K-12 students was restricted, and she was segregated from the majority of her colleagues by being assigned to teach in an adult education classroom. Carol's mantra, "I will teach in a deep, dank dungeon next to hell," highlights how she was able to transform her rage into a higher purpose in an attempt to redefine her life as one worth living. The stigma of being marginalized as this monstrous other and the metaphor of being confined to a dungeon are elemental in Carol's story of perseverance and ultimate transformation. By fighting for and surviving her school-based gender transition, Carol was able to excel as a teacher and ultimately pursue graduate studies as a way to give back and help make conditions better for other transsexual teachers.

Gayle's storyline describes how she approached her school-based transition in a strategic, methodical, and matter-of-fact way. First, she formally requested a sick leave from her teaching assignment, which afforded her time to develop increased comfort in her new gender role. Without the pressure of having to literally transition before the eyes of her students, Gayle was able, under medical supervision, to take an incremental approach in her gender change, which helped to reduce her emotional distress and, in

turn, increase her confidence. However, as Gayle relates, this transition still was not

without unexpected risks.

> During my sick leave, my focus was on transitioning, and because I wasn't teaching and didn't have to appear in the workplace environment, it was less stressful on me. It takes a while to become comfortable, in a public sense, presenting as female. It's nerve-wracking. It took me about three or four months to become comfortable doing that…. Eventually, I started cross-dressing when I went to the Gender Clinic. Gradually, as I got a little braver, I would go out for supper afterwards…. One time a student saw me cross-dressed and went to one of her teachers and said, "I saw Mr. Roberts dressed as a woman." The teacher really didn't know what to do. She said, "Are you sure about this?" And the girl said, "Yes." So she went and told the principal about it. Fortunately, I had already informed the principal and vice-principal about my transition plans. So, it didn't come as a complete shock to them. The principal called me into her office and told me what had happened. She told the teacher that she knew about [my transition] and not to worry about it. I suppose, in some way, there is a concern that I might be a threat to students. We are all aware of pedophiles. I don't know if people associate that kind of thing [with being transsexual]. I didn't want anyone misunderstanding what was going on. As a result, the principal and I went and talked with the area superintendent who was incredibly supportive. He said that this is a medical condition… and we will support you to transition.

The challenge to Gayle's new gender presentation by an unsuspecting student,

and the reporting teacher's lack of awareness about gender identity, are often indicative

of what happens when private lives enter into the public realm. Fortunately, for Gayle,

this gender challenge was addressed by her school's administration, which is due in large

part to Gayle's decision to openly transition by sharing her personal medical information

with her senior administration. Gayle's personal disclosure of her medical condition

allowed the school administration to serve as a buffer zone during her transition process.

However, even with this support, Gayle remained acutely aware of the lack of knowledge

that surrounds transgender identity, relating how some people equate that which they do

not know or understand with deviance and, in the case of teachers, with pedophilia. As

Gayle's narrative indicates, the threat of misrecognition and the specter of the monstrous other always loom nearby.

Namaste (2006) highlights how this "policing [of] gender presentation [occurs] through [both] public and private space" (p. 585). Visibly identifiable transsexual or transgender teachers violate public space and, in turn, public education by bringing their private lives into the open, which is read as a fundamental challenge to the established sex and gender order. Through their revelation of otherness, these transsexual teachers call into question essentialized categories of what it means to be male and female and, in doing so, reveal the implicit gendered construction of public space. This gendered construction and ensuing regulation of public space determines who has the right to occupy public space and how people should act within it. Gayle's misrecognition by her student demonstrates how transsexual identities are deemed to be private identities, which must be hidden from public space such as the classroom.

Gayle seeks to counter this misrecognition as she advocates for her gender identity to be recognized within her school. To accomplish this goal, Gayle elaborates on how she asserts and attempts to normalize her gender identity disorder as a medical condition. Gayle's storyline also articulates how she utilizes this medicalized discourse with her colleagues as a process to bring intelligibility and humanization to her new gender presentation. Concomitantly, Gayle's body is and is not her own, as it is always in the process of being reconstituted within public space (Butler, 2004). From this perspective, Gayle's very body becomes a pedagogical site for her to become intelligible and, in turn, to help to educate her colleagues about gender identity.

> I've always stressed that if people see this as a medical condition it's a lot easier
> for them to deal with…. I've always felt that while you need to be open about

transitioning, you don't want to be in people's faces about it. Being transsexual and transitioning is a big deal to the [individual] person, but it's not necessarily a big deal to everyone else. So my basic approach when interacting with people was to say, "I have some information available for you." Basically, I would stress that it's a medical condition and tell them that I believed this was caused prior to birth by biological forces [impacting] brain structure. I would tell them that I've had this feeling ever since I can remember. It has finally come to a head and this is what I need to do. Then I would invite people to ask me questions. Sometimes they asked a lot of questions and sometimes they didn't need to ask any questions. I found this to be a good approach…. I think one of the key lessons I learned was that to be successful, you need to be open about this. You can't hide it.

Like Gayle, Angela also utilized medical discourses to support her transition while teaching. However, rather than conflict and misrecognition, Angela describes how she found strong support for her transition. The biggest challenge that Angela faced was not centered on how or when to transition, but whether it would be in her best interests to go to a new school post-transition or to stay in an already familiar environment with her routine teaching assignment.

In September 2003, I ended up meeting with the health recovery program specialist [at my school district]. I told her that I was planning to transition next school year and I wanted to know where [the school district] stood on that and what kind of support they could offer. Overall, my [transition] experience has just been wonderful. The district was incredibly supportive. We went through a process of a few months where we were trying to figure out what would be best for me, the school, and for everyone involved. The question we considered was whether I should transition at my school or if I should transition in a completely new setting. I wanted to stay in my school for a variety of reasons, such as familiarity with my teaching assignment, students, and staff, but the district strongly encouraged me to go to a new school. I wasn't very open to going to another school, but they were able to find me a really good placement with a supportive principal.

To protect her confidentiality and to help ensure that her transition would be met with support from a new school principal, Angela strategically enlisted the help of the district health specialist to find a suitable placement. Although she was initially resistant to the thought of going to a new school and starting over, Angela explains how this fresh

start provided her with time to build confidence in learning how to "do gender." From this perspective, Angela highlights how she wanted to negotiate any perceived barriers that might prevent her from having a successful transition and, at the same time, she highlights how gender is always performative in nature and how a safe and supportive environment helped her to build confidence and self-esteem in her new gender role.

> By going to a new school it allowed me to experience several months without anyone questioning my gender whatsoever. The only person at my new school who knew about my past was the principal. I wanted at least one person at the new school to know. I thought it would be valuable for my principal to know in case issues came up. I wanted to be sure that this person would be comfortable dealing with any issues and would be understanding in case I had to miss any school because of medical appointments. In other words, I didn't want to have to hide it from my boss.
>
> The district health specialist arranged to go and meet with the new principal in advance of my arrival. I found out that the principal had a background in counseling. She had married a Black person and she was White. So she was not your stereotypical bigoted kind of person. The principal was obviously concerned about how the district would support her should any issues arise. When she was assured that the district would be 100% supportive, that it would never be a question of the principal having to carry this issue alone, she became 100% supportive of my transfer. So we got the paperwork started and I accepted the position.
>
> When I arrived at the new school, none of the staff members knew, none of the parents, and none of the children. I was accepted by the female staff members and immediately included in the things that males are not usually included in. It was really instrumental in solidifying my identity. I didn't have to worry about doing gender. I had developed this incredible self-confidence that came from being around junior high school kids who never questioned me at all. I felt that I was in a really good space to begin to explore what kind of woman I am and who I wanted to become without any kind of preconceived notions coming at me.

While Angela confided in her school principal, for the most part she was "living in stealth" by choosing not to disclose her transsexual identity to students and staff at her new school (Samons, 2009, p. 207). Angela relates how this self-imposed invisibility gave her much-needed breathing room to experiment and gain comfort with her new gender presentation. Concomitantly, her principal's personal experiences with diversity

helped her to frame transsexuality as another form of difference that need not be feared. However, for this principal, it was also critical that the school district would provide her with additional support should Angela's new gender role be challenged. Like Gayle, Angela highlights how gender is performative in nature when she describes how she needed the space and administrative support to "explore what kind of woman… [she] wanted to become." Butler (2004) suggests that there are a multiplicity of ways in which transsexual and transgender bodies can occupy the norm, "exceed the norm, rework the norm, and expose the realities to which we thought we were confined as open to transformation" (p. 217). By simply working to pass in her new gender, Angela is working to challenge the normative constructs of what it means to be considered a woman.

For transsexual teachers like Angela, Gayle, and Carol who all work within compulsory hyper-heteronormative educational environments such as K-12 public schools, "the question of how to embody [or challenge] the norm is very often linked to the question of survival, of whether life itself will be possible" (Butler, 2004, p. 217). As Atkinson and DePalma (2009) suggest, transsexual teachers are constantly involved in an active and continual "process of passing rather than a passive process of silence and conformity" (p. 20). Passing for transsexual teachers is viewed as a sign of success, rather than as an imposed silence or failure. Stone (2006) relates, "Passing means to live successfully in the gender of choice, to be accepted as a 'natural' member of that gender" (p. 231). Concomitantly, Stone (2006) also describes how "the highest purpose of the transsexual is to erase him/herself, to fade into the 'normal' population as soon as possible" (p. 230). As a result, passing also means the erasure of one's previous lived

264

history in the other gender as a requirement of gaining social acceptability and, in the case of transsexual teachers, keeping their jobs. There can be no gender ambiguity allowed in K-12 public schools. As a result, these teachers are kept in the transsexual closet. They are permitted to transition within their school environments, yet only when they agree to be part of and to maintain a strict dichotomous gender regime, the "purpose of … [which] is to regulate these [dichotomous and fixed] meanings [of sexuality and gender] and to punish those who transgress them" (Wilchins, 2006, p. 549). As a result, transsexual teachers themselves continually police their gender just as their students, colleagues, employers, and student's parents police it. Thus, for Carol, transitioning in the 1980s meant that she had to invoke legal discourses to support her right to transition within her school district. For Gayle and Angela, with increased (although still limited) social awareness about gender identity, they were able to invoke medicalized discourses to support and legitimize their transitions while teaching. However, by utilizing the discourse around the diagnosis of gender identity disorder, transsexual teachers are often required to participate in what Kaufmann (2010) describes as the "sex-gender misalignment plot" (p. 112) whereby a heteronormative understanding of gender is maintained and reinforced. A potential unfortunate consequence of utilizing this medicalized narrative means that one's range of gender performance outside of the male/female binary is limited. Moreover, normalizing gender stereotypes are (re)produced and heteronormativity is reified. Still, as Kaufmann (2010) also cautions, for many transsexuals, and especially transsexual teachers, this medicalized narrative can also be understood as a necessity in the face of the "everyday realities of violence for being read" as a gender traitor (p. 112). For many transsexuals, the price to be paid for

misrecoginition or being "read" as a gendered imposter can be loss of employment, brutality, and death (Namaste, 2006).

Can transsexual teachers achieve more than being given the "right to disappear" and pass as the other gender (Whittle, 2006a, p. 202)? While the transsexual teachers in this study may not appear to have been directly engaged in radically queer strategies of gender subversion in their schools, perhaps, more importantly, they did engage in survival strategies. Moreover, they also utilized the gendered discourses available as an attempt to carve out a livable life in the quest to become fully recognized as human. In their quest for full personhood, each of the transsexual teachers in this research first had to come to terms with their transsexual identity. Following that often emotionally fraught process, they then had to attempt to negotiate with their school districts to support their transition as part of their continued employment. Once their continuing employment was ensured, they next had to develop a transition plan to support their re-integration back into the classroom environment in their new gender role. The next section of this chapter explores how these transsexual teachers developed transition plans, visibility management strategies, and new pedagogical practices to support their return to the classroom.

A Pedagogy of Impossibility: Transsexual Teachers as Learning in the Making

How are our bodies implicated in pedagogy? How do transsexual teachers create new understandings, knowledges, and ways of being and acting in the world in relation to the self, students, parents, and other teachers? Ellsworth (2005) asks us to consider the question of how our very bodies are implicated in the production and transmission of

pedagogical and social knowledge as something more than the "mere construction of representational objects and the transfer of knowledge" (p. 7). In a quest for a different and more complex understanding of pedagogy, Ellsworth posits how we ought to consider somatic experience as the basis of pedagogy rather than representational experience that can be intellectualized, quantified, and transmitted. To understand the complexities of lived experience, Ellsworth calls for a turn to embodied materialism to encounter and challenge "the limits of thinking and knowing and to engage with what cannot, solely, through cognition, be known" (p. 25). The exploration of embodied experiences becomes crucial in our experience of pedagogy as a continual state of becoming. From a queered perspective, pedagogy becomes a site for radical relationality and radical potentiality whereby pedagogy is detached from discrete units of study, objects of knowledge, or language-based claims to understanding to a much-needed focus on the materiality of lived experience.

This materiality encourages teachers and learners to think about "possible and impossible pedagogies" (p. 9), whereby "knowledge is in the making" (p. 17). From this vantage point, pedagogy is not a still moment or an instrumental process, rather it is conceptualized as an emergent process. As such, we need to reconfigure pedagogy from a model of representation "that teachers use to get the terms in which already-known ideas, curriculums, or knowledges are put into relation" (Ellsworth, 2005, p. 27) to an understanding of pedagogy as a somatic or sense-making experience, or what Ellsworth calls the "conditions of possible experience" (p. 27).

In the case of transsexual teachers, this form of somatic pedagogy requires us to engage gender *as* a place of learning rather than as an essentialized state of being. It is

"our experience of an event or occurrence of learning [that] constitutes the materiality of its pedagogy" (Ellsworth, 2005, p. 23). For example, postfoundational research has shown "how some social dynamics and sexual differences mark bodies and position them differently within relations of power. These approaches have shown how some social dynamics make some bodies matter more than others, and they make social and cultural differences figure in the human interests that shape the social construction of knowledge" (Ellsworth, 2005, p. 23). From this perspective, transsexual teachers' bodies represent the very activity of becoming pedagogical whereby the classroom becomes a "potential space" (p. 60) to "constantly traverse the porous boundaries between self and other, individual and social, personal and historical. We cannot know self in the absence of separate different others" (p. 61). For the transsexual teachers in this study, their bodies become the site for an engagement with a pedagogy of impossibility in which gender is cast from its binary moorings and the conditions for its existence are transformed. For example, Carol relates how her body, mind, and soul became transformed through the transition process. She identifies how a gender transition is akin to what researchers have described as a "post-adolescence phase," which can result, for example, in male-to-female transsexuals projecting a hyper-femininity or being caught up in a "pink cloud" whereby the insecure feminine self is over exaggerated as part of a process of learning to do femininity and gain tacit approval and social acceptance in a new gender role (Samons, 2009, p. 194).

> There are so many issues before going into transition. Everyone I've talked to who has gone through transition describes how you come out the other end feeling like you're a teenage girl. We don't know how to behave or react. I'm me now, and I'm very okay with me. That's why I can now tell people that I'm transgendered, because I'm okay with it. I know that the total package of who I am has substance to it. Labels won't cover me up. Initially, I was very insecure.

Even after my transition it took a long time to gain the security I feel now. I had no foundation. It was all crumbling, but I have a strong foundation now.

In my first position as a female teacher, I dressed in expensive clothes and I did get comments from some of the women in my class as to how nice my clothing was. I was just two months away from having taught as a male. Therefore, I was on a steep learning curve. More than once, I turned around to face a speaker who spoke my male name. It was so embarrassing. Although, I'm sure that no one other than myself noticed the error. Also, I wasn't prepared for many of the everyday questions that occurred. When a teacher in the classroom next door asked me if I was married, I wasn't ready to respond. Although I deeply wanted to live in the female gender, I wondered if I was actually "pulling it off" in a believable and consistent manner. I was always wondering about my voice. Was it feminine enough? How was I being received? I constantly practiced what I assumed were female things, such as saying "My, I love your watch. It's gorgeous, where did you buy it?" This was such a period of hypersensitivity. I was constantly seeking out clues to see if someone may have read me.

For Carol, her initial few months of teaching in her new gender was a time of great happiness, but also a period of intense self- and social-regulation. Carol was methodical in how she worked to present her gender to such an extent that she sought to exaggerate stereotypes as a method to "pass" as a normative female to her students and colleagues. As Shelley (2008) identifies, male-to-female transsexuals are often caught in a paradoxical quandary, as their efforts to cross the gender binary are "successful only if they reinforce it by emulating conservative portrayals of femininity" (p. 140). By learning to do femininity, and by "pulling it off," Carol's body became a site of unique pedagogical learning. Carol relates how the discipline she enacted on her body translated differently into the classroom as a result of perceived gender norms and societal expectations.

When I was told that I was finally being assigned to an elementary school, my fear returned. I was afraid that comments from children and parents could potentially cause difficulty with my teaching career. I didn't want to cause any issues with my grade four students, so I chose to discipline in a very loose fashion, which was much different than when I was a male in the classroom. This was a year where I felt vulnerable on all sides. I was worried that the children would see through me and discover the male-to-female change. Near the

beginning of the year, a painful incident occurred when a kindergarten student began crying and asked another teacher in my presence if I was a boy teacher or a girl teacher. The other teacher of course immediately said that I was a girl teacher. What a shock to the system this was! Eventually, the business of teaching and the business of life helped to tone down my hypersensitivity. I could not afford to spend so much time focused on myself.

In this storyline, Carol relates that no matter how methodical or meticulous one becomes in their gender presentation, gender is always fluid and never fixed or entirely stable. For Carol, these ruptures in gender exacerbate the risk of having been "made" as a gender imposter and the potentially devastating return to the position of the monstrous other. These ruptures also illustrate how gender can never be understood as complete and is always under continual surveillance and regulation. Carol further highlights the power of gendered expectations and stereotypes when she describes how she had to alter her classroom management practices and become less strict as a female teacher. This gendered dimension to classroom management highlights how the masculine end of the binary is conceived as having power and control and how the subordinate feminine side is viewed as permissive and nurturing. This is another powerful example of how transsexual bodies demonstrate how pedagogy becomes embodied within dominant masculine and feminine sex roles and gendered expectations within the classroom.

For Gayle, her return to teaching post-transition was met with support from her school board rather than the marked resistance that Carol experienced. Through open dialogue and the joint development of a transition plan, it was determined that Gayle would work at her board office and spend the rest of the school year as a science consultant working with other teachers. Gayle relates how this mutually supportive and innovative approach allowed her to gain a renewed sense of confidence and comfort in her new gender role.

By Christmas time, I was extremely comfortable in my new role and I got in touch with the school board…. The area superintendent of the school district said to me, "We've never had to deal with this before. So what we want to do is work with you to make your transition as successful as possible." … Together the area superintendent, human relations, and I all basically worked together to make for a smooth transition….

We arranged that I would come and do work as a science consultant at the board offices at the beginning of February. I was very pleased because I was somewhat concerned that they might just hide me in a back room somewhere, but that wasn't the case. I was very much in the forefront and very public. The only thing was that I wasn't directly interacting with students.

At the end of June, I arranged to go back to my old school. I thought I would have the most success in doing that because I was a very respected teacher. I thought that if there were going to be any problems in terms of parents or students interacting with me, there would be the least amount of problems in my old school. In other words, my chances of success were greater by returning to my old school. I realized that if I went to a different school that very quickly people would know. You don't keep this thing a secret.

One of the administrators at the school board said, "Why don't you teach summer school?" I thought, "What a wonderful idea!" So, I went and taught physics in adult education. I stood in front of the class as female and taught. Obviously, I didn't need practice in my ability to teach, but I think there was a need for me to feel a degree of comfort. How would people react to me in front of them in the role of a female teacher?

The experience went very well. I just came in the first day of class and said, "My name is Ms. Roberts. I'm a teacher and I have a Master's degree in physics." And, away we went. Nobody batted an eyelid. This experience helped me a lot when I went back into the regular school system in September.

For Gayle, her experience teaching summer school was equivalent to a gender practicum

placement in which she would be under less stress and potential scrutiny from students

and staff, especially when she was planning to return to her pre-transition teaching

assignment in her old school. In essence, this practicum experience allowed Gayle to shift

her focus away from the worry of a new teaching assignment, and potentially having to

master a new teaching subject, to dedicating her time and energy towards learning and

performing her new gender role in a "real-life" yet supportive teaching environment. For

Gayle, this could be equated to a school-based "real-life test" (now officially known as

the real-life experience), which is mandated as part of the medical treatment for gender

identity disorder and approval for sex-reassignment surgery (APA, 2000; Gherovici,

2010). Paradoxically, a real-life test presumes that transsexuals do not already have real

or authentic lives if they cannot maintain the coherence of the sex/gender binary. As a

result, the only way to "pass" the real-life test is to ensure that one completely passes as

the other gender. This focus on how a diagnosis of gender identity disorder maintains a

heteronormative gender binary, vis-à-vis its mandated requirement of a real-life test,

allows no possibility for a life to be constructed outside of the male/female binary

(Shelley, 2008). In the K-12 school environment, it also serves to codify dominant and

often stereotypical gender roles and expectations for all transsexual teachers who are

transitioning with the support of medical assistance. Under this medical regime, the goal

of these transsexual teachers is to simply pass and successfully disappear within their

school. As a result, the only way to create a new commensurability between "teacher"

and "transsexual" is to ascribe to stereotypical conceptions of what it means to be male or

female within a (hetero)normative school environment.

Once her practicum was successfully completed, Gayle and the school board then

worked on a plan for her return to her regular teaching assignment in the fall. Gayle

relates how she wanted to normalize her return to school as much as possible.

> That fall, with the permission of my school board, I went back to my old school. I
> told my principal that I didn't think it was wise to make a big deal about me
> returning to the school. Because if you start having assemblies and things of that
> kind, then you are going to heighten people's awareness and you're possibly
> going to run into problems. As far as I'm concerned, a teacher who transitions
> should be treated exactly the same as a teacher who is coming back from heart
> surgery or treatment for cancer. Yes, they may have been away for a while on sick
> leave, but when they come back to the classroom it shouldn't be a big deal.
>> When I returned to my classroom [post-transition], I had no difficulty
> whatsoever. No student ever made rude comments to me. No parent ever said
> anything critical to me or to the administration. In fact, the whole transition was a
> complete success. My impression was that everyone treated me the same as

before. It was as if I had always been a female teacher. Some students came to me and told me that I was very brave. One student told me I was an inspiration. One parent, as she was leaving my classroom, said, "You look very pretty." This was at the beginning of September 1996. I was overwhelmed by that [comment] because I wouldn't say I looked particularly pretty. I thought to myself, "What a wonderful thing to say to a teacher who has transitioned." I found that to be one of my most moving experiences.

By equating her return to school the same as a teacher returning from "heart surgery or treatment for cancer," Gayle highlights how she engaged a deliberate strategy of normalizing her transsexuality by making it visible and known. At the same time she also attempted to normalize her potential otherness by providing students and staff with an interpretive framework for understanding her medical condition and its prescribed treatment. Spade (2006) has written extensively about Western society's need for "gender legibility" (p. 322) and how one's success in passing is deemed to come from the gender attribution of non-trans people. As a result, gender role stereotyping becomes reinforced and normative expectations of gender are maintained, valourized, and reproduced. Spade questions the appropriateness of gender identity disorder and its prescribed treatment by asking if "illness is the appropriate interpretive model for gender variance" (p. 328)? Spade describes how the "passing imperative," (p. 323) and the masking of gender difference, begins from the very first visit to a qualified medical professional, to a diagnosis of gender identity disorder, to an ensuing real-life test, to sex re-assignment surgery, all in the name of the successful maintenance and presentation of a hegemonic heteronormative gender order. As a result, rigid and true understandings of masculinity and femininity are disciplined and maintained. Spade provocatively asks, "What if the success of transition was not measured by (non-trans) normative perceptions of true femininity and masculinity in trans people" (p. 324)?

As Gayle, Carol, and Angela's storylines attest, a non-normative transition within a K-12 school environment may not even be possible or livable without tremendous personal, professional, and social costs. Butler (2004) describes how these kinds of imposed gender norms operate:

> [They are] violations in the sense that they are, at first and by necessity, unchosen….. When gender norms operate as violations, they function as an interpellation that one refuses only by agreeing to pay the consequences: losing one's job, home, the prospects for desire, or for life…. We continue to live in a world in which one can risk serious disenfranchisement and physical violence for the pleasure one seeks, the fantasy one embodies, the gender one performs. (p. 214)

For Angela, transition planning started very early in her process. She was deliberate and open with her intentions to transition to the female gender, and she shared this information with her school administration and all of her colleagues well in advance of her actual transition and while still presenting as male. Through this disclosure, Angela's pre- and post-transition body became a pedagogical site for knowledge making. For many, the idea that gender is an essential and unitary characteristic of a person can clash and cause dissonance when gender is understood or witnessed as performative. In this space of pedagogical dissonance, Reeser (2010) describes how transsexuality can represent an approach to gender that can "potentially signify the [need for a] reconfiguration of the gender system as a whole" (p. 142). By openly announcing her gender change to her colleagues, Angela profoundly demonstrated, and in turn, taught her colleagues how we experience embodiment "in absolutely singular, unique, unrepeatable,

and significantly, unshareable ways…. As living, moving, sensing bodies, we all exist

only and always in relation even as our individual experiences of relationality are

singular and unshareable" (p. 166). It is through this relation of the transsexual body to

the normative ideal of a dichotomous gender binary that Angela educates her colleagues

about the power and possibility that gender holds for us all. Angela's pedagogy of

impossibility serves to challenge her colleagues in relation to normative thinking by

creating "places in which to think without already knowing what we should think" (p.

54). This kind of pedagogy is impossible to imagine without it's very possibility made

known. Angela relates how she used this pedagogy of impossibility to make her true

gender identity intelligible within her school.

> Once the decision to transition was made, the whole last year at my school was a very important part in my transition. I shared with the school administration what was going on and I shared the news with my colleagues, many of whom had become close friends over the eight years I spent in that school…. I took things slow. I began the process of telling people around November of that school year. I finished up the process of meeting people, usually one on one, in about February or March. So they had a lot of time to get information and a lot of time to ask questions of me. They all appreciated me going to speak to them one-on-one. They said that was really important. They were inclined to give me the same kind of respect back and consideration because I had already given it to them. People did give me feedback and told me they knew me as a person first of all. They knew me as a very thoughtful, very thorough person who never did things impulsively. I also had a personal connection with most people at work. We were friends. The worst reaction I got was some people that were less comfortable being around me. They were generally the males on staff. That was also understandable as well because we were redefining our relationship.
>
> By the time I left the school at the end of June, the staff was using my new name in emails, even though I was still working as a male at the time. People came to talk to me about transsexualism. They wanted to find out more about me. This was really important to have taken care of before the even more stressful time of actually stepping out as a woman began. I already had their support, and I knew that I didn't have to worry about making a living. If my whole family disowned me, at least I knew I could support myself.

Like Gayle and Carol, Angela used a school break, in this case summer holidays, to undergo her physical gender transition. Each of the participants identified how transitioning over a natural school break was critical in the success of the coming-to-terms process. This transition break was especially important as it provided the much-needed time and safety to support them in relearning their gender through a second gender socialization process much different from the first, which started at birth. Angela relates the challenges of this second gender socialization and the difficulty of learning to become a woman as a thirty-three year old adult.

> Basically, I went from living and working as a male in June to teaching as a woman in September. I had two months to do a whole bunch of socialization. I'd ask people to give me feedback and encouragement. But what I found is that people generally, even if they are very supportive, don't know how to do that. I mean my mother doesn't know how to socialize me at the age of 33; you can't just flip a switch that way. I knew I'd have to find other means of reinforcement. I got it from very supportive friends and from my new principal. Some of my friends were remarkably adept at not ever seeing me in the old role. These people are really valuable, but they are few and far between.

Angela describes how there is no one set process of socialization involved in what it means to be or become a woman. Rather gender socialization is mostly invisible, regulated, and for many, as Angela attests, indescribable. Accordingly, when gender socialization is rendered invisible it is often viewed as naturalized and associated with ascribed biological characteristics, which are thought to be innate to males and females. This notion of biology as destiny reinstates the fixity and priority placed on the category of sex. Likewise, Butler (2004) identifies:

> It is important to not only understand how the terms of gender are instituted, naturalized, and established as presuppositional but to trace the moments where the binary system of gender is disputed and challenged, where the coherence of

categories are put into question, and where the very social life of gender turns out

to be malleable and transformable. (p. 216)

It is in these transitory moments of degrounding that the personal becomes the

pedagogical and gender can be otherwise imagined and lived. In her storying, Angela

related the struggles and opportunities of transgender socialization that she experienced

when she returned to the classroom, for the first time, presenting as a female.

> I transitioned 24/7 [full-time] on July 3 and started teaching as a woman at my
> new school in September. Prior to coming to this new school, I was warned that
> the school had a very old-boy's-club kind of culture. I heard that there had been
> two or three teachers that were either gay, or likely to be gay, and they were
> basically run out of the school…. The first day of school that I taught, I was
> absolutely mortified. I was just struck with fear. I thought of all the negative
> things that could happen. I just kind of dove into it all without a life jacket. I was
> hypersensitive from September to October. I was always looking sideways, trying
> to see if people were perceiving me differently.

Angela's comments indicate that she became hyper aware of how schools are maintained

as heteronormative spaces and of the price to be paid if one is perceived as different.

Angela had relinquished her male privilege by transitioning genders, as a move from

masculinity to femininity is traditionally understood as a loss of power and control

(Reeser, 2010). She had to navigate a potentially hostile environment where no one knew

or could know of her difference. Angela relates how she was able to transcend that first

month of anxiety to reach a state where she could become comfortable and increasingly

gain the confidence necessary to experiment with her gender performance.

> After a few months of that fear, I just kind of pushed the boundaries and relaxed
> and said to myself, "I don't have to worry so much about this." So I wondered
> what would happen if I tried to project my voice in a different way, or if I tried to
> engage in some banter with the female students. Will something be signaled out?
> What would happen if I started changing my dress and started becoming more
> hyper-feminine? What would happen if I switched to more traditionally masculine
> attire? Nothing. I never got any different signals from anyone in any sphere of my

life. I just learned to accept that they were not picking up on anything [different] and they're not likely to ever do that.

For Angela, learning to do gender was very much a deliberate and at times playful act. Her storyline relates the sense of fear and trepidation she experienced as she left her past history behind and stepped into the classroom with uncertainty as to how she would be perceived. Would she be viewed as a gender imposter? Would she gain acceptance from her colleagues? How would she relate to her students in this new gender role? Angela describes how it was vital to the success of her transition to find allies within the school in whom she could confide. Angela speaks to how she found these unlikely allies in the school principal and another teacher colleague who was also marked as different.

> I knew that I would need at least one female person on staff that could actually be a bit of a role model and guide. Somebody who could say, "You know what, the way you're dressing is not going to cut it here"…. The first month the principal watched out for me. We met a couple of times and she was very open to talk with me whenever I needed. The message I received from her was that I was fitting in and she had no concerns whatsoever. She was there when I needed support. When I was feeling completely inadequate as a teacher, and not holding things together well, she said, "You're doing great, don't worry about it." That alone was worth the price of gold. I've just been learning by doing.
> It also helped to have found at least one other supportive teacher on staff that I could confide in and talk too. I clicked with this one female teacher who was a very friendly person. She was not at all like the other stereotypical women on staff. She looked a little different and there had been some rumors that maybe she was a lesbian. I was kind of drawn to her for that reason. Eventually, she told me she was bisexual and I shared my story with her. It was a really good experience because of the minority status she's already experienced. She didn't treat me any differently. She's also been able to give me feedback. When I asked her if she ever had any idea, or if anyone talks about me on staff, she said, "No, no one, whatsoever". It was incredibly valuable to have that kind of feedback. That's something that keeps me very confident in new and unusual experiences where I might otherwise be questioning what people might see.

With her network of supportive allies in place helping her to constantly monitor and adjust her gender performance, Angela explains how she spent the rest of the school

year engaged in an active process of gender socialization, which was led primarily by the surprising expectations of her students.

> During that first year, I was often keenly aware that I was doing a lot of learning about interacting with students as a woman. Of course, I wouldn't have had to be learning at this age if I'd simply been born one. I had a sense that this learning would be transitory and eventually I would learn the ropes. Looking back, I came a long way in how I interacted with some of the boys in September [of that first year] and how I interact with them now. It's hard to learn because there is no support network where you can say, "You know, look, this is how it's done if you're a woman and this is how it's done if you're a man."…. I was never a very masculine teacher to begin with. I was always gentle and very quiet with my students. I was much more similar to my female colleagues in the way that they dealt with kids. But even then, I used to be able to do this authoritarian thing with the boys where I'd say, "I'm laying down the law now, you need to listen," and they'd do it. That rarely happens now. I have to use different techniques. Now, mothering boys tends to work a little bit better. Physical contact is much more important – a touch on the shoulder, a direction, praising them – is way more effective now than it was before [my transition].

Angela's transitional pedagogy affords unique and profound insight into how gender is understood, regulated, and performed within our public schools. As a teacher who has embodied both masculine and feminine gender roles in the classroom, Angela is able to reveal the normative rules and implicit demands or what Foucault (1978) might call the apparatus of gender and how it tacitly shapes, constricts, and defines pedagogy, classroom management, and virtually every other aspect of student-teacher engagement. Though her storyline, Angela demonstrates how gender is not a naturalized characteristic, but performative, situational, and relational. From this perspective, sex and gender are not taken as preordained and are revealed as being at the heart of how we come to understand not only the expectations of being perceived as masculine or feminine, but also how these expectations are enacted and controlled through the regulatory discourses and discursive practices of public education. Angela goes on to relate how these processes of gendered

279

socialization disciplined her body through students' anticipated knowledge and the associated specific expectations required of her newly feminized body.

> I've also noticed that my female students like to "hang out" with me. I remember turning around one day before class and there were five to six girls just hanging out and talking to me. They were showing me their pictures, doing this, that, and the other. I hadn't done anything to encourage it, and I don't think I'm the most 'touchy-feely' teacher. I had never been that close to my students. I was amazed by it all and didn't really know how to handle it…. I used to be hyper-paranoid about any kind of physical contact with students. I remember when a student hugged me at the end of the school year a number of years ago and I thought, "Oh, this could get me in trouble". [As a male teacher,] I was very uncomfortable with any affection. I always maintained my distance from students. I would not even touch their hand or anything like that. I was very restrictive in my body language as well. I was always aware that I needed to be almost – a robot – very cut and dried. I couldn't let myself out. Then teaching as a woman, that kind of touch is expected and you have to deal with it. I've had my grade seven students hug me spontaneously, and that's something that never ever happened before in eight years of teaching as a man. I found that in the first few weeks [of teaching as a woman], I'd have these sudden, almost out-of-body experiences where I felt like I was looking down at myself. I realized, oh gosh, I'm very free with my body in terms of what I do with my hands and how I articulate myself. Gradually, I've learned to relax. In a way I've come to realize that I'm learning gender from these girls in my classroom.

In this unique situation it was Angela's students who became one of the primary means in which she was socialized into her new gender role, and its associated pedagogical and bodily expectations. Angela learned that she was expected to be attentive, gentle, and soft towards her students. Her students expected, and indeed demanded, that she display compassion, interest, and emotional responsiveness to their needs. The normal processes of socialization had been reversed as Angela became the student and her students became the teachers who helped to shape and regulate her femininity, pedagogy, and classroom management. These students disciplined Angela's body through their gendered expectations of how female teachers were expected to act. In

essence, these students played a very important role in teaching Angela what it meant to "do gender" in the classroom.

For Angela, Gayle, and Carol, their transition experiences were fraught with both personal and pedagogical challenges, but also with tremendous opportunity to begin their lives anew. In many ways, their gender transitions represented not only a physical and emotional rebirth, but also their rebirth as teachers. Each of these transsexual teachers had to cross a significant internal boundary in their lives, one that is "drawn between the person one has been but no longer is and the person one will become" (Wodiczko, as cited in Ellsworth, 2005, p. 48). For Angela, Gayle, and Carol, their journey towards full personhood involved more than mere medical intervention. It necessitated a complex journey towards intelligibility and concomitant personhood for themselves in relation to their family, friends, students, and co-workers. Through their transitional pedagogies, they invoked a dissonance that requires us to think about gender in much more complex and profound ways.

Intertext II

Day Before Surgery

the artificial light lit something real
last night as we sat poolside
& dipped our feet into the water. we waded
into each others' lives, drifted
from memory to memory of days
lived under the same burning sun:
when you were hitchhiking
across the country i was in a classroom
going nowhere. when you danced
for them in winnipeg, i danced for no one
but myself with a farmer from red water
in a bar north of edmonton.
we lived in that city for years
& never met although we were moving
in the same direction: once
upon a time i became born-again
while you went punk—two sides
of the same coin, i suspect—two banks
of the same river

i think of our births by different mothers
in other hospitals & now this
intersection á la maison de l'île
this house on an island in a river
where the good dr's patients stay
before & after their "sex change"

on the day before our surgery
we met & i am glad
we broke the water, sister
that night with our tired feet
after our long journeys
thousands of miles, decades
& a day
from the date of our conception

-   *for Emilie, by Angela*

Becoming Visible and Political: Moving Beyond the Transsexual Closet

For Angela, Gayle, and Carol to be able to transition in their school environments, they had to make public their inner most private feelings and reveal the core essences of their inner beings. The decision to make the personal public was not simply for the sake of retaining their teaching careers; it was necessary for their very survival. For these teachers, transitioning was not a choice. There could be no choice to continue to endure the pain, emotional turmoil, and isolation of being imprisoned by societal and gendered expectations that did not align with their material embodiment.

As these teachers related, they only had one choice, which was to transition. The personal acceptance they would find, the level of support they would receive from their schools, and the quality of life they could create were all unknown factors in their journey. To make their private feelings public was to risk everything in their lives. As Warner (2005) relates, "In the case of gender, public and private are not just formal rules about how men and women should behave. They are bound up with meanings of masculinity and femininity" (p. 24). To challenge these normative constructions is to disrupt deeply held beliefs about sex, sexuality, and gender that are permissible in public. Those who dare to call into question public understandings of these categories are relegated to fugitive, dark spaces. They are positioned as sex and gender outlaws who must be pushed to the margins where they can be rendered silent and invisible. In essence, these fugitives are to be hidden away in a "closet" and made to feel deeply stigmatized and shameful.

The once public privilege Gayle, Angela, and Carol experienced as men is now stripped away from them as transsexual women. To be revealed as once having been a

male teacher would send the message that they had formally renounced their male privilege in direct disavowal of what Namaste (2006) describes as the "implicit masculine dimension of public space" (p. 589). These transsexual women also face extreme risk for violence and discrimination should the "unnaturalness" of their gender be revealed. Likewise, the perception of a person's sexuality is often pre-determined by how well one performs his or her gender. For example, a gay basher may not know the actual sexual orientation of his victim; rather, he makes a presumption based on how effeminate he has judged his potential victim to be. "He looked like a faggot" is the excuse often provided for the gender-motivated assault. Concomitantly, Butler (2004) identifies how "the implicit regulation of gender takes place through the explicit regulation of sexuality" (p. 53). Accordingly, when one's gender presentation does not conform to social norms there is always a price to pay, whether that price is exacted in the form of ridicule, bullying, hate, violence, or even death. Warner (2005) argues that to be seen in "public is a privilege that requires filtering or repressing something that is seen as private" (p. 23). Correspondingly, the cultural power of heteronormativity positions sexual minority and gender variant identities as private individual problems by imposing public constraints on what can be made visible and what can be spoken or known about these identities. As a result, the individual is to be blamed for not being good or normal enough to gain societal acceptance on his or her own terms. Therefore their "secret" must be kept hidden. By remaining hidden, or forced into the closet, individuals become self-regulating subjects as they learn to internalize dominant normative structures, taxonomies, and discourses related to (hetero)sexuality and gender. For transsexual individuals, this self-regulation highlights the power and performative nature of gender and "the constructed nature of

normative alignments between anatomical sex, gender role, and sexual identity"
(Valocchi, 2005, p. 758). Because of the power of these dominant gender norms, most
transsexuals attempt to "pass" into rather than challenge a dichotomous gender binary.
However, as Warner (2005) identifies, this dominant heteronormative gender regime and
its associated closet "is better understood as the culture's problem, not the individuals.
No one ever created a closet for him or herself" (p. 52). Society forces us to think of a
closet as a form of shelter or protection. If you comply by its rules, you will be protected
from harm. The tradeoff is enforced silence and invisibility. One must give up one's
personhood to be seen as a person at all. The closet is always a claustrophobic space of
denial, fear, and shame. Yoshino (2006) poignantly suggests that "perhaps the worst any
closet does to us is to prevent us from hearing the words 'I love you'" (p. 26).

For transsexual teachers, there can be no closet. Transitioning genders cannot be
done in secret. Ultimately, there is no privacy when transitioning. For transsexual
teachers, coming out of the closet is not a demand for public recognition per say, but a
search for the "right to self-determination" (Warner, 2005, p. 53). Fundamentally, this
right to self-determination requires public support such as workplace accommodation.
For Gayle, Carol, and Angela, moving from reconciling their innermost personal feelings
to a public revelation of a new gender represented intense personal, pedagogical, and
political challenges, which involved a direct confrontation and contestation with the
dominant forces of heteronormativity, especially as they are played out in K-12 school
environments. As their storylines attest, transsexual teachers can exist, but only in
isolation, and then only if they comply with pre-established heteronormative rules. In
public schools, for example, transsexual teachers are allowed to transgress and cross over

the gender binary only if they agree to also maintain it in their new gender roles. There can be no space for gender queer teachers who want to subvert the forces of heteronormativity by directly calling into question the very grounds by which gender is constructed. To navigate this intensely political landscape and heteronormative school culture, Carol, Angela, and Gayle developed survival strategies, forged alliances, and made detailed transition plans to help carve out a measure of intelligibility within their school environments. When asked what advice they would give to other teachers who are contemplating transitioning, Carol, Angela, and Gayle reflected back on their lived experiences to offer the following suggestions.

> **Carol:** If I were to talk to teachers who are transitioning today, I'd suggest to go slow and to go with a lawyer. Let the lawyer do the talking, especially if you are in a rural area or a Catholic jurisdiction. I'd tell them to get all the support they can find, and then look for more. There are many more community supports and resources available now than when I transitioned in the 1980s.
> Personally, I would try and make them aware, especially when transitioning from male-to-female, how there is a tendency to feel younger and become more flamboyant. You actually feel like a teenager. You don't feel your age anymore. It takes a while before you catch up and remember your real age.
> I would suggest finding a good ally in their school to help critique them and to ensure their clothes, manners, gestures, and makeup are appropriate. I would say tone it down and be a little quieter and softer for the first little while. Take an incremental approach. Be softer and gentler and more in the background. Take your time. Be careful with your excitement and what you're going through. You may turn someone off so badly that they may have a very furious, negative reaction.

> **Angela:** I would tell them not to put it off. Just go ahead and do it. There's always going to be some circumstance that could be better, but there's never going to be an ideal time either. I would also say that one doesn't truly grasp how far in the gender hellhole one has been living until one finally can stop pretending and just be your self. My advice would be to go and see your personnel department first and then plan everything with their assistance. As far as timing goes, I'd recommend the timeline I went through: start testosterone blockers during September to December of your last year as male; start hormones in January and present as female outside of school as much as possible; then go full-time in the summer.

Gayle: I think administrators need to set up and create an environment where both teachers and students can feel free to talk about issues, because for me, I was incredibly ashamed of myself. While I was a very successful teacher, nobody knew about the hidden me and I had a lot of shame about it….While I've never had any problems with transphobia, I think one has to be prepared for that sort of thing. You can't be naïve about it. I remember when the school board called me up during the summer holidays and said, "We've just had a phone call from a reporter who has heard there's a transsexual teacher in the school system and we'd like to interview her." The school board told the reporter, "We're very sorry but we will not confirm or deny any information about our teachers." They didn't want my story to be on the evening news. Fortunately, that never happened.

I think [transitioning teachers] need to adapt. The system has formal structures. Requesting some leave time, or sick leave, is important. Personally, I needed time to come to terms with presenting in public as female. Teachers also need a safe working environment. Working in the school board offices provided me with the psychological safety necessary for my transition to go smoothly. The time away from the regular school system, working with adults only, gave me the confidence to be successful when I went back into the high school classroom. I also think that part of my success has been due to my own personality. I don't try to hide who I am, yet I'm not in people's faces about it. Ultimately, I think that unless you are an incredibly passable person, it's very silly to think that people won't know. If you work in a school system, people are going to know. Eventually, your story comes out and I think that by being upfront with people you control what comes out. And what does come out are the facts, not some distortion.

Ultimately, if you're a good teacher, in other words, a person that colleagues and staff, and particularly students, are comfortable with then your chances of success are going to be much greater…. If you're uncomfortable – either in the gender you present to people, or uncomfortable in the classroom, or if you're nervous with kids – it comes across and they will take advantage of that. I think you've just got to be honest with people. The issue passes and it becomes no great deal…. As my principal put it, "The wrapping just looks a little different on the outside." In other words, the inner me was still there. Yes, I was dressed as a female now instead of as a male, but that was it.

I also think that it is very important for teachers to transition over the summer, so you can start in a new gender role at the beginning of a new school year. If you start in September with a new class of students, it's not as difficult for people to come to terms with it. In other words, they can accept it intellectually and it's not as big of a problem. In my case, I still had some of my former grade 11 students who were now in my grade 12 class taking senior physics courses. Obviously, they knew about my transition. On the first day of class, I said to them, "I'd like to tell you and all the others that I'm very glad to be back in the school. As you all know, my circumstances have changed, but I want you to know that I am very, very happy and it's really great to be back with you. I look forward to a successful year for both me and for you. It's a long curriculum. I think we better get started."

Although, Carol, Angela, and Gayle, transitioned in different decades and within very different school environments, they have drawn upon their diverse life experiences to provide a series of thoughtful recommendations that other transsexual teachers may wish to consider as part of their own transition planning and visibility management strategies within their K-12 school environments. These suggestions include the following general themes:

- *Proceed with caution:* Examine your school environment and look for both professional and community-based supports to help guide your transition experience. Recognize that you may find full, limited, or no support for your transition. Know what your rights are and plan accordingly by consulting with legal, medical, and educational professionals who are knowledgeable about school-based gender identity issues.

- *Be strategic and incremental:* Work with your school district to develop a transition plan. If possible, transition over a school break, preferably over the summer, to provide the time necessary to gain comfort and confidence in your new gender role. Your school district can also help you to find a safe and accommodating workplace environment that can help to support you in your transition.

- *Be flexible and adaptable:* Although you may have a plan, situations will change depending on the levels of support or resistance you may encounter.

- *Find school-based allies:* If possible, find allies in whom you can trust and confide. These allies can help to read the school culture and help you to ensure

that the euphoria of your new gender role is expressed in age-appropriate and professional ways.

- *Be prepared for transphobia:* Transitioning genders in K-12 schools is not only a private, but also a public experience. Be prepared to help educate your colleagues and students and have open discussions about gender identity. Have factual information available and ready to help confront misinformation and stereotypes. Often, if you are uncomfortable talking about gender identity issues, people will respond in uncomfortable ways.

- *Be and trust yourself:* Ultimately, there will never be a perfect time or moment for your transition. It takes time to build confidence in your new gender role. The more you can be yourself, the better teacher you will become.

The issues surrounding gender identity in K-12 schools are complex and not easily classified into discreet steps or components that can be used to develop a formula or blueprint for a successful transition while teaching. The transition experiences of Carol, Angela, and Gayle are not generalizable to every teacher, school, or transition experience. However, they can be used in a thoughtful way to help open a discussion surrounding gender identity in schools. Students who are transitioning genders will need different kinds of suggestions and supports than the ones provided to teachers (Roberts, Allan, & Wells, 2007). Parents of transitioning students will also need different information and supports to help them address any fears, concerns, or misconceptions they may have in relation to having a gender variant child (Hill & Menvielle, 2009). Ultimately, regardless of whether you are a transitioning teacher, student, or the parent of a transitioning child, this journey not only involves significant personal risk, but also, and

perhaps more importantly, a tremendous opportunity for personal and professional growth, happiness, and the pursuit of a life that is worth living.

Schools are critical to the safety, health, and wellbeing of all gender variant individuals and their families. Transsexual and transgender issues ought to be able to come out of the educational closet and serve as a catalyst for how we understand gender, gender identity, and sexuality within twenty-first century schools. Tensions and dilemmas will inevitably be an unavoidable part of this journey. However, as Sumara (2007) reminds us, "remaining silent about discriminatory practices supports their being maintained and reproduced. This is not just work for gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transsexual teachers. As history has shown, it is very difficult for persons who are in minority subject positions to alter the power structures that condition their minority status" (p. 51). Homophobia, transphobia, and heterosexism limit possibilities for everyone. By seeking to interrupt heteronormativity and dominant gender binaries we can work to open up a horizon of possibility for each student, teacher, administrator, or school employee to fully be themselves and to explore their limitless potential without the fear of threat or ridicule. Public education ought to be about building educational spaces that support all teachers and students to move from being in a position of having to worry about their survival to a place where they can be supported to thrive and enrich their classrooms and communities.

In pursuit of this capacious understanding of a public education for all, we need to work to actively create welcoming environments for transsexual teachers in which they can feel comfortable and supported to be themselves, and, in turn, to be out and visible role models to other teachers, students, and parents, if they so choose. Positive role

models demonstrate that transgender and transsexual people do exist. Successful transition stories provide hope and can save lives. By sharing these transsexual teacher storylines, we indicate the value of diversity and difference and provide a powerful counternarrative to enforced normativity (Samons, 2009). These storylines also provide a space for hope and possibility to grow and flourish, which should be at the very heart of how we understand the purpose and power of an inclusive public educational system.

Concluding Perspective

Butler (2004) posits how "theory is an activity that does not remain restricted to the academy. It takes place every time a possibility is imagined, a collective self-reflection takes place, a dispute over values, priorities, and language emerges" (p. 176). For the transsexual teachers in this study, their articulation of theory is embodied in their everyday activities of practicing, doing, and living gender.

Paradoxically, for Carol, Angela, and Gayle to successfully "pass" into the opposite gender and become intelligible to themselves and others, it also means that they had to "fail" to perform the gender they were assigned at birth. In each case, to be seen as having a successful transition process, these teachers had to erase their previous lived history as males and start anew. The result of this loss of history is the price to be paid for social acceptance in regulatory public schools. As Stone (2006) relates, "Transsexuals know that silence can be an extremely high price to pay for acceptance…. It is difficult to generate a counter discourse if one is programmed to disappear" (p. 232, 230). However, each of these teachers in their own way, whether through working with their school districts, or educating colleagues, friends, and family, demonstrated a pedagogy of

impossibility, which invoked moments of dissonance to think about gender in much more complex ways.

In the face of being created as the monstrous other that education cannot bear to know, these transsexual teachers have challenged the normalizing role of sex and gender binaries. Through their efforts, predetermination and biological destiny in relation to gender are disrupted. What is left is a radical potentiality, which challenges traditional discourses of pathology and otherness. The pedagogy of impossibility each of these teachers engaged served to leave the question of sex and gender open as a site of learning and as a state of untold personal, pedagogical, and political possibility. These teachers have worked hard, and at great personal risk, to become intelligible within their schools and, in the process, they have challenged old discourses of transsexual invisibility, silence, shame, and fear. As a result of their fight for recognition and personhood, transsexuality ceases to become an unknown stereotype, and in turn, the possibility for a different understanding is created. By breaking down the incommensurabilities between the identities of "transsexual" and "teacher," counternarratives are revealed and new pedagogies are made known in an effort to demonstrate that all bodies and all lives do matter.

If we believe, as Butler (2004) suggests, that "gender is the mechanism by which notions of masculine and feminine are produced and naturalized… [then] gender might [also] very well be the apparatus by which such terms are deconstructed and denaturalized. Indeed, it may be that the very apparatus that seeks to install the norm also works to undermine that very installation" (p. 42). There is no doubt that Carol, Angela, and Gayle have done more than simply attempt to conform to dominant gender norms in

their schools. Through their storylines they have enacted the very conditions for resisting

heteronormativity and the male/female binary through their performance of sex and

gender in everyday life. Their perseverance and lived experience is knowledge with the

promise of another knowing that is filled with hope and possibility for a future that once

could never be imagined.

> **Carol:** Looking back, it's not just the 31 years I spent in the classroom that I will remember, but the "brick walls" that I had to climb over, chisel through, and tunnel beneath in order to continue my teaching career. I fought anyone who challenged my right to teach, and I worked very hard to teach well. Overall, I had a lot of fun in my journey, even though it was rough, and at times life felt like it could barely go on another day. I saw the mountain before me, contemplated the difficulties in climbing its heights, disregarded the uncertainty, and began to climb. If I could speak to God on that mountain, I'd say, "Instead of being born a normal male or female, I want to do this again, because it was fun." After the despair and the difficulty, I'd still do it a hundred times again.

> **Gayle:** I don't think I could have considered transitioning 20 years ago and kept my job as a teacher…. I think there has been tremendous change. I think that because schools are a microcosm of society, a cultural shift in our society has meant that teachers themselves are more accepting of these issues…. I find that students, young people, have the least difficulty around this. They just accept it. They grow up with it. It's there and it's not a big deal…. Yes, horrible things do still happen, but we shouldn't lose sight that society is becoming more and more accepting. It's a lot better now than it was before. Now that I'm retired from teaching, I want to act as an advocate and an educator – in the broad sense of the word – for transsexual issues.

> **Angela:** Things are so much better now. The only regret I have about this whole process was waiting so long to make the change. I should have done this in my early twenties when I first understood what I was dealing with…. Not only did I end the infinitely draining gender dysphoria and find wholeness, but I also grew tremendously in other areas. I learned to have more compassion for those who are different or marginalized in some way. I've grown exponentially in my interpersonal skills, and I've learned to have a huge amount of confidence in myself. I feel like my personality finally developed after being stifled back when I was a teenager. Going through transition, and all the changes, opened up my mind in other areas. I'm much more adventurous and live my life "outside the box". For example, I shifted from being a born again Christian to a Conservative Jew. Now I'm contemplating going back to school and working on an MFA in creative

writing. My appreciation for life and all of its interesting possibilities is huge now! I'm much happier and fear no longer controls my life.

References

American Psychiatric Association (APA). (2000). *Diagnostic and statistical manual of mental disorders (DSM-IV)* (4th ed.). Washington, DC: Author.

Atkinson, E., & DePalma, R. (2009). Un-believing the matrix: Queering consensual heteronormativity. *Gender and Education, 21*(1), 17-29. doi:10.1080/09540250802213149

Butler, J. (1989). *Gender trouble: Feminism and the subversion of identity.* New York: Routledge.

Butler, J. (2004). *Undoing gender.* New York: Routledge.

Brooks, K. (2010, September 13). Bullied Greensburg student takes his own life. *Fox59 News.* Retrieved from http://www.fox59.com/news/wxin-greensburg-student-suicide-091310,0,1101685.story

Ellsworth, E. (2005). *Places of learning: Media, architecture, pedagogy.* New York: Taylor & Francis.

de Lauretis, T. (1991) Queer theory: Lesbian and gay sexualities. *differences: A Journal of Feminist Cultural Studies, 3*(2), iii-xviii.

Foucault, M. (1978). *The history of sexuality. Volume 1: An introduction.* Pantheon Books: New York.

Gherovici, P. (2010). *Please select your gender: From the invention of hysteria to the democratizing of transgenderism.* New York: Routledge.

Grace, A. P. (2009). Resilient sexual-minority youth as fugitive lifelong learners: Engaging in a strategic, asset-creating, community-based learning process to counter exclusion and trauma in formal schooling. In J. Field (Ed.), *Proceedings of the Lifelong Learning Revisited: What Next? Conference of the Scottish Centre for Research in Lifelong Learning, University of Stirling, Stirling, UK* (CD format, 4,041 words).

Grace, A. P. (2008). The charisma and deception of reparative therapies: When medical science beds religion. *Journal of Homosexuality,* 55(4), 545-580. doi:10.1080/00918360802421676

Green, J. (2006). Look! No, don't. The visibility dilemma for transsexual men. In S. Stryker & S. Whittle (Eds.), *The transgender studies reader* (pp. 499-503). New York: Routledge.

Hall, D. E. (2003). *Queer theories.* New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Hill, B. D., & Menvielle, E. (2009). "You have to give them a place where they feel protected and loved": The views of parents who have gender-variant children and adolescents. *Journal of LGBT Youth, 6*(2-3), 243-271. doi:10.1080/19361650903013527

Huffer, L. (2010). *Mad for Foucault: Rethinking the foundations of queer theory.* New York: Columbia University Press.

Jagose, A. (1996). *Queer theory: An introduction.* New York: New York University Press.

Jagose, A. (2009). Feminism's queer theory. *Feminism & Psychology, 19*(2), 157-174, doi:10.1177/0959333509102152

Kaufmann, J. (2010). Trans-representation. *Qualitative Inquiry, 16*(2), 104-115.

    doi:10.1177/1077800409350699

Kosciw, J. G., Greytak, E. A., Diaz, E. M., & Bartkiewicz, M. J. (2010). *The 2009*

    national school climate survey: The experiences of lesbian, gay, bisexual and

    transgender youth in our nation's schools. New York: GLSEN.

Lahey, K. (1999). *Are 'we' persons yet? Law and sexuality in Canada.* Toronto, ON:

    University of Toronto Press.

Lather, P. (1991). *Getting smart: Feminist research and pedagogy with/in the postmodern.*

    New York: Routledge.

Lather, P. (2007). *Getting lost: Feminist efforts toward a double(d) science.* Albany, NY:

    State University of New York Press.

Lather, P., & Smithies, C. (1997). *Troubling the angels: Women living with HIV/AIDS.*

    Boulder, CO: HarperCollins.

Lyotard, J. F. (1984). *The postmodern condition: A report on knowledge*. Minneapolis:

    University of Minnesota Press.

Martinez, E. (2010, September 29). Seth Walsh: Gay 13-year-old hangs self after

    reported bullying. *CBS News.* Retrieved from http://www.cbsnews.com/8301-

    504083_162-20018025-504083.html

Namaste, V. K. (2006) Genderbashing: Sexuality, gender, and the regulation of public

    space. In S. Stryker & S. Whittle (Eds.), *The transgender studies reader* (pp. 584-

    600). New York: Routledge.

O'Hare, P. (2010, September 28). Parents say bullies drove their son to take his life. *Houston Chronicle.* Retrieved from http://www.chron.com/disp/story.mpl/metropolitan/7220896.html

Pollack, W. S. (2005). Sustaining and reframing vulnerability and connection: Creating genuine resilience in boys and young males. In S. Goldstein & R. B. Brooks (Eds.), *Handbook of resilience in children* (pp. 65-77). New York: Kluwer.

Prosser, J. (1998). *Second skins: The body narratives of transsexuality.* New York: Columbia University Press.

Prosser, J. (2006). Judith Butler: Queer feminism, transgender, and the transubstantiation of sex. In S. Stryker & S. Whittle (Eds.), *The transgender studies reader* (pp. 257-280). New York: Routledge.

Quinn, T., & Meiners, E. R. (2009). *Flaunt it! Queers organizing for public education and justice.* New York: Peter Lang.

Rasmussen, M. L. (2009). Beyond gender identity? *Gender and Education, 21*(4), 431-447. doi:10.1080/09540250802473958

Reeser, T. W. (2010). *Masculinities in theory: An introduction.* Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell.

Roberts, G., Allan, C., & Wells, K. (2007). Understanding gender identity in K-12 Schools. *Journal of Gay and Lesbian Issues in Education, 4*(4), 119-129. doi:10.1300/J367v04n04_08

Saillant, C., & Covarrubias, A. (2008, February 15). Oxnard school shooting called a hate crime. *Los Angeles Times*. Retrieved from http://www.latimes.com/news/local/la-me-oxnard15feb15,0,7663055.story

Samons, S. L. (2009). *When the opposite sex isn't: Sexual orientation in male-to-female transgender people.* New York: Routledge.

Sedgwick, E. K. (1990). *Epistemology of the closet.* Berkeley: University of California Press.

St. Pierre, E. A., & Pillow, W. S. (Eds.). (2000). *Working the ruins: Feminist poststructural theory and methods in research*. New York: Routledge.

Setoodeh, R. (2008, July 19). Young, gay, and murdered. *Newsweek.* Retrieved from http://www.newsweek.com/2008/07/18/young-gay-and-murdered.html

Shelley, C. A. (2008). *Transpeople: Repudiation, trauma, healing.* Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

Sondergaard, D. M. (2002). Poststructural approaches to empirical analysis. *Qualitative Studies in Education, 15*(2), 187-204. doi:10.1080/09518390110111910

Spade, D. (2006). Mutilating gender. In S. Stryker & S. Whittle (Eds.), *The transgender studies reader* (pp. 315-332). New York: Routledge.

Stone, S. (2006). The empire strikes back: A posttranssexual manifesto. In S. Stryker & S. Whittle (Eds.), *The transgender studies reader* (pp. 221-235). New York: Routledge.

Stryker, S. (2006a). (De)subjugated knowledges: An introduction to transgender studies. In S. Stryker & S. Whittle (Eds.), *The transgender studies reader* (pp. 1-17). New York: Routledge.

Stryker, S. (2006b). My words to Victor Frankenstein above the village of Chamounix: Performing transgender rage. In S. Stryker & S. Whittle (Eds.), *The transgender studies reader* (pp. 244-256). New York: Routledge.

Stryker, S., & Whittle, S. (Eds.). (2006) *The transgender studies reader.* New York:

    Routledge.

Sumara, D. (2007). Small differences matter: Interrupting certainty about identity in

    teacher education. *Journal of Gay & Lesbian Issues in Education, 4*(4), 39-58.

    doi:10.1300/J367v04n04_04

Taylor, C., & Peter, T. (in press). Left behind: Sexual and gender minority students in

    Canadian high schools in the new millennium. In T. Morrison, M. Morrison, D.T.

    McDermott, & M.A. Carrigan (Eds.), *Sexual minority research in the new*

    millennium. Hauppage, NY: Nova Science.

Valocchi, S. (2005). Not yet queer enough: The lessons of queer theory for the sociology

    of gender and sexuality. *Gender & Society, 19*(6), 750-770.

    doi:10.1177/0891243205280294

Warner, M. (2005). *Publics and counter publics.* New York: Zone Books.

Weiner-Bronner, D. (2010, September 29). Rutgers student believed to have committed

    suicide after classmates allegedly recorded him in gay sexual encounter. *The*

    Huffington Post. Retrieved from

    http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2010/09/29/dharun-revi-molly-wei-

    charged_n_743539.html

Whittle, S. (2006a). Where did we go wrong? Feminism and trans theory – Two teams on

    the same side? In S. Stryker & S. Whittle (Eds.), *The transgender studies reader*

    (pp. 194-202). New York: Routledge.

Whittle, S. (2006b). Foreward. In S. Stryker & S. Whittle (Eds.), *The transgender studies*

    reader (pp. xi-xvi). New York: Routledge.

Wilchins, R. A. (2006). What does it cost to tell the truth? In S. Stryker & S. Whittle

    (Eds.), *The transgender studies reader* (pp. 547-551). New York: Routledge.

Yoshino, K. (2006). *Covering: The hidden assault on our civil rights.* New York:

    Random House.

Concluding Perspective
Building Queer-Inclusive Schools as Part of Social Responsibility:
Strategic and Ethical Considerations

This dissertation's through line, or what emerges from its assemblage, is the development of queer criticality as an interdisciplinary theory that is utilized to frame a multifaceted study investigating the forces of heteronormativity and the interplay of sexuality and gender binaries in Canadian K-12 schools. As a multiperspective theory, queer criticality provides lenses to examine how we have come to understand queer youth as both victims and resilient survivors who transgress heteronormativity; it also explores interpretive frameworks used to politicize or privatize sexual minority identities and concerns through policy and practice; and it interrogates the lived effects of these discourses and discursive practices on sexual minority teachers working for inclusive change as well as on transsexual teachers searching for a space and place for recognition of their personal and professional identities. Ultimately, through these connected threads, this postfoundational weaving seeks to open up spaces for difference to be exposed and interrogated in K-12 public schools. It also works to help provide discursive materiality to sexual minority and gender variant identities by demonstrating how (hetero)normalizing discourses impact and shape the lived experiences of all teachers and students in our schools as they mediate the contexts, relationships, dispositions, and ideological systems shaping these institutions.

In pursuit of this research this dissertation study focused on three central, yet interrelated questions:

1. What discourses and (re)presentations of sexual minority and gender variant role models, images, identities, and affirming messages are evident or absent

in school curricula, policy, pedagogy, and practices in Canadian K-12 educational contexts?

2. How are heterosexism, homophobia, transphobia, and harassment, in intersections with racism, ethnocentrism, sexism, and other abuses of power, manifested, (re)produced, and resisted in relation to the (mis)treatment of sex, sexual, and gender differences?

3. What are some transformative, possible directions for the development of educational theory and practice that would connect existing critical, queer, and postfoundational research on sexual orientation and gender identity to the discourses of schooling?

To address these questions I conducted postfoundational empirical research, which focused on the lived experiences of seven sexual minority and gender variant teachers in Canadian K-12 public schools. A postfoundational approach to inquiry resists theoretical certainty, truth claims, and attempts to provide pedagogical closure (Foucault, 1978; Lather 2007; Rasmussen, 2009). Ellsworth (2005) highlights the uncertainty: "Our knowledges are always partial, insufficient, and in the making" (p. 77). As a result, this dissertation contributes to knowledge as a promise of another knowing without ending. This dissertation refuses closure, reflecting an ongoing struggle to explore and (de)construct new subject positions in relation to heteronormativity. The goal of this research is not to provide grand narratives, claims to theoretical certainty, or the installation of regimes of truth, all of which would attempt to offer unassailable best practices, lessons learned, and a recipe of effective teaching strategies. Rather than fixity, this dissertation develops lenses for analyses and questions to be asked and carried

302

forward to assist in the transformation of our understandings of the lived experiences of sexual minority and gender variant teachers and students within public education and culture.

Ellsworth (2005) suggests that the overarching goal of postfoundational research is an "attempt to make something new and different of what we already think we know" (p. 13). Accordingly, queer criticality in education calls for a "public world making" (Warner, 2005, p. 60) in which sexuality and gender identity no longer remain hidden from view and are valued as part of "embracing common worlds, making the transposition from shame to honour, from hardiness to the exchange of views with generalized others, in such a way that the disclosure of self partakes of freedom" (Warner, 2005, p. 61). Likewise, for Foucault (1978), this practice of freedom, or world making, involves inciting discourse, which strives to create "mobile and transitory points of resistance, producing cleavages in society that shift about, fracturing unities and effecting regroupings…. [It is] the strategic codification of these points of resistance that makes a revolution possible" (p. 96). If this wholesale change is to be made possible, it is critical that these points of cleavages and spaces of resistance be created within public schools, which have historically been the guardians of the heteronormative status quo (DePalma & Atkinson, 2009).

Research Limitations

This empirical dissertation research focused on lived experience, and, as a result, grand narratives or objective claims to truth cannot be generated, nor are they the intended desire or purpose of postfoundational discourse. Other limitations to this study

include the small non-generalizable sample size, which includes qualitative life history interviews with seven sexual minority and gender variant teachers in Canada. Subjectivity is also unavoidably present in my interpretation of the data analysis presented, which calls into question traditional notions of scientific validity and the need for concrete recommendations or generalizable "truths" arising from the research. Concomitantly, postfoundational research identifies the need to move beyond individually constructed realities that give meaning to our experiences to further connect these discursive experiences with larger discourses and discursive practices that limit possibilities for SMGV inclusion in public education. One significant goal of postfoundational research is to create a forum for interdisciplinary thought and dialogic communication. This dialogue seeks to move beyond absolute certainties that undergird fundamentalist claims to objectivity, fixity, and the belief that "reality" is somehow "out there" waiting to be discovered. Postfoundational discourse, as manifested in queer criticality, seeks to serve as a meeting point for collective interpretation and critique as a way of entering into a constructive, rather than polarizing dialogue. Through this critical dialogue a more complete and nuanced picture of heteronormative discourse can be constructed by engaging with differing research perspectives and interdisciplinary theorizing. Ultimately, this dissertation research represents an entry point into postfoundational theorizing in education. Further postfoundational empirical research is needed to explore the lived experiences of sexual minority and gender variant teachers from different racial, ethnocultural, religious, disability, gender, and class backgrounds. These perspectives would assist in providing a deeper analysis of the ways in which sex,

sexuality, and gender are implicated in the purpose and lived practice of public education in Canadian K-12 schools.

Resisting the Privatization of Queer Reality: Educational Values for Critical Social Transformation

In schools today, the very notions of morality, virtue, and queerness are seen as incommensurable concepts that cannot be reconciled (Grace & Wells, 2005). This incommensurability is apparent within trends towards an ever-increasing emphasis on the resurgence of conservatism and moral-based education in Canadian public education. In pursuit of this purported higher moral ground, critical perspectives are often left behind in favour of educational programs that claim to promote a virtuous education premised on the development of good character and sound moral fiber. Within these programs, even in public schools, virtue is often unquestioningly understood in Christian, especially Catholicized terms given the prevalence of Roman Catholic school jurisdictions, that privatize queer perspectives and thereby place untenable limits on queer acceptability, access, and accommodation (Grace & Wells, 2005). At the same time, however, Canadian courts have increasingly recognized that all publicly funded schools are subject to scrutiny under the Canadian *Charter of Rights and Freedoms*, including scrutiny of the equality rights of young people and teachers in schools (Clarke, 1999; MacDougall, 2000; McNinch & Cronin, 2004).

This research has sought to counter institutional efforts to privatize queer reality; that is, to keep it hidden, invisible, silent, and unannounced in religion, culture, policy making, and education. It has explored how queer criticality can be used to challenge the

heteronormative status quo and related binary systems in Canadian public schools. In attempting to reconcile the concepts of virtue and queer, I draw on the work of Allman (2001) to propose a strategic and ethical framework that outlines seven guiding virtues or principles that are required to meet the legally mandated responsibility of publicly funded schools to accommodate sexual minority and gender variant students, teachers, and same-sex parented families. These "seven virtues," grounded in educational values for critical social transformation, are conceived to be: commitment; vigilance and shared responsibility; honesty and truth; passion, desire, and dreams; critical and hopeful thinking; transformation of the self; and democratic classrooms and schools (Allman, 2001; Wells, 2005).

In the new millennium virtue has resurfaced with a certain cachet and newfound vigour as the basis for a notion of a true morality or upstanding education. Concepts of heteronormative virtue and morality are "produced in almost every aspect of the forms and arrangements of social life: nationality, the state, and the law; commerce; medicine; education; plus the conventions and affects of narrativity, romance, and other protected spaces of culture" (Warner, 2005, p. 194). In schools today, despite a focus on Canadian multiculturalism and an increasingly pluralistic society, contemporary discussions of virtue are steeped within Judeo-Christian ethical perspectives premised on the desire to harmonize one's love of God in relationship to earthly men and women. However, the etymological origins of the word virtue reveal an array of differing perspectives that collectively uncover a critical space to critique and challenge understandings of what another understanding of a virtuous or moral education might entail.

The word virtue comes from the Latin *vitus* (pre 1200) meaning moral strength, valour, and excellence. In 1384 Middle English defined virtue as unusual ability, of inherent good quality, or being righteous and just (Barnhart, 1995). The Greeks understood virtue as habitual excellence. For example, Aristotle noted that virtues can have several competing meanings and opposites (that would later come to be described as vices) (Kraut, 2005). In Roman Catholicism, the Seven Virtues are justice, prudence, temperance, and fortitude, which are known as the Four Western or Cardinal Virtues, and faith, hope, and charity, which are known as the Three Theological Virtues (Adikibi, 1995). In comparison, the Seven Deadly Vices (or Sins) are identified as pride, avarice (greed), lust, wrath, gluttony, envy, and sloth. In contrast to these Western perspectives, Confucianism identifies perfect virtue as the global practice of gravity, generosity of soul, sincerity, earnestness, and kindness (Ames & Hall, 1987).

In contrast, the word queer derives from the "Indo-European root – *terwekw*, which also yields the German *quer* (transverse), [and] Latin *torquere* (to twist)" (Sedgwick 1993, p. xii, italics added). As Butler (1993) also identifies, the word queer "derives its force precisely through the repeated invocation by which it has become linked to accusation, pathologization, [and] insult" (p. 226). In the past two decades, many lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender persons have actively sought to reclaim the word queer as a source of pride and virtue and as a way to refute the historical discursive and performative function of the word that seeks to enact narrow pathologized identity categorizations based upon a person's actual or perceived sexual orientation and/or gender identity. Kumashiro (2001) accentuates a key point, "Queers do not ignore the harmful history of ignorance, discrimination, hatred and violence carried with the term"

(p. 3), rather they use the term as an urgent and insurgent way of reclaiming and re-storying history in an attempt to transgress and disrupt heteronormativity, homophobia, transphobia, and sexism. In this sense, queer is a political marker, and a call to strategic and ethical action, as much as it is claimed as a personal identity.

Given the origins of the words virtue and queer, what then might the seven virtues of building queer-inclusive schools entail? Here is a proposal:

- **Commitment –** Critical social transformation takes time and open, respectful dialogue. Queer-inclusive schools will not be created over night. Societal and cultural change is built upon a foundation based on an appreciation for human rights, equality, justice, and social responsibility. By helping to construct dialogic coalitions and counterpublic spaces, which provide support across multiple differences, schools can begin to open the dialogue towards full inclusion, meaningful access, and unrestricted accommodation. In this research, the lived experiences of James, Murray, Gerard, and Joan highlight the personal commitment and conviction that is necessary for educators to overcome the backward forces of a hegemonic heteronormativity to become active agents for social justice in their schools. Despite enormous personal and professional risks, these teachers became cultural workers who sought to include sexual minority and gender variant issues in their schools and communities. This commitment took the form of personal consciousness-raising, professional development, and legal challenges to ensure that queer issues would be brought into the public space of the classroom.

- **Vigilance and Shared Responsibility –** Challenging homophobia, transphobia, heterosexism, and sexism requires constant reflection and evaluation. How are the structures of oppression connected? In particular, how are homophobia and transphobia utilized as weapons of bullying and sexism? Vigilance and shared responsibility are embedded in the belief that we need to look more critically at our schools and communities as we ask: Who is included and who is excluded? What are the effects of this pedagogical silence and curricular and social exclusion? In answering these questions, it is important to realize that building queer-inclusive schools cannot be the sole responsibility of sexual minority and gender variant teachers and students. Everyone has a part to play in creating safe, inclusive, welcoming, and just schools. In some cases, heterosexual allies may be in the safer position to advocate for change within hostile school environments. Angela spoke powerfully about the role of heterosexual allies who supported her gender transition. These allies were critical in helping to educate the school community about gender identity issues and, in turn, to support Angela's determination to grow as a resilient educator. Angela's gender transition became an important pedagogical opportunity for her school community to learn to value and celebrate diversity and difference, rather than to react with fear and ridicule. In each case, the activist-educators and transsexual teachers in this research understood and demonstrated that personal and social freedom had to be exercised, fought for, and ultimately could not be accomplished alone.

- **Honesty and Truth –** We need to ask ourselves: What are the realities and resistances in engaging in this counternormative pedagogical work? By sharing

our personal stories, we invite an openness and vulnerability that encourages others to share their own stories and experiences of difference. We all live storied lives. Stories are the way by which we relate and make sense of our shared experiences. By sharing our storied experiences in an open and honest way, we can begin to open the hearts and minds of others. The virtues of honesty and truth are deeply embedded in the difficult work of challenging the status quo. This work can be understood as a part of learning in the struggle as we strive to rupture deeply held silences and dismantle the structures of oppression. Each of the research participants in this study sought to break the silence that surrounds sexual orientation and gender identity in their schools. When education is understood as a process of transformation and liberation, "rather than trying to deny risk" it encourages students and teachers to take it (Freire, 2004, p. 5). The resolute educators in this research, despite the inherent risks, sought to use their personal, pedagogical, and professional experiences to speak openly and honestly about the impact of homophobia, heterosexism, and transphobia and how these oppressive forces limit possibilities for all teachers and students in K-12 public schools.

- **Passion, Desire, and Dreams –** Ultimately, we need to be able to internalize social justice and compassion in order to live them out in our everyday practice. The construction of knowledge is not separate from our lived experience. There can be no false dichotomies; rather, there is a dialectical unity that is dynamic and reciprocal in which theory and practice mutually work together to develop the critical consciousness that is necessary for change. This mutuality helps to build

critical knowledge that affirms that destiny is not pre-given or pre-determined. Instead we learn that we need to envision and become the change that we seek in the world. We should work to overcome our own inherent biases and learn to dwell in the radical possibility of and for the "other." This other only exists holistically in the space of hope and possibility that stems from our commitment to social justice, freedom, and the pursuit of an audacious democracy (West, 1997). Freire (1998) reminds us that we can have two basic types of encounters with people, and it is our choice as to whether those interactions will be humanizing or dehumanizing. Which one will we choose? Will we continue to demonize the other, or will we open our hearts and minds to accept and learn from them as a way to strengthen and enrich our schools? A pedagogy of transformation is critical in engendering the hope for a better and more just and socially-accountable educational system. This process of transformation involves the recognition that we are not a neutral presence in the world. Through this critical recognition, "we become capable of transforming the world, of naming our own surroundings, of apprehending, of making sense of things, of deciding, of choosing, of valuing, and finally, of ethicizing the world" around us (Freire, 2004, p. 7). This dream for transformation starts with a desire and a realization that another world is possible. It is an active commitment to cultivate an individual and active desire to resist the regimes of the normal and to imagine possibilities for an otherwise imagined future. This future involves the creation of hopeful, joyous, creative, inclusive, welcoming, and vibrant schools where all differences are celebrated and valued (Quinn & Meiners, 2009). The research participants in

this study all sought to make their dreams for a truly inclusive, welcoming, and respectful school a reality by living their lives as proud and authentic educators.

- **Critical and Hopeful Thinking –** Critical and hopeful thinking not only involves asking "why" and "how," but also "why not," "what if," and "what about" questions. We need to believe that we can change the school system and society for the better. We can start to establish the foundation for this hope by creating the glimpses of the social transformation that we seek in our schools and communities. This begins by smuggling in hope through the cracks in the walls of oppression. For example, this can occur by intervening in homophobic and transphobic language and name-calling, through incorporating queer-inclusive educational topics in the curriculum, and by establishing gay-straight student alliances and other counterpublic spaces that seek to open up, rather than close down spaces of difference. This critical thinking and hope for the future is vital in creating schools as spaces that foster resistance, recoupment, and resilience. As Freire (2004) identifies, we apprehend and insert ourselves in the world "in order to change, not to settle" (p. 76). Helping youth to transcend experiences of victimization becomes critical in supporting these vulnerable youth to grow into resilience. Importantly, resilience is not a product or outcome solely located in the individual, but a process that needs to be understood and nurtured through the creation of inclusive policy, curricular supports, professional development, and ultimately, the creation of inclusive and welcoming schools where all sexual minority and gender variant students and teachers can be valued and respected for their unique identities and contributions.

- **Transformation of the Self –** Chomsky (2010) has passionately articulated that if we believe there is no hope, there will be no hope. Ultimately, we as individuals choose how we live and interact in the world. Before we ask others to change, we need to begin with ourselves and ask if our own values and beliefs are inclusive. Likewise, before we can begin to pursue difficult knowledge within our schools, we ought to ask: What forms of knowledge make us uncomfortable and why? Of course, to begin any process of transformation we first need to start by learning to love and forgive ourselves. As sexual minority and gender variant people, we need to overcome a legacy of external and internalized homophobia, transphobia, stigmatization, and shame. We also need to recognize that we will make mistakes in this journey towards personal, cultural, social, and political freedom. However, these practices of failure can become sites of success if we interrogate and attempt to learn from them. Overcoming a legacy of homophobia and transphobia, first involves the development of self- and social-esteem. This is especially important for vulnerable youth who experience shame and stigmatization for their actual or perceived differences. This transformation of the self does not take place in isolation, but ought to be supported within schools that foster a spirit of individualism, critical thinking, and transformative action for self- and social change. This transformative process must necessarily involve the entire school community, including parents, students, administrators, trustees, and school district personnel. For transformative change to be successful, the conditions of oppression need to be named and acted upon at all levels of the educational system. Change may be difficult, but it is possible when we understand our selves

as political actors and change agents. Through this critical work we need to ensure that the structures of disavowal are named and linked to relationships of power and privilege, and the ways in which society marks difference as outside of the "normal".

- **Democratic Classrooms and Schools –** At the heart of any queer critical praxis is the understanding that classrooms and schools are communities of learners with multiple subjectivities, desires, and goals. When one member feels excluded from this community, everyone loses access to that person's knowledge, insights, gifts, talents, and contributions. In this inclusive community there is no learning *for* students, but only learning *with* students. From this perspective, the teachers and the students both become the educators. Thus democratic classrooms and schools ought to attempt to move away from a simple process of transmitting knowledge to a more complex understanding of transforming relationships to knowledge. In this milieu, classrooms become sites for critical democracy where students and teachers learn to embrace diversity and difference. The classroom becomes a space of hospitality, which, as Ellsworth (2005) describes, must "hold us, support us, and attend to us" and all of our unique needs (p. 70). In this light, education is structured as a pedagogical relationship with that which is outside us; it is a critical encounter "with the unthought" and unknown (Ellsworth, 2005, p. 54). In this queer critical dialogic encounter, the classroom becomes a transitional space for us to become actors and agents in the world around us. Each of the teachers in this research, have committed to become active participants in this dialogic encounter. By making their personal identities, histories, and lived experiences

part of their professional work, they have sought to make long held private identities public in the pursuit of creating communities of resistance to the regimes of the normal that ask questions and attempt to put the public back in public education through their work to create equitable, just, and inclusive schools for all.

Concluding Perspective: Creating a Better World

In conclusion, I echo the words of Freire (1998) and suggest that building queer-inclusive schools revolves around one simple, yet immensely profound statement: "We need to create a world in which it will be easier to love" (p. 12). This precept speaks to a world in which human dignity is protected and respected, diversity and difference are embraced, and everyone's individual destiny can be achieved. This world is our ethical obligation. This world expanding virtue and its possibilities is the project of hope, humanity, and possibility that exists within our own hands. This project can enable truly inclusive and democratic schools to be realized for every teacher, student, and parent who walks through the school's doors. This ethical responsibility should be the promise and challenge of public education in the 21st century. Carol, Gayle, Angela, Joan, Gerard, Murray, and James are resilient and resolute educators who take this challenge as part of their calling of what it means to be teachers who understand and take up public education as a critical space to live out the seven virtues of building queer-friendly schools as part of their personal, professional, ethical, and social responsibility for the creation of a world that values, respects, and fully includes sexual and gender minorities. This is a world that does not merely tolerate and put up with difference, but celebrates and values

this difference as the very hope and promise of public education and the future of our society. By working towards our dreams, hopes, and vision of a world that we struggle to create, transformation is possible. It is through this struggle that we gain a sense of our personhood and ultimately an understanding of our right to full and equal citizenship. To achieve this vision we must not only envision and speak this dream into existence, we must also engage in the critical practices necessary to materialize this hope for a more robust, inclusive, just, and audacious democracy to be realized in our everyday lives and teaching practices.

References

Adikibi, O. (Ed.). (1995). *The Hutchinson dictionary of ideas*. London: Helicon Publishing.

Allman, P. (2001). *Critical education against global capitalism.* Westport, CT: Bergin & Garvey.

Ames, R., & Hall, D. (1987). *Thinking through Confucius*. Albany, NY: SUNY Press.

Barnhart, R. K. (1995). *The Barnhart concise dictionary of etymology.* New York: Harper Collins.

Butler, J. (1993). *Bodies that matter: On the discursive limits of sex.* New York: Routledge.

Chomsky, N. (2010). *Hope and prospects.* Chicago, IL: Haymarket Books.

Clarke, P. (1999). Toward an inclusive community: Protecting the human and constitutional rights of homosexual educators in public schools. *Journal of Educational Administration and Foundations, 14*(1), pp. 58-100.

DePalma, R., & Atkinson, E. (Eds.). (2009). *Interrogating heteronormativity in primary schools: The No Outsiders project.* Stoke on Trent, UK: Trentham Books.

Ellsworth, E. (2005). *Places of learning: Media, architecture, pedagogy.* New York: Taylor & Francis.

Foucault, M. (1978). *The history of sexuality. Volume 1: An introduction.* Pantheon Books: New York.

Freire, P. (1998). *Teachers as cultural workers: Letters to those who dare teach.* Boulder, CO: Westview Press.

Freire, P. (2004). *Pedagogy of indignation.* Boulder, CO: Paradigm Publishers.

Grace, A. P., & Wells, K. (2005). The Marc Hall prom predicament: Queer individual rights v. institutional church rights in Canadian public education. *Canadian Journal of Education, 28*(3), 237-270.

Kraut, R. (Ed.). (2005). *The Blackwell guide to Aristotle's ethics*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishers.

Lather, P. (2007). *Getting lost: Feminist efforts toward a double(d) science.* Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.

MacDougall, B. (2000). Queer judgments: Homosexuality, expression, and the courts in Canada. Toronto, ON: University of Toronto Press.

McNinch, J., & Cronin, M. (Eds.). (2004). *I could not speak my heart: Education and social justice for gay and lesbian youth.* Regina, SK: Canadian Plains Research Centre, University of Regina Press.

Rasmussen, M. L. (2009). Beyond gender identity? *Gender and Education, 21*(4), 431-447. doi:10.1080/09540250802473958

Warner, M. (2005). *Publics and counter publics.* New York: Zone Books.

Wells, K. (2005, Fall). The seven virtues of queer friendly schools. *The Post: A*

   Publication of the Parkland Institute, IX(3), 4-5.

<center>**Appendices**</center>

<center>**Research Participant Consent Letter**</center>

\<Insert Date\>

Attention: \<Insert Name\>

Re: **Participation in a national research project entitled** *Welfare-and-Work Issues for LGBTQ and Allied Teachers in Canada: Legislative, Legal, and Educational Policy Contexts Impacting their Personal and Professional Lives*

You are invited to participate in this study for which support has been obtained through a Social Sciences & Humanities Research Council: Standard Operating Grant. The purpose of this study is to research LGBTQ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans-identified, and queer) and allied teachers' lives, welfare, and work, and the contexts shaping them. In Phase I, the research chronicled and analyzed legislative, legal, and educational policy documents impacting welfare and work for Canadian LGBTQ teachers. In Phase II, in which you are invited to participate, the research will use life-narrative research and open-ended interviews to investigate welfare-and-work issues from teachers' perspectives. It will be carried out as stated, and there is no deception involved.

This research project is intended to gather information from teachers that will be useful to other teachers, teachers' federations/associations, and other educational interest groups that develop policies affecting teachers' welfare and work in schools as teachers' workplaces.

The following research questions serve as a guide to the investigation:

The Personal
1. Can you tell us about your school and teaching experience as an LGBTQ teacher doing inclusive work in relation to sex, sexual, and gender differences?
2. As an allied teacher can tell us about your school and teaching experience as an ally doing inclusive work in relation to sex, sexual, and gender differences?
3. For LGBTQ teachers: Have the issues of hiding or being silent affected your life? If they have, how?
4. For allied teachers: What concerns do you have about addressing LGBTQ issues in the curriculum or in co-curricular activities? If you've done this work, how has it affected you?
5. Have you experienced or witnessed homophobia in your personal or professional lives? Did it overwhelm you? Did you ignore it, resist it, or did you find ways to be deal with it?

The Professional

6. How are things for LGBTQ persons in your school? Are their any school policies to deal with discrimination against LGBTQ teachers and students? Is your school a supportive environment?
7. What supports/barriers affect your ability to engage LGBTQ issues in your workplace?
8. For LGBTQ teachers: How do you think being a LGBTQ person affects your career? Do you think it affects how you are viewed as a teacher? Do you think it affects, for example, your ability to be tenured or promoted?
9. For allied teachers: How do you feel being involved in LGBTQ initiatives in your school or community affects your career? Do you think it affects how you are viewed as a teacher? Do you think it affects, for example, your ability to be tenured or promoted?
10. Are you aware of any formal supports or resources for LGBTQ persons in your school, district, teacher association/federation, or community?
11. From your experience, have things changed for LGBTQ teachers and students since you began teaching? If they have, why do you think they have changed?

The Pedagogical

12. In your experience, are LGBTQ issues included in the curriculum or in the teaching practices in your school?
13. Has there been discussion in your school around including foci on sexual orientation or gender identity? What issues have teacher colleagues, parents, and other interest groups highlighted in these discussions? How do supporters of positive action around sexual orientation or gender identity deal with those teachers and parents who resist such action or are silent around it?
14. Have you developed or used teaching strategies or techniques for dealing with the issues of homophobia and building valued spaces and respect for LGBTQ persons?
15. Do you utilize co-curricular activities such as guest speakers or student-support groups?
16. Do you do this work alone or with support? What kind of risks are you taking when you do this work?

Your participation in this national research project is important to expand our capacity to address issues affecting the welfare and work of LGBTQ and allied teachers in school settings. To collect data, a multi-method strategy that utilizes two methods – narrative writing and interviews – will be used. It is anticipated that narrative writing will take one hour and the interview will take one-half hour. Although you will be contacted to confirm that you are in receipt of this invitation, please do not hesitate to contact me using the information in the heading if you need further clarification.

You are invited to sign this consent letter in the space provided below once you read the following guidelines for participation:

- As a research participant, you are asked to sign this consent letter to participate.
- You will have the right to refrain from answering any particular questions, and you will have the right to opt out of the research at any time without penalty.
- Processes to provide accuracy of data, security, confidentiality, and anonymity are implemented in the design of the study. A technical recording device will be used to ensure accuracy of data collected from the interviews. Security and confidentiality measures will be implemented, including the back up of data, secure storage of tapes, and a plan for deleting electronic and taped data.
- Only the researcher and his research assistants and transcriber, all of whom are required to sign confidentiality agreements, will have access to data and information. To ensure anonymity, pseudonyms will be used.
- You agree that my graduate research assistants and I can use information in secondary writing beyond the research report, which includes such writing as conference papers, book chapters, or journal articles. The same ethical considerations and safeguards will apply to secondary uses of data.
- You will be able to review research material as part of an iterative process. You will be provided with drafts of analyses for correction, amendment, and editing. Your interpretations, resistances, and challenges will be taken into account in rewriting and editing processes.
- You will be provided with a copy of the research report culminating from this national study.

Consent to participate in a national research project entitled ***Welfare-and-Work Issues for LGBTQ and Allied Teachers in Canada: Legislative, Legal, and Educational Policy Contexts Impacting their Personal and Professional Lives.***

Participant's Name: _____ (please print)

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Researcher's Name: _____ (please print)

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Researcher's Name: _____ (please print)

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Should you have any questions or concerns during any part of the research process, please contact:

André P. Grace, Ph. D.
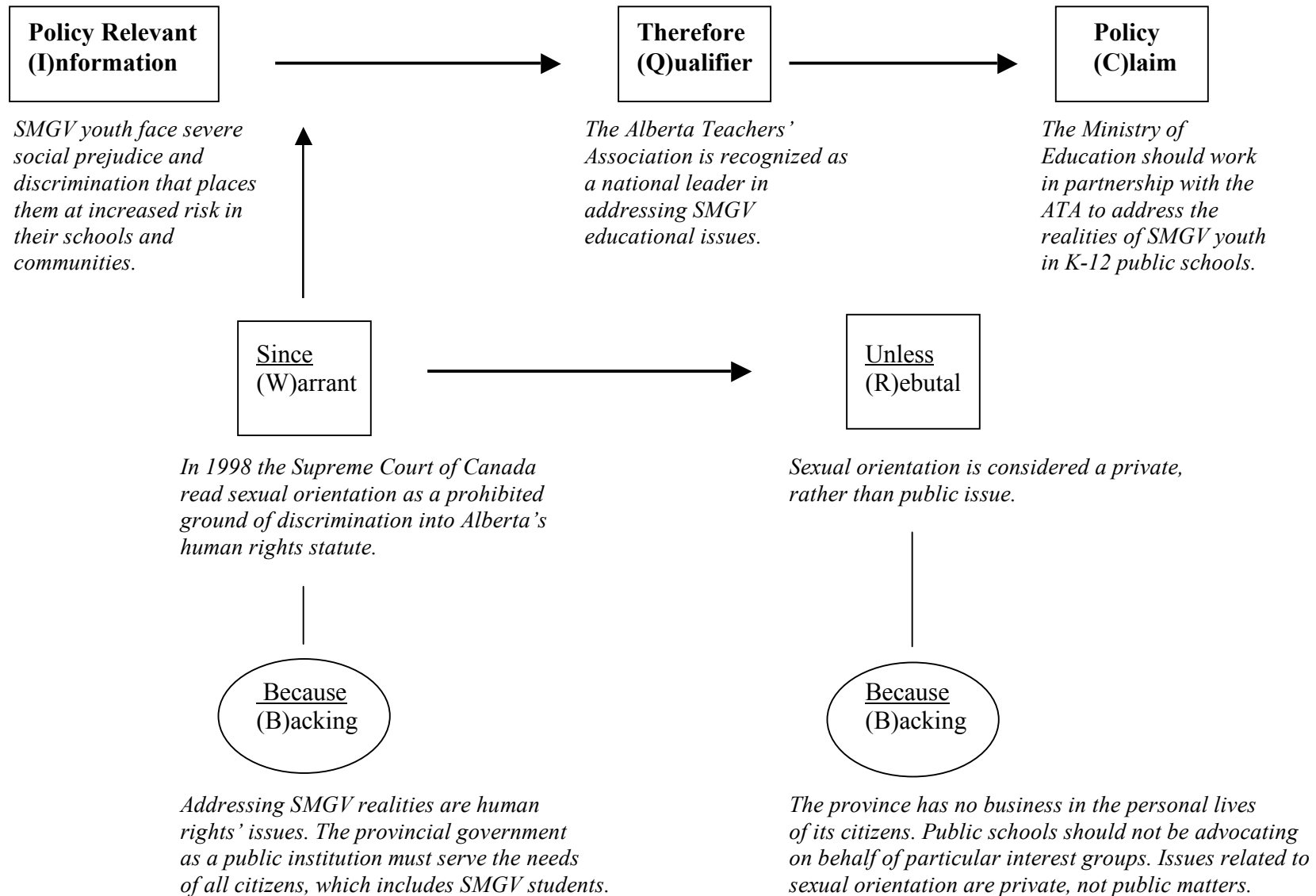**Tel: (780) 492–0767 Fax: (780) 492–2024**
E-mail: andre.grace@ualberta.ca

Kristopher Wells, Ph. D. Student
Tel: (780) 492–0772 Fax: (780) 492–2024
E-mail: kwells@ualberta.ca

Elements of the policy argument for addressing the realities of sexual minority and gender variant students in Alberta public schools

| Policy Relevant (I)nformation | → | Therefore (Q)ualifier | → | Policy (C)laim |

SMGV youth face severe social prejudice and discrimination that places them at increased risk in their schools and communities.

The Alberta Teachers' Association is recognized as a national leader in addressing SMGV educational issues.

The Ministry of Education should work in partnership with the ATA to address the realities of SMGV youth in K-12 public schools.

Since (W)arrant → Unless (R)ebutal

In 1998 the Supreme Court of Canada read sexual orientation as a prohibited ground of discrimination into Alberta's human rights statute.

Sexual orientation is considered a private, rather than public issue.

Because (B)acking

Because (B)acking

Addressing SMGV realities are human rights' issues. The provincial government as a public institution must serve the needs of all citizens, which includes SMGV students.

The province has no business in the personal lives of its citizens. Public schools should not be advocating on behalf of particular interest groups. Issues related to sexual orientation are private, not public matters.

I. Application for Ethics Review of Proposed Research

(revised June 21/05)

Principal Investigator - Kristopher Wells

Department/Faculty - Educational Policy Studies, Faculty of Education

Complete mailing address - 7-104 Department of Educational Policy Studies, Faculty of Education, University of Alberta

Co-applicant(s) - none

E-mail - kwells@ualberta.ca

Project title - Sex, Sexual, and Gender Differences in Canadian Schools: Perspectives on Policy and Practice

Project Deadlines

Starting Date (year/month/date) **2006/02/01**

Ending Date (year/month/date) **2008/04/31**

If your project is not finished before the Ending Date, you must apply for an extension by submitting the appropriate *Status of Research Study* form.

Annual Reporting

If your project extends beyond one year from the date of EEA REB approval, you will be required to submit an *Annual Report for Multi-Year Studies* at the end of each year of the project. Projects are normally subject to a complete re-submission after 3 years.

Status (if student) -
( ) Master's Project   ( ) Master's Thesis   (X) Doctoral Dissertation   ( ) Other (specify)

Funding (if applicable) -
( ) Grant Application   ( ) Contract Research   ( ) Non-Funded Research   ( ) Other (specify)

Do you plan to gather data in University of Alberta units other than Education, Extension or Augustana?   Yes ( )   No (X)
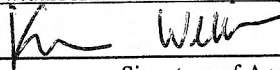   If yes, name the unit(s)

Is another educational institution involved in this project?   Yes ( )   No (X)
          If yes, name the institution(s) and the nature of the involvement

I, the applicant, agree to notify the EEA REB in writing of any changes in research design, procedures, sample, etc. that arise after the EEA REB approval has been granted. A *Request for Change in Methodology* form must receive approval from EEA REB before the modified research can proceed.

I also agree to notify the EEA REB immediately if any untoward or adverse event occurs during my research, and/or if data analysis or other review reveals undesirable outcomes for the participants.

I have read the University of Alberta Standards for the Protection of Human Research Participants [GFC Policy Manual, Section 66 [http://www.ualberta.ca/~unisecr/policy/sec66.html] and agree to comply with these Standards in conducting my research.

_____   _____
          Signature of Applicant   Jan. 25/06
                                                                              Date

As the supervisor/instructor, I have read and approve submission of this application to the EEA REB, and ensure that the proposed project is compliant with the University of Alberta Standards for the Protection of Human Research Participants [GFC Policy Manual, Section 66 [http://www.ualberta.ca/~unisecr/policy/sec66.html].

André P. Grace   André P. Grace   Jan. 25/06
Printed name of Supervisor/Instructor   Signature of Supervisor/Instructor   Date

ETHICS REVIEW STATUS

[X] Application approved by EEA REB member   [ ] Application approved by EEA REB   [ ] Application not approved

_____   January 31, 2006.
Signature of EEA REB Member   Date

Distribution of approval page: Original to EEA REB file; Copies to Applicant, Supervisor/Instructor (if applicable), Unit student file (if applicable)

II. Reviewer's Checklist for Research Application

Principal Investigator -

Project Title -
(PI Name and Project Title to be filled in by applicant.)

ASSESSMENT	YES	NO	N/A
1. Does the researcher provide a clear <u>statement of what is to be done</u>?	☑	☐	☐
2. If there is any circumstance which could compromise the voluntary consent of participants (e.g. incentives, captive populations, second relationship), has this been satisfactorily accounted for?	☐	☐	☑
3. Are the <u>data collection procedures</u> clearly specified?	☑	☐	☐
4. Have <u>copies of instruments</u> or samples of items to be used, including tests, interview guides, and observational schedules been provided?	☑	☐	☐
5. Have <u>information letters, consent forms, and other attachments</u>, as appropriate, been provided?	☑	☐	☐
6. Has the matter of <u>informed written consent</u> of participants been attended to?	☑	☐	☐
7. If underage, legally incompetent, or other "captive" subjects are used, is there provision for <u>the right to opt out</u> for (a) the subjects, and (b) their parents/guardians?	☐ ☐	☐ ☐	☑ ☑
8. Is there a clear <u>explanation of the involvement of human participants</u>?	☑	☐	☐
9. Has the <u>right to not participate</u>, and the <u>right to opt out</u> at any time without penalty, harm or loss of promised benefit been provided?	☑	☐	☐
10. Has provision been made for explaining the <u>nature, length and purpose</u> of the research to the participants and/or guardians?	☑	☐	☐
11. Are the procedures for providing <u>privacy, anonymity and confidentiality</u> acceptable?	☑	☐	☐
12. Is it clear that the study will <u>not be harmful or threatening</u> to the participants or others?	☑	☐	☐
13. If there are limited and/or temporary exceptions to the general requirements for full <u>disclosure of information</u>, is there clear provision for debriefing of participants?	☐	☐	☑
14. If <u>inducements or promises</u> are offered for participants, are they of such a nature that they do not compromise freedom of consent?	☐	☐	☑
15. Any other aspects of the study that need special ethical consideration are specified and acceptable?	☐	☐	☑
16. If personnel within units other than Education, Extension or Augustana are involved in this project, has research ethics approval been obtained from the appropriate REB(s)?	☐	☐	☑
17. If personnel from other educational institutions are involved in this project, has research ethics approval been obtained from the appropriate REB(s)?	☐	☐	☑

EEA REB member's recommendation:

☑ Approve   ☐ Refer to EEA REB   ☐ Resubmit with changes, as indicated on the application

_____
Signature of EEA REB member

_____
Date

January 31, 2006