

9000
55-11-04

This is to certify that the
dissertation entitled

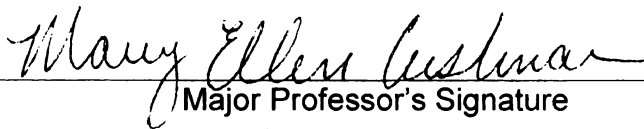
LGBT STUDENT NEGOTIATIONS OF ACADEMIC LITERACIES:
THE BUILDING OF DISCIPLINARY AND CAMPUS LITERACY
COMMUNITIES

presented by

BRIAN CHARLES LEWIS

has been accepted towards fulfillment
of the requirements for the

Ph.D. degree in ENGLISH


Major Professor's Signature

5/11/04

Date



PLACE IN RETURN BOX to remove this checkout from your record.
TO AVOID FINES return on or before date due.
MAY BE RECALLED with earlier due date if requested.

DATE DUE	DATE DUE	DATE DUE

LGBT STUDENT NEGOTIATIONS OF ACADEMIC LITERACIES: THE BUILDING
OF DISCIPLINARY AND CAMPUS LITERACY COMMUNITIES

By

Brian Charles Lewis

A DISSERTATION

Submitted to
Michigan State University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Department of English

2004

ABSTRACT

LGBT STUDENT NEGOTIATIONS OF ACADEMIC LITERACIES: THE BUILDING OF DISCIPLINARY AND CAMPUS LITERACY COMMUNITIES

By

Brian Charles Lewis

Compared to studies of other under-represented groups, such as people of color, women, and working classes, very few studies have examined how LGBT students deal with the constraints of academic literacies. The purpose of this dissertation is twofold: (1) to investigate how LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgendered) students negotiate academic literacies and (2) to learn what solutions exist to make LGBT students feel more included in academic discourse. 105 questionnaires were distributed to LGBT community college and university students, and then these questionnaires were followed by 32 interviews with students who completed the questionnaire. The study resulted in two major findings. To begin with, it reveals that LGBT college students tend to have negative attitudes towards writing, both in and out of the classroom, when weak, ephemeral writing communities are present. This negative view of writing also includes chat room literacy communities, which the students in this study generally want to avoid. On the other hand, the study also shows that LGBT students, particularly lesbian students, have a desire to form strong campus communities outside classroom environments, both in person and in asynchronous online forums. The last chapter of this dissertation offers a plan for future research which suggests that we must examine the issue of LGBT student inclusion in academic literacies not just from a classroom perspective, but from an institutional perspective as well. This plan argues that by

evaluating academic literacy spaces and by engaging in dialogue on inclusion with specific groups, more inclusion of LGBT issues in disciplinary and campus literacy spaces can be achieved. Achieving LGBT student inclusion in these spaces should involve the entire academic community: students, teachers, and administrators alike.

DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my dear friends, Ronald Herrema and Stephan Weinberger; to my sister, Alison Lewis; and, most of all, to my mother, Ethel Ackerman Lewis. I never would have finished without their love and support.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First of all, I would like to acknowledge the efforts of everyone on my committee, each of whom contributed something unique to the knowledge I gained during my years at Michigan State: Kathleen Geissler, for her valuable, constructive criticism that enabled me to produce higher quality work; Dean Rehberger, for teaching me so much about effective ways to use technology in education; Marilyn Wilson, for instilling in me an unwavering faith that I could complete this dissertation and for teaching me how much students can gain by being actively involved in their own learning; and, most of all, Ellen Cushman, my committee chair, for giving me so much important feedback on my writing in the short time we've known each other and for providing me invaluable assistance with my professional development.

In addition, I want to thank all the students who participated in this project, especially the interviewees. They took time from their busy schedules to help me out, and this project would not have been possible without their candor. Thank you so much!

Many thanks also to the following organizations and individuals for helping me locate students for this study: the MSU LGBT Alliance, RING, SGL Social, the GSA at Grand Rapids Community College, the GSA at Jackson Community College, Break the Silence at Albion College, Spectrum at the University of Toledo, Brent Bilodeau, Sean Shannon, Nat Furrow, Jeff Hartman, Tom Oakley, Erik Green, Mimi Pugh, Erin Roberts, Ken Powell, and Kevin Leistner.

Finally, I must thank my family, friends, and colleagues, who supported me so much emotionally over the years: Mom, Alison, June Land, Ron, Steve, Nathalie,

Heather, Rodney, Carrie, Jayme, Jessica, Monica, Brett, Brandi, Mel, Kirk, Rachel,
Sarha, Chris, Cheryl, Keri, Teresa Purvis, Larry Levy, and Linda Smith. All of you are
special people. Thanks for believing in me.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

List of Figures.....	xi
“What’s LGBT?”: An Introduction to the Key Issues.....	1
Introduction.....	1
Stuckey, Gee, and My Working Definition of Literacy.....	3
What Are “Academic Literacies”?.....	5
The Violence of Literacy: Research on LGBT Students.....	8
K-12 Education Studies.....	9
College Education Studies.....	12
Composition Studies.....	18
Electronic Literacy Studies.....	22
Conclusion.....	25
 “I’ve Never Thought about These Questions Before”: Data Collection	
and Analysis.....	27
Overview.....	27
Data Collection.....	28
The Questionnaire.....	28
The Interviews.....	34
Methodological Complications.....	40
Data Analysis.....	47
Phenomenological Categorization.....	47
The Usefulness of Performative Theory.....	48
The Usefulness of Discourse Theory: Gee and Bakhtin.....	51
Conclusion.....	58
 Disabling Writing, Enabling Communities: The Questionnaire Results.....	60
Overview.....	60
Trend One: Negative Attitudes towards Writing Activities with Weak	
Communities.....	63
Writing as an Ineffective Means of Negotiating Academic Literacies.....	63
Writing as an Ineffective Solution for Facilitating LGBT	
Student Inclusion.....	68
A Dislike of Writing in Chat Rooms.....	72
Trend Two: A Desire for Campus Literacy Communities.....	76
Forums outside Class.....	76
Community Solutions.....	79
Conclusion.....	83

“She Didn’t Think It Was Right”: LGBT Student Negative Attitudes towards Writing.....	87
Overview.....	87
Students’ Attitudes towards Writing: The Research.....	89
General Research on the Attitudes of Writers.....	89
Research on LGBT Students.....	92
Writing in Class: An Ineffective Means of Negotiating Academic Literacies.....	94
Writing outside of Class: Another Ineffective Means of Dealing with Academic Literacies.....	106
Sharing Informal Writing with Others: A Source of Classroom Anxiety.....	117
“Informal” as “Formal”.....	118
“Informal” as “Uncomfortable”.....	121
Conclusion.....	123
 LGBT Students’ Perceptions of Problems with Online Chat.....	 126
Overview.....	126
Research on Students’ Attitudes towards Chat.....	128
General Research on Attitudes towards Chat Rooms.....	128
Research on LGBT Student Negotiations of Chat Rooms.....	129
Infrequency of Chat Room Use.....	131
Chat Rooms as “Hook Up” Sites.....	134
Chat Room Use during “Coming Out” Process.....	137
Anonymous Use of Chat Rooms in Courses.....	139
Student Failure to “Take Chat Seriously”.....	139
Dislike of Anonymity.....	141
Conclusion.....	145

LGBT Student Campus Literacy Communities outside the Classroom:	
Online and On-Campus.....	147
Overview.....	147
Review of the Research: Online and On-Campus Communities.....	150
Building Communities Online.....	150
Building Communities in On-Campus Groups.....	152
Connections to My Work.....	154
Online Communities.....	155
E-mail Communities.....	155
Listserv Communities.....	157
Blog Communities.....	159
Forming Communities through On-Campus Groups.....	163
Multiple Group Membership.....	164
Friendship.....	164
Activism.....	166
Pride in Identities.....	167
Education.....	169
Conclusion.....	170
 “You Just Have to Speak Up”: Lesbians and Campus Literacy	
Communities.....	172
Overview.....	172
“Lesbian” as Outsider.....	174
The Language Communities of Gabrielle, Marie, and Lechele.....	176
Gabrielle.....	176
Marie.....	180
Lechele.....	185
Conclusion.....	190

“More Community, More Literacy”: A Plan for Future Research.....19

Overview..... 19

Step One: Evaluation..... 19

 Classroom Communities: Discipline-Specific Literacies..... 19

 Non-Classroom Communities: Campus Literacies.....19

Step Two: Dialogue.....20

 Where would it take place?.....20

 Who would participate?.....20

 What would be discussed?.....21

Conclusion: Summary and Beyond.....22

 Chapter Summary.....22

 Beyond Dialogue: What’s Next?.....22

Appendices..... 224

 Appendix A.....224

 Appendix B.....227

 Appendix C.....228

Works Cited.....229

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1: Student Agreement on Different Academic Literacy Statements.....64

Figure 2: Student Agreement on Different Statements of Solution.....69

Figure 3: Student Use of Different Literacy Forums.....73

Figure 4: Student Agreement on Classroom versus Community Solutions.....80

Figure 5: Marie’s Blog.....182

“What is LGBT?”: An Introduction to the Key Issues

Introduction

I began my first full-time college teaching job with great enthusiasm, hoping to make a difference at an institution currently in the process of revamping its English program. At one of the first department meetings, a discussion ensued on the materials that should be taught in a new course called “Minority Literature.” Everyone seemed to agree that African-American literature, Native American literature, and Asian-American literature should all be covered in this course. I started to notice that the focus of the discussion seemed to be on visible racial minorities; not one word was said about the invisible minority of the LGBT community. “Shouldn’t we be teaching LGBT literature?” I queried. My question was returned with blank stares. The department chair finally asked, “What is LGBT?” and some of my colleagues snickered. “I’m referring to materials written by lesbians, gays, bisexuals, and transgendered people about their experiences,” I replied. “Gays and lesbians are minorities by choice,” one of my colleagues sniffed. “We’re only focusing on *true* minorities here.” Several people bobbed their heads in agreement. The woman who made the remark also happened to be the chair of my evaluation committee, so I felt at the time that it would not be safe for me to pursue the argument further. But I seethed with anger at her ignorance.

This entire circumstance made me think about the role that sexual orientation plays in people’s literacy development: to what extent are LGBT individuals ousted from college curricula, especially courses involving intensive reading and writing? The research indicates that, indeed, links between sexual orientation and literacy are often

ignored, in spite of the fact that some research does indicate that “queering” college classrooms brings several advantages to students and teachers alike. Such advantages include the stimulation of critical thinking, the battling of homophobia, and the creation of a “safe” space for rhetorical performance of gender and sexuality by straight and queer students alike. I began to wonder: why is the link between sexual orientation and literacy so often ignored? This dissertation is a result of my desire to rectify this situation: to speak of the unspeakable, to give voice to a voiceless community.

My study had two major goals. First of all, I attempted to discover how LGBT students negotiate academic literacies, which often act as oppressive forces against the LGBT student population. Secondly, I tried to learn ways in which academic discourse could be more inclusive of LGBT students. As a result of my findings, I learned that, like many undergraduate students, LGBT students tend to have negative views on writing, both in and out of classroom environments. However, their unfavorable perspectives on writing tend to stem from their frustrations with institutional and classroom constraints regarding their writing processes rather than from fears of writing on LGBT concerns. In particular, writing activities lack a sense of community, LGBT student interest in writing weakens. Consequently, LGBT students desire to form literacy communities outside classroom spaces within academe, both in person and online, and see these communities as their key to inclusion in academic discourse. Therefore, this dissertation argues that working on classroom inclusion is not enough: we can achieve more inclusion of LGBT issues in academic literacy communities only by developing our understanding of how LGBT students’ literacy lives emerge as communal events which take place in a variety of discourse spaces.

To elucidate my position in this study, I shall begin by revealing my working definitions of both “literacy” and “academic literacies.” My definition of “literacy” here tends to integrate the approaches of J. Elspeth Stuckey and James Gee, and my conception of “academic literacies” asks us to consider that many academic literacy events take place outside classroom spaces.

Stuckey, Gee, and My Working Definition of “Literacy”

In her 1992 text *The Violence of Literacy*, J. Elspeth Stuckey spends a great deal of time critiquing the specific “subjectivities” of America’s class structure. As the title of her text indicates, she clearly positions herself as literacy’s antagonist, thus demonstrating that she rebels against it. The text manifests an angry tone throughout, not one of acceptance; we do not get the impression from Stuckey that she is trying to work “within literacy categories,” as Horsman suggests. For Stuckey, literacy is, first and foremost, an act of “violence.” Even though popular myths about literacy suggest that it has the power to transform America for the better, and most texts about literacy describe being “literate” in glowing terms, Stuckey asserts that “The truth is that literacy and English instruction can hurt you, more clearly and forcefully and permanently than it can help you, and that schools, like other social institutions, are designed to replicate, or at least not to disturb, social division and class privilege” (123).

In contrast to Stuckey’s, Gee’s approach to literacy is better classified as a socio-cultural approach than a Marxist approach. His studies tend to focus on discourse analysis: Gee asserts that to engage in an act of reading or writing, one must engage in a discourse. James Gee defines “discourse” as “a socially accepted association among ways of using language, of thinking, and of acting that can be used to identify oneself as

a member of a socially meaningful group or ‘social network’” (“Literacy” 537). He urges us to “Think of a discourse as an ‘identity kit’ which comes complete with the appropriate costume and instructions on how to act and talk so as to take on a particular role that others will recognize” (“Literacy” 537). The more adept one is at taking on this role, the more “literate” one is considered to be. Since some individuals may seriously deviate from this role when engaging in discourse to the point where they are not understood or accepted by their community at large, I also would argue that we need to recognize literacy’s potential for the “violence” that may surface when such deviations occur.

Therefore, in my working definition of “literacy” for this study, I integrate the tenets of Gee’s discourse theory with Stuckey’s Marxist stance. I concur with Gee’s view that we must perceive literacy as one’s ability to read and write within one’s particular culture or community, but I also feel that we need to validate Stuckey’s more radical view that literacy, particularly academic literacies, may often manifest a “violent” side. As most sociocultural theorists indicate (Horsman, Giroux, Gee, Freire), those individuals whose literacy skills vary from people in positions of power, such as racial and class minorities, are often perceived as lacking literacy skills rather than possessing different ones. Thus literacy is more than just an ability to read and write; it can be, as Stuckey suggests, embedded with a political system which varies from one culture to another, and often reinforces cultural division.

When I was told by my colleagues at my first full-time job that LGBT works did not belong in a class on minority literature, I was not only being excluded from the discourse community of my home department, I was also a victim of academic

“violence” through the class hierarchy it reinforced. When my department refused to include LGBT literature in the “Minority Literature” course, I felt that my interests—and, in fact, my very identity as a gay man—were shunned as unimportant. I clearly received the message that “LGBT lives do not have a place here at our university.” As a result of this incident, I became more aware of the power of bureaucratic institutions to dictate language and literacy policies: those who employ the discourses of the most powerful in academe tend to succeed the most, and those who do not tend to be overlooked, even in academic environments where we often pride ourselves for our “concerns with diversity” or our “attention to multiculturalism.” This dissertation examines the relationship between literacy spaces in the academic world and one of those overlooked groups: LGBT students. Since I often refer to “literacy” in the plural here, I would also like to explain the rationale behind my working definition of “academic literacies.”

What Are “Academic Literacies”?

Many teachers want their students to leave their classrooms with an ability to read and write in the discourse of the academy. If they can do this, then their students have presumably achieved what is frequently termed “academic literacy.” Edith Peschke defines “academic literacy” as “instruction that values standard English usage through logical hierarchies, subordination of one idea over another, rationalizations and categorizations reached through text-assisted memory, etc.” (1). While this is indeed an admirable goal, I feel that it needs examination and revision. After all, as Stephen G. Brown notes, a “growing gap” exists “between the classroom and the community of students, between their home dialects and Standard English” (5). I would also add that this gap exists not just between the classroom and home communities, but also between

most academic discursive spaces and more familiar language communities, thus setting up a dichotomy between the secondary discourses of academe and the primary discourses of family and friends of which James Gee speaks.

Elizabeth Chiseri-Strater makes us more aware of the multiple academic discursive spaces in her discussion of “academic literacies,” implying that more than one exist, and her distinction between “literacy” and “literacies” is helpful. And Ann Johns further reinforces this point in *Text, Role, and Context*, in which she “prefers ‘literacies’ to ‘literacy,’ and the point is made that literacy is not conceived of as an incremental process” (Hall 392). Examining “literacy” in the plural allows us to realize the complex discourse relationships that make up institutional space. However, Chiseri-Strater, Johns, and other contemporary scholars tend to refrain from providing examples of “academic literacies” which may exist on college and university campuses. At times, scholarly definitions of “academic literacies” are vague. In “Multiple Literacies and the Reading of Literature,” Hunter McEwan suggests that “‘academic literacies’ . . . directs one immediately to the idea that there is one approach to literacy” (54), but he refrains from providing examples of different “academic literacy” communities. Lea and Street’s definition of “academic literacies” in “Student Writing and Feedback in Higher Education” is slightly more specific: they note that “academic literacies” view “literacies as social practices” and that “An academic literacies approach views the institutions in which academic practices take place as constituted in, and as sites of, discourse and power” (35). While Lea and Street do help to define “academic literacies,” they avoid giving examples of them, leaving readers to wonder whether “academic literacies” truly can exist beyond classroom spaces. Elizabeth Hoadley-Maidment acknowledges the

existence of different “academic literacy” communities in her essay “From Personal Experience to Reflective Practitioner: Academic Literacies and Professional Education.” In the essay’s section on “Academic Discourse, Academic Literacies, and Professional Education,” she stresses that “each academic discipline—for example, psychology or sociology—is an individual discourse community” (166). However, she conflates the terms “academic literacies” and “academic discourse” in her discussion, and the only distinction she makes between “discourse communities” is between students’ “academic discourse” and “occupational discourse”: she acknowledges that the two are separate, and then claims “we need to examine the commonalities between the writing done by, for example, nurses and social workers, and undergraduate academic writing” (169).

While Hoadley-Maidment speaks of “academic literacies” mainly in terms of the discourse communities of different classroom disciplines, I would argue that “academic literacies” involve much more than classroom discourse. These “academic literacies” are the reading, writing, and speaking activities which occur in a variety of places in academe. My dissertation adds to contemporary scholarship on “academic literacies” in that it provides many examples of the wide variety of “academic literacies” that may exist outside classroom spaces. We need to recognize that “academic literacies” occur in student groups, in resource fairs, in departmental meetings, in conferences, in presentations, in committees, and in countless other spaces outside the classroom environment, including both asynchronous and synchronous online spaces. Increasingly, these literacies may even be expressed through images, particularly as we increasingly encounter more technological literacies in the 21st century. This dissertation suggests that we must think of LGBT student literacies from this complex perspective if we are to fully

understand these students' literacy negotiations. The literacy spaces in academe are many and varied, and reach far beyond classroom boundaries. Therefore, throughout this dissertation, I will be referring to two different types of "academic literacies": (1) disciplinary literacies, which usually occur in classroom spaces and cover specific classroom subjects, and (2) campus literacies, which take place outside the classroom but still deal with issues pertinent to students' personal and professional lives. "Campus literacies," as I define them here, include not just the face-to-face literacy activities of on-campus groups, but also the more nebulous literacy negotiations which occur in electronic spaces outside of class, in such environments as e-mails, listservs, and blogs. However, the question still remains: In what ways do LGBT students experience academic literacies—either the disciplinary literacies or the campus literacies--as oppressive, constraining forces?

The Violence of Literacy: Research on LGBT Students

In explaining literacy's divisive nature, most scholars do note a type of hegemony or misuse of power which often victimizes women (Wahlstrom, Radway), racial minorities (Smitherman, Solá and Bennett, Naidoo, Holmes), and lower/working classes (Olson, E. Barton, Faigley, Selfe). While some scholars on literacy do come to their conclusions after studying particular communities of college or university students, many of them refer to a more general sample of the population in their discussion (Gee, D. Barton). However, my research is more particularized. First of all, I narrow my focus only to college and university students. Secondly, I focus on an often-overlooked group of minorities: LGBT students. Since I decided to focus on studying a minority population in particular, I did not wish to include straight, "non-queer" students in the

study; most straight students share the hetero-normative values of academic literacies. Even compared to studies of other under-represented groups, such as people of color, women, and underclasses, very few studies have examined how the “violence” of literacy affects LGBT students alone or explored possible methods of rectifying this violence. Therefore, to fill in this gap in research on LGBT student literacy, my study stresses the different means of combating the nature of this “violence,” as I learn how LGBT students negotiate academic discourse. Research on LGBT student literacy has taken place in four major research areas: K-12 education studies, college education studies, composition studies, and electronic literacy studies. When examining these four areas of study, we can see that two major gaps exist in this research: (1) the studies which stress that the “violence” exists tend to ignore possible solutions to the problem at the academic level and (2) the studies which stress the solutions are usually limited in terms of research design, scope of coverage, or definitions discussed. My work, on the other hand, examines both the constraints of academic literacies and the solutions to these constraints in detail.

K-12 Education Studies

Several studies in K-12 education have made important observations on the marginalized roles of LGBT K-12 students. Simon Harris, a British professor of English education, was one of the first to address how the academic world affects young LGBT students in a book-length study. Harris provides elaborate lesson plans to fight the oppressiveness that young LGBT students often experience in his 1990 text *Lesbian and Gay Issues in the English Classroom: The Importance of Being Honest*. He focuses on British secondary schools, describing a lesson plan for teaching the children’s novel

Annie on My Mind, which describes the lesbian relationship of two high-school age girls and the consequences that they must endure as a result of their relationship. To deal with the issues within the book, Harris suggests that his students write “a dialogue between a teenager and her/his closest adult relative, in which the young person ‘comes out’” (81). For Harris, “The dialogue work is intended to make students realize the difficulty inherent in finding a solution to this problem and also to allow them to articulate their own feelings and responses to such a situation” (82). Finally, Harris recommends having the students reenact the book’s trial scene, and ultimately videotape them (85-87). By reading the novel and engaging in Harris’s activities, students can develop their skill of predicting words within the text, critique hetero-normative labels, role-play scenarios to facilitate activities for discussion and writing, and learn about sexuality and gender roles in the culture in which they live.

After Harris’s study, American educators began to explore similar issues in K-12 contexts. Peter Nardi, a sociologist from Pitzer College who often researches the place of gay men in American society, mentions in his 1994 article “Gay and Lesbian Issues in the Classroom” that, at the high school level, “When . . . proms, yearbook photographs of school events, language used in official school documents, all ignore gay and lesbian students, heterosexuality is presented as the only viable pattern, and homosexuality is communicated as deviant” (“Gay and Lesbian” 128). Gay and lesbian students do not get the chance to read about themselves in high school; they remain invisible, and so does their language and/or means of communication (“Gay and Lesbian” 129). Randal Donelson, Professor in Elementary Education at Ohio State University-Newark, shows us that the English classroom can serve as a way for gay and lesbian students to see their

experiences legitimized and for straight students to comprehend what “gay” entails. In his 1997 *Creating a Safe Space for Gay and Lesbian Students in the English/Language Arts Classroom*, he stresses that, for teens especially, the question “What is gay?” needs to be answered through reading and literature. Like Nardi, James Earl Davis, who studies educational leadership and policy issues in the department of African-American Studies at Temple University, also examines a younger age group in his 1999 article “Forbidden Fruit: Black Males’ Constructions of Transgressive Sexualities in Middle School.” His article provides important insights into the linguistic significance of the term “gay” for African-American middle school students. After interviewing several adolescent black males, Davis concludes that “gay” becomes a term for this group to describe those males who act in a sissified manner, regardless of the sexual orientation of those particular individuals. This definition results in “a repressive, largely self-created culture grounded in hegemonic masculinity that enforces strict gender conformity”; the gay black adolescent males end up feeling victimized within their own culture (Davis 58).

My work builds upon the trail laid down by all these authors. While Harris’s lesson plans are valuable suggestions for pedagogical approaches, my pedagogical suggestions result from more formalized research. Peter Nardi suggests that educators must “change the sociocultural and institutional arrangements that perpetuate exclusion of gay people’s lives” (“Gay and Lesbian” 129), and stresses the importance of having “the clout and legitimacy of larger organizations” when deciding to take action against oppressive forces (such as media which perpetuate offensive stereotypes) (“Changing Gay” 440). My work follows up Nardi’s observations by offering specifics as to how one obtains this “legitimacy.” It also helps us to recognize how, as teachers, we already have

a kind of legitimacy that would permit us to address these concerns. Overall, even though Nardi's work alludes to the exclusion of LGBT students from high school literacy events, Nardi stresses oppressiveness in the media against LGBT people in general, whereas my study focuses more on academic literacies in particular. In addition, my work adds to the work of both Donelson and Davis. Donelson's study focuses on finding ways to assuage literacy's constraints against LGBT students, and Davis's study, conversely, focuses more on merely acknowledging that such restrictions persist. This dissertation will demonstrate the ways in which academic literacies sometimes act as oppressive forces against LGBT students, explore how LGBT students negotiate these forces, and also offer possible ways to rectify the problems that they present.

College Education Studies

In studies in college education in the 1990s, two educators on the teaching of literature, Joseph Cady and Diane Brunner, began to explore the place of queer sexualities in the college classroom; specifically, both scholars acknowledged that LGBT students must confront a hetero-normative literacies and suggested solutions for helping LGBT students feel more included in the English classroom. Cady, an author of several studies of gay literature in the Renaissance, as well as of essays on AIDS literature, wrote the 1992 essay "Teaching Homosexual Literature as a 'Subversive' Act," was one of the first to note a hegemony that persists in English classrooms. Cady suggests that instructors too often apply "new-inventionism" in academic literacies. According to Cady, this "new-inventionism" wrongly claims that "homosexuality is a late nineteenth-century 'invention'"; instead, literature classes should acknowledge that homosexuality has existed for centuries (103). To combat the constraints of new-inventionism, he

advocates the teaching of LGBT “material in historical perspective” (97). He would rather focus on a historical period than do a broad survey course; he stresses the importance of LGBT people knowing their history. A “new-inventionist” approach, on the other hand, would examine only contemporary materials on queer culture. Brunner, a theorist in critical pedagogy and performativity from Michigan State University, discusses her successes with using collaborative writing and performance in her college literature classroom in her 1997 essay “Challenging Representations of Sexuality through Story and Performance.” Her work focuses more on the potential of queer performative space. Brunner’s students created “autobiographical narratives . . . that seemed especially important for their own constructions of self” (179). They then “worked in teams to script portions of each narrative into a play—a collective autobiography,” which “seemed to uncover—unmask—some of the repressed shadows of both individual and collective struggles to construct sexual and social identities” (179). Through this collaborative writing effort, students developed their ability to deal with “sensitive subjects” as well as their ability (re)articulate their words before an audience (180). Brunner thus concludes that “The potential for transformative—even revolutionary—moments, then, occurs each time we create a space for imagining the unimagined” (179).

While Cady does briefly acknowledge the hetero-normative constraints of academic literacy that LGBT students must encounter, and offers a solution for dealing with these constraints (a historical curriculum), my dissertation extends his original ideas further. Cady’s syllabus of readings for his historical survey course includes “only authors who we know or can reasonably determine were/are homosexual or bisexual and only writing by such authors that express their homosexual feelings or experiences or that

are in some way responses to or reflections of the homosexual situation" (94). However, my work suggests that other communities of writers—such as transgendered people and straight individuals writing from queer perspectives—also have much to offer LGB communities, both in and out of classroom spaces. This study emphasizes inclusion, rather than exclusion: we can find the ultimate solutions to achieving LGBT student inclusion in academic literacy spaces by working together in language communities, regardless of our sexual orientations. In addition, Cady seems to assume that a happy medium between his perspective and "new-inventionism" (the suggestion that homosexuality is a nineteenth-century invention) cannot be reached, but he does not really explore any way to mediate the two, even though some students may find some value in new-inventionism's focus on contemporary culture. My work, by contrast, attempts to find a place for "queer-friendly" individuals and for students who would find some value in a "new-inventionist" approach of having current homosexual literature and popular culture in the classroom. This solutions, I argue, may be located not just in new, queer-friendly classroom pedagogical approaches, but also within language communities outside the classroom, in which many individuals, straight and queer, students, faculty, and administrators, may work together to make the LGBT community feel more included in academic discourse.

Like Cady's, Brunner's work does indeed open up new opportunities for classroom discourse, and acknowledges that queer voices may be sometimes marginalized in English classrooms. However, we should keep in mind that Brunner's study here is more concerned with showing the liberating potential that performance may create and the creation of "queer" classroom spaces than it is with providing LGBT

students new voices in the classroom. My work resembles Brunner's in its concern with discovering transformative, inclusive pedagogies; however, it differs from hers in its examination of LGBT student voices. Much time is spent in my study recounting the words of LGBT students, in particular, and revealing their views on academic literacies. Since my work pays such close attention to students' direct words, we can develop an even greater understanding of the identities of these marginalized students and the literacy communities within which they participate.

Unlike most scholarship from the 1990s, 21st century studies of LGBT college students reveal a desire to examine more complex dimensions of queer academic presence, such as the role of transgendered people in academe, or intersections between race and sexual identity. Jody Norton, Lecturer in English Language and Literature and Women's Studies at Eastern Michigan University, is only one of select few to focus on literacy's violence against transgendered students in her 2000 essay "(Trans)gendering English Studies." She rightly points out that "the essentialist sex/gender binary *male/female* [sic] remained largely uninterrogated until the 1990s, and continues its de facto dominance over our pedagogies, curricula, and critical writing to this day" (79). Norton thus claims that those interested in sexuality studies have mostly ignored ways of examining genders which exist out of this binary (transgenders), partly because this binary still dictates classroom procedures and politics. Little space exists in academia for transgendered studies. Both Christina Misa and Lisa Loutzenheiser, on the other hand, examine intersections between racial concerns and LGBT students in academic literacies. Misa, a lesbian activist and doctoral student at the University of Illinois, reveals how Chicana/o students experience much more marginalization than those in the racial

majority. Throughout her 2001 essay “Where Have All The Queer Students of Color Gone?,” she reports on her observations from interviewing three queer Chicana/o students. Maria Elena, one of her interviewees, tells us that Chicana lesbian women often lack an identity in academe. For example, when Maria Elena took a “Women of Color” course, the professor spent five weeks talking about white, straight, middle class women, and then five weeks on African American and Asian American women. “‘The professor said she forgot to include Chicana/Latina and queer literature’” and that ‘there isn’t enough stuff out there to use for this course’” (qtd. in Misa 72). Lisa Loutzenheiser’s 2001 essay “‘If I Teach about These Issues They will Burn Down My House’” also focuses on the violence against queer literacies. Loutzenheiser, a doctoral candidate in Curriculum and Instruction and Educational Policy Studies at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, notes that students often dissociate themselves from queer perspectives on purpose. For example, when her class discussed the work of queer writer Lorraine Hansberry, one of her students, Wanda, asserted that “‘There ain’t no black dykes, besides I think she’s [Lorraine Hansberry] only half black.’” By saying this, “[Wanda] left herself an out by saying that Hansberry was not queer, but even if she was, it was only because she was partially white” (201). For African-American Wanda, “queer” is defined only in white terms that having nothing to do with her culture. In addition, Loutzenheiser claims that heterosexual students rarely address sexuality issues in their narratives without prompting. Since her heterosexual students did not have to think about, discuss, or question their sexuality to the extent that queer students do, they had no impetus to write about sexuality.

Even though Norton effectively heightens her audience's awareness of the paucity of transgendered issues in the college classroom, her article contains three major gaps, which I fill in with my work here. To begin with, her suggested solutions to the problems she describes are overly general. She explains that "more complex and sophisticated theories of sex/gender" are sorely needed in order for us to discuss such issues outside of the typical male/female dichotomy (85), but she doesn't explain what steps we may take to formulate such theories, or offer a theory herself. In this dissertation, I offer a curricular theory on the basis of my research, which includes specific activities in which the entire academic community may engage in order to heighten the presence of the LGBT community in academe. In addition, Norton's article doesn't relate to English classrooms all that much; she provides very few specifics on how to do transreading in college English classrooms. Instead, she opts for a more heavily theoretical approach and seems to assume that her reader will know how to apply these theories. By contrast, my work puts more specific focus on application. This study includes the development of a pedagogical theory and specific activities for its implementation.

Misa emphasizes how curricular choices in the English classroom may make Chicano/a students feel non-existent, but she says very little about how this situation may be corrected. Even though Misa points out that "Educational researchers, teachers, and students can benefit from using queer Chicana/o and Chicana feminist theoretical works that challenge the silencing of multiple identities in various social, political, and economic dynamics" (77), she does not offer educators much guidance as to how this can be accomplished. For the most part, Misa appears more concerned with showing that the

violence of literacy affects LGBT students than she does with suggesting ways to rectify this violence. My dissertation, on the other hand, deals with both of these concerns. Chapters 4 through 6 concern the LGBT student negotiations of academic literacies, and chapters 6 and 7 explain how these students (and lesbians in particular) find these solutions through the building of language communities, both in person and online.

Loutzenheiser also elaborates on the problems that students have in dealing with the language of the LGBT community, but does not sufficiently explain how such problems may be solved. When Loutzenheiser comes out to her class, she notes that her “actions altered the class dynamic” (204), and her students became more open about discussion both race and sexuality concerns. Therefore, she implies that LGBT instructors should be honest about their sexual orientation if they desire to see a change in their students. However, she ignores the fact that some LGBT teachers may feel uncomfortable doing this, and she refrains from suggesting what straight instructors may do to initiate change. My work, on the other hand, suggests not only specific ways to accomplish this “altering” of “the class dynamic” besides coming out, but also goes into much more detail about how instructors may contribute to creating LGBT inclusion in academic literacy spaces, regardless of their sexual or gender orientation.

Composition Studies

In the 1990s, Harriet Malinowitz, Professor of English at Long Island University and Board of Directors of the Center for Lesbian and Gay Studies in New York, made the most in-depth, thorough contribution to the field of queer composition studies thus far with her 1995 book-length study of LGBT writers, *Textual Orientations*. The data in her study comes from her lesbian and gay themed writing courses, as well as four case

studies of lesbian and gay writing students. She reveals that, unfortunately, all the students in her study felt the need to either justify or suppress their queer identities in their writing (*Textual Orientations*, 257). She learns that, in most writing classes, LGBT “students will perceive risks which might inadvertently ‘out’ them as foolhardy, and see the benefits of experimenting with writing as secondary to the need to maintain safety for themselves” (*Textual Orientations*, 258). On the other hand, “an overtly gay-positive” writing class “provides a place in which lesbian and gay students’ rhetorical knowledge can be utilized, drawn on, and used as a foundation for their development as writers” (*Textual Orientations*, 257-58).

In spite of Malinowitz’s important suggestion that a “gay-positive” writing class may provide LGBT students with the rhetorical agency they so strongly crave, she does not address the need for the subversion of homophobia in the regular composition classroom until the end of her text, and, when she does, her suggestions are all too brief. The best suggestion she offers is one that she describes as an “umbrella suggestion . . . Learn about lesbian and gay people” (*Textual Orientations*, 258). She then goes on to claim that specific “suggestions wouldn’t work, anyway” (*Textual Orientations*, 260). She explains:

questions [on inclusion] are patently unanswerable because, in deferring to the authority of an “expert,” they divest the asker of the authority to make the very judgments that are requisite to dealing responsibly with the subject in the first place. Furthermore, these questions suggest that “gay students,” “straight students,” and “straight teachers” can be formulated as generically constituted and manageable sets emptied of all . . . complexity, heterogeneity, and particularity . . . (*Textual Orientations*, 260)

Malinowitz’s desire to want her audience to do their own thinking on this issue is admirable, but she short-changes those who have been “dealing responsibly with the

subject” for years and want a carefully articulated curricular theory on LGBT classroom pedagogy. My dissertation, assumes, by contrast, that the “asker” of whom Malinowitz speaks here not only wants to learn more about LGBT pedagogical methods, but also *deserves* some concrete, elaborate answers to his or her questions. After all, “learning about lesbian and gay people” is not something that one should have to do in isolation; as scholars, we can all help each other out in accomplishing this task, and we owe it to each other to talk about LGBT inclusion in academic literacies in a less general way.

Three years later, compositionist Pamela Olano employed interviews of LGBT students and faculty to stress how LGBT individuals often battle literacy’s violence. After interviewing several gay and lesbian undergrads, graduate students, and instructors in her 1998 article “The Unclaimed Self: Valuing Lesbian and Gay Diversity in the Writing Environment,” Olano concludes that, in writing classrooms, queer students are often forced to take on different types of queer identities, as out writers and as writers still in the closet. She stresses that most LGBT individuals in writing classrooms are NOT out writers; instead, they choose to hide their identities and assume false, straight identities in their writings. For Olano, the academic writing environment has the potential to serve as a stepping stone for real changes which challenge heteronormativity. She argues that students need to be given the freedom to write what they want, and even lists some questions that writing instructors could consider when creating their courses (87-89).

Olano’s work raises two more major issues that my dissertation considers. First of all, Olano’s article appears to assume that if students have the freedom to write what they like, they will be more likely to write on LGBT issues. But when most students are

given the freedom to write what they want, most of them will not write about LGBT concerns, because they do not see the issues as pertinent to their lives. Secondly, Olano's work forces me to query: what motivation will the resistant teacher have to address LGBT concerns to an equally resistant group of students? Straight instructors may not see the inclusion of LGBT issues as part of their social or curricular "responsibility" to address, even in classes on multicultural issues. My dissertation concerns issues involving both resistant students and resistant instructors. Throughout this study, we shall see ways in which hetero-normative students and instructors often do resist student engagement on LGBT concerns, and, consequently, LGBT students often develop negative attitudes towards writing.

Richard Miller, whose 2000 article "Fault Lines in the Contact Zones" builds upon the work of Mary Louise Pratt and Patricia Bizzell, reveals that some students will even go out of their way to mock queer topics. He spends much time discussing a student essay called "'Queers, Bums, and Magic'"; in fact, "an entire panel" was devoted to this essay at the 1992 4Cs conference (236). The student writer defines "'fags and bums'" as "'the lowest class,'" discusses surveying a man on Polk Street and asking him if he is "'a fag,'" and describes "urinating on a homeless person" (236). The faculty responses to the essay at the 4Cs conference were strongly divided: they "fell into . . . three categories: read the essay as factual and respond accordingly; read the essay as fictional and respond accordingly; momentarily suspend the question of the essay's factual or fictional status and respond accordingly" (237). But instead of favoring one of these three suggested solutions, Miller concludes his discussion by noting that instructors need to learn "how to

read, understand, and respond to the strange, sometimes threatening, multivocal texts [students] produce while writing in the contact zone” (252).

As we can see, Miller focuses on explaining how literacy may oppress the LGBT community (in this case, in the form of the student essay) rather on solving the violence literacy presents. He heightens our awareness of the problem, but he refrains from taking a firm stand on any solutions for addressing it. My dissertation, on the other hand, accomplishes both these goals in more detail. It thoroughly explores different ways in which LGBT students must negotiate academic literacies, and offers several solutions which may make LGBT students feel more comfortable within academic literacy spaces. In addition, my study also follows up on Miller’s work in that it examines other ways in which student “contact zones” manifest themselves and even suggests ways in which these contact zones may benefit students. Chapter 6 will reveal in more detail how students may use these “contact zones” to establish a sense of community, which lesbian students, in particular, find beneficial.

Electronic Literacy Studies

Other recent approaches to queer composition studies have examined how LGBT students negotiate electronic literacies. The August 1997 special issue of *Computers and Composition* included three major articles on LGBT student interactions with CMC (Computer-Mediated Communication). Jonathon Alexander’s “Out of the Closet and into the Classroom” suggests that gay and straight students alike can successfully use CMC to talk about issues involving sexual orientation (207-16). He argues: “. . . networked classrooms offer an unparalleled opportunity for students and teachers to address issues of sexual orientation in powerful and unprecedented ways” (208).

Then, Scott DeWitt's "Out There on the Web" examines how the World Wide Web helps to shape the identities of LGBT students (229-44), and Michelle Comstock and Joanne Addison's "Virtual Complexities" encourages readers to examine the literacy "cyberculture" that is beginning to emerge among young LGBT students. Comstock and Addison also suggest that a relationship exists "between academic literacy and the literate activities of this les-bi-gay youth cyberculture as well as how the discursive practices enacted in such contexts can inform our classroom teaching" (248). Randal Woodland, Director of the Writing Program at University of Michigan-Dearborn, also appears to offer a viable solution to LGBT silences in revealing the queer potential of CMC for writing and assessment purposes in his 2002 article "I Plan to Be a 10: Online Literacy for Lesbian, Gay, Bi, and Transgender Students." After distributing questionnaires and free response questions to many young LGBT people, Woodland concludes that "The results so far suggest that people coming out and coming into the larger community use online resources in three major ways: to get information, to explore their identity, and to find an audience" (7). He notes that CMC "creates a 'safe space' that seems free of most of the oppressive forces that threaten people's jobs, friendships, personal safety and even their lives in real, physical communities" (8).

Most of these studies on electronic literacies tend to take a largely positive approach to CMC: they see it as a liberatory pedagogy which assists LGBT students in discussing issues which matter most to them. Anderson views CMC as "powerful," and both DeWitt and Woodland similarly insist that electronic discourse has a transformative effect on the identities of LGBT students. And all of these studies focus exclusively on students under 30 in the research samples, leaving readers wonder how those over 30 feel

about the Internet. They also ignore other identity variables, such as race or ethnicity. In addition, the brevity of these articles leaves much room for more work to be done, and my dissertation attempts to fill in some of these gaps.

To begin with, my study indicates that LGBT student negotiations of electronic pedagogies are more complex than some recent studies suggest. For example, I concur with the aforementioned authors that some electronic literacies do indeed create an important means for LGBT students to negotiate academic discourse. However, unlike these authors, my focus here is on e-mail, listservs, and blogs (online journals), rather than electronic chat: the students in this study found the asynchronous online conversations—the ones in which they could form the strongest discourse communities—to be the most valuable. By contrast, my findings on synchronous chat are much less positive than Anderson, DeWitt, and Woodland indicate. For the most part, the LGBT interviewees in my study found electronic chat to be neither an important means of negotiating academic discourse nor an effective means of assuaging the hegemony of academic literacies. In addition, because of its depth, my dissertation better represents the diversity of academic student populations than the aforementioned articles. It includes students from ages 17-55, including several graduate students, and over twenty percent of both my questionnaire and interview samples include students of color. Comstock and Addison's willingness to explore the relationship between the disciplinary literacies of the classroom and other literacy communities outside of class is indeed admirable, and my dissertation follows up on their suggestion that we need to examine LGBT student literacies—including electronic ones--outside classroom environments in much more detail. It asks us to look more closely at LGBT literacies beyond the

classroom, the relationship between LGBT student language and the institutions which determine academic language policies, and the discourse communities that students form both online and on campus.

Conclusion

Overall, two major gaps exist in research on LGBT student literacy. The studies which stress that “violence” exists in academic discourse tend to ignore possible solutions to the problem at the academic level. And, by contrast, the solution-oriented works tend to refrain from detailing the nature of this “violence.” Very few studies have been done on LGBT students and academic discourse, so my dissertation attempts to fill in gaps left by these other works. It is much broader in scope than most other studies which have examined this topic, so it allows me to examine both manifestations of academic hegemony against LGBT students and the possible solutions to it. The major questions of my dissertation are as follows: How do LGBT students negotiate academic literacies? And what solutions exist to make LGBT students feel more included in academic literacy spaces? To find the answers to these questions, I distributed over 100 questionnaires to LGBT college students, and then held over 50 hours of interviews with them. My study has two major findings. To begin with, I found that LGBT students tend shun writing activities in which they feel they cannot build strong language communities. When the sense of community is weak, LGBT students have negative attitudes towards writing, both in and out of the classroom. This negative view of writing also includes chat room discourse, which the students in this study view as ephemeral and fragmentary. On the other hand, my study also shows that LGBT students, particularly lesbian students, have a strong desire to form language communities outside classroom environments, both in

person and in non-synchronous online forums. In the last chapter of this dissertation, on the basis of my findings, I offer a research plan which suggests that we must examine the issue of LGBT student inclusion in academic literacies not just from a classroom perspective, but from an institutional perspective as well. Assuaging the heteronormative constraints of these literacies should involve the entire academic community: students, teachers, and administrators alike.

“I’ve Never Thought about These Questions Before”: Data Collection and Analysis

Overview

When I interviewed Kadijah, an African-American bisexual student, at a local coffee shop, I noticed that she seemed thrilled to be there. She was extremely personable: she talked a lot during the interview, asked me questions as well, and smiled constantly. Near the end of the interview, she noted that she had to get to class soon. But she kept talking. And talking. Eventually, she said, “Oh, it’s ok if I miss some of this class. I can get it on tape anyway.” By the end of the interview, she said, “You know, I love doing this. I’ve never thought about these questions before.” About a week later, I received an e-mail from her, claiming that she “really enjoyed” the interview, and she signed it with “much love.”

I, of course, was ecstatic that Kadijah was so pleased to be asked questions about how her sexual identity relates to academic literacies. However, I was also sad that she hadn’t considered these questions before. Judging from her beaming smile throughout the interview, it didn’t seem as if she didn’t care about them. Had she not had the opportunities? If not, why not? My experience with Kadijah made me think even more about LGBT students and the ways in which they deal with hetero-normativity in academic literacies. It also reminded me of the many gaps that still exist in the current research on this topic. Our language, after all, is hetero-normative, so many teachers and scholars perceive this as normal and natural, and do not see a need to explore how language’s hetero-normativity affects LGBT students. Harriet Malinowitz suggests two important questions that college educators need to explore: “Are the conditions that produced lesbian and gay students’ rhetorical self-consciousness reproduced or altered in

. . . class? And, as a result, is their language subverted, or supported?” (*Textual Orientations*, 258). If LGBT students do suppress their queer identities in class, where, indeed, do LGBT identities belong in academe? To help answer such questions, this dissertation focuses not only on exploring the nature of academic hetero-normativity in more detail, but also on the best solutions to assuage the discursive constraints which hetero-normativity presents to LGBT students in academic communities. My key research questions here are as follows: How do LGBT students negotiate their way through academic language communities? And what can be done to make them feel more included within these communities? To answer these questions, I collected data through both questionnaires and interviews and then analyzed it through the lenses of both performative and discourse theory. This section explains the ways in which the questionnaires and interviews were designed and the reasons behind my methodological choices. I then go on to explain why performative and discourse theory were particularly helpful to me in analyzing my data from this study.

Data Collection

The Questionnaire

I began the research by designing a questionnaire. I divided the questionnaire into four sections (See Appendix A), and I employed a Likert scale on its first three sections. This Likert scale enabled me to assign single numbers to individual students’ attitudes and beliefs, and this allowed for simple, straightforward measuring. And since students only needed to select a number from 1 to 5 for most of the questions, they were able to complete the questionnaire quickly, which provided an impetus for them to do the questionnaire in the first place.

In section one of the questionnaire, I attempted to discover how LGBT college students negotiate academic literacies. I wanted to investigate major ways through which students might encounter the constraints of academic literacy, so I included reading, writing, speaking, and public actions here. I purposely placed similar types of questions next to each other in the questionnaire for ease of comparison: questions one and two focus on reading; questions three through five focus on writing; questions six and seven focus on speaking; and questions eight through ten focus on public actions taken by the students to negotiate academic literacies. Placing questions dealing with similar topics adjacent to each other on the questionnaire enabled me to see comparisons and contrasts within categories (reading, writing, speaking, and public actions) at a glance.

Since the places in which these literacy negotiations take place as well as the frequency with which they occur may have some influence on student attitudes, I thought it was important to learn where and how often students engaged in literacy activities as well. Therefore, section two of the questionnaire focuses on the literacy forums that students most often use to discuss LGBT issues, and the frequency with which they do so (see Appendix A, Section II). As with section one, I placed similar types together here, again, for ease of comparison; this organizational method helped me to categorize the different types of literacy forums which exist in academe. Statements one and two investigate students' use of electronic forums; statements three through five focus on students' use of campus literacy forums; and statements six through eight stress students' use of social settings as literacy forums for LGBT issues.

Next, I wanted to focus more on ways to rectify the problems that academic literacy presents for LGBT students, so section three of the questionnaire attempted to

discover the solutions that students perceived as the most feasible ones for assuaging the “violence” of academic literacies (see Appendix A, Section III). Statements one through nine from Part III deal with solutions that may take place in the classroom, whereas statements ten through fifteen concern possible solutions outside the classroom environment. I included more here on solutions in the classroom than outside the classroom because I originally assumed that most of the solutions would be found in classroom spaces. However, I eventually learned that most students perceive inclusion of LGBT student literacies as an institutional concern.

In section four of the study, students wrote in responses to some demographic questions (see Appendix A, Section IV). I wanted to measure demographics to add some complexity to the study; these demographics would enable me to learn if certain types of students were more likely to engage in certain activities more than others. This demographic section proved to be particularly helpful for my discussion in Chapter 7 on lesbians and their attitudes toward the building of language communities. I had the students write in responses here rather than provide scaled responses for two reasons. First of all, I wanted to give them some agency in describing themselves for the study. Secondly, LGBT/queer students tend to be particularly sensitive about labels. For example, if I had presented a scale which read, “What is your gender? Circle 1 for male and 2 for female,” the transgendered students would have felt excluded. Even if I had included a “3 for transgendered,” many of the students still would have felt annoyed, for several of them explained to me that they see gender as a much more complex system than two or three categories. Similarly, students’ sexualities, majors, and even class rank

are often perceived by the students in ambiguous ways, and I wanted to leave some room for this ambiguity in my study.

I then began my data collection by sending out e-mail requests for research participants to over 75 LGBT student organizations around the country. Most of the organizations were located in the mid-Michigan area, but I also sent my request to places as geographically diverse as New York University, University of California at Berkeley, and the University of Alabama. Several LGBT student organizations then invited me to come to their student organizational meetings, including organizations at Michigan State University, Jackson Community College, University of Toledo, and Grand Rapids Community College. Some asked to see copies of the questionnaire beforehand, so I would send copies of it via e-mail. Most questionnaires were distributed and filled out at these LGBT student organizational meetings, but some students preferred to mail their responses to me individually. All students who received the questionnaire were asked to sign and return a consent document along with the questionnaire. This document let them know that their responses were confidential, explained to them that their words will be used for my research purposes only, and reminded them that their participation was strictly voluntary.

The students for the study came from three different sources: (1) LGBT student organizations (including the Alliance, RING, and SGL Students of Color at Michigan State; the Gay-Straight Alliance at Grand Rapids Community College; and Spectrum at the University of Toledo); (2) an LGBT student resource fair at Michigan State University; and (3) my LGBT friends and acquaintances. Overall, 105 LGBT college students completed the questionnaire. The numerical breakdown by college and

university is as follows: 52 from Michigan State University; 14 each from the University of Toledo and Grand Valley State University; 12 from Grand Rapids Community College; 5 from Albion College; 2 each from Lansing Community College and Jackson Community College; and 1 each from University of California at Berkeley, Western Michigan University, Central Michigan University, and Texas (College/University unknown).

I want to stress here that I did not always hand the questionnaire to the participant directly; sometimes, the participants received the questionnaire from other sources and then it was delivered to me. For example, unbeknownst to me, the advisor of the Gay-Straight Alliance at Grand Rapids Community College copied my questionnaire off e-mail and then distributed it at Grand Valley State University. He collected the questionnaires and then returned them to me. The questionnaire from Berkeley was forwarded to a student, who mailed his responses to me. I also received one questionnaire from a graduate student in Texas who did not identify his university or college affiliation. Since I sent no questionnaires or calls for research participants to Texas, I have no idea how this student received it. Consequently, I began to understand that because the students' responses were self-reported and not random, they lend themselves to descriptive statistical analysis rather than inferential.

Sometimes in Section Four ("Demographics"), students wrote down more than one response to a question, because they perceived certain aspects of their identities as dualities. For example, some would identify their "race" as "Caucasian/Native American" or their sexual identity as "gay/queer." Because I counted all written responses in tabulating my demographic results, I have more than 105 responses in some

demographic categories. Appendix B indicates some of the demographic breakdowns for the questionnaire. The tables in Appendix B reveal that the majority of participants in the questionnaire portion of the study were between the ages of 18 and 21 (63 out of 105). The median age for questionnaire participants was 22.79, and the age range was from 17 to 50. Furthermore, the table on ethnic background shows that 22.0% (24 out of 109) of the questionnaire participants' responses to the "ethnicity" question indicated racial minority status. African-Americans, Hispanics, Native Americans, Arab-Americans, and Asians were all a part of the questionnaire's racial demographic. We can also see that a slight majority of the questionnaire participants self-identified as female (53 out of 105). The study also included 46 males, three transgendered students, and an intersexed student (who has both male and female genitals). In terms of sexual orientation, most of the students who filled out the questionnaire identified themselves as "gay" or "homosexual" (38 out of 111). The questionnaire participants also included 27 who self-identified as "lesbian" or "dyke"; 24 who identified themselves as "bisexual"; 10 "queer" students; 6 "straight"; and 6 other responses. We might wonder why "gay" was the most prevalent sexual orientation when the questionnaire study mostly consisted of women. This is partially explained by the fact that, out of the 24 individuals who identified as bisexual, 18 of them also self-identified as female. We might assume that this occurred because "gay" is traditionally used as an umbrella term for both "lesbians" and "gays," much the way that traditional Western discourse referring to "men" is often meant to include "women" as well. However, no questionnaire respondents in this study identified themselves as both "gay" and "female," which indicates that the common practice of lesbians referring to themselves as "gay" is apparently changing.

The questionnaire demographics also indicate that a majority of the participants in the study were humanities or social science majors (58 out of 114). For the purpose of forming “major” categories, I defined “humanities major” as anyone majoring in English, Art, History, Philosophy, Religion, Dance, Theatre, or other similar fields. Anyone majoring in Political Science, Urban Planning, Pre-Law, Psychology, Sociology, Anthropology, or other like fields was defined as a “social sciences major” in this study. 13 out of 114 declared majors were from medicine/health care fields, such as Pre-Med, Pre-Vet, Pharmacy, or Radiation Technology. In addition, Appendix B indicates that the four most popular career goals for questionnaire participants were teaching (19 out of 114), undecided (14 out of 114), medicine/health care (13 out of 114), and a graduate degree (11 out of 114).

The Interviews

Once the students’ answers to these questions were obtained, I followed up the questionnaire with 32 one-time interviews with a select group of students who completed the questionnaire. Students indicated on the questionnaire that they were willing to be interviewed, and then I contacted them by e-mail or phone to arrange for the interview. All interviews were recorded in their entirety, so the students interviewed were asked to sign an additional line on the consent document indicating their willingness to be tape-recorded. The interviewees came from the following institutions: 18 from Michigan State University; 4 from Grand Rapids Community College; 3 from the University of Toledo; 2 from Lansing Community College; and 1 each from Albion College, Central Michigan University, Western Michigan University, Jackson Community College, and the University of California-Berkeley. The interviews for the students from University of

Toledo, as well as the interview with the student at UC-Berkeley, were done by phone. All other interviews were done in person. Each interview lasted about 80 minutes, on average: the shortest took only 15 minutes (the student only wanted to tell a brief story), and the longest took two and a half hours.

These one-time interviews took place during the Fall 2003 semester. Overall, each interview followed a specific process. During the meeting, the student and I discussed his or her questionnaire responses and I asked my follow-up questions. I took copious notes during each meeting, and audio-recorded all student responses. After the meeting, I looked over my notes, filling in the gaps to clarify my understanding. Usually I did this in front of the student, so, if I had a question or needed something clarified, I could ask the student before he or she left.

I began most of the interviews by asking students why they choose to write/not write on LGBT topics in the classroom and why they choose to write/not write on LGBT topics outside the classroom. I asked these particular questions to gain some sense of their writing practices both in and out of classroom environments; I wanted to be able to see whether their writing habits differed in the two places. Their responses then enabled me to answer one of the major questions of this study: how do LGBT students negotiate academic literacies?

Then I asked them if there are other strategies (that are not listed on the questionnaire) that they use to engage with LGBT issues in the academic world, and, if so, what are they. I asked this question in order to make sure that we covered issues that the questionnaire did not. Since student responses here went beyond the areas I had originally envisioned, I was able to use the question to broaden my understanding of how

the students negotiate academic literacies. Including this section enabled me to discover, for example, more about student online literacies, especially their use of blog communities.

Next, I asked students which of the proposed solutions on the questionnaire they feel would work best towards making LGBT students feel more included in academic literacies and why. I followed this up by asking them what suggestions they would have for teachers who want to bring these topics into the classroom. Once I completed these questions, I explored their flip side: I asked the students which of the proposed solutions on the questionnaire they felt would *not* work well and why, and what they would warn teachers *against* doing when trying to address LGBT issues in the classroom. The “solutions” question (and its opposite) directly enabled me to answer the second major question of this study: what are the best means of assuaging the constraints of literacy against the LGBT student population? And the questions about the teachers asked the students to think about the “solutions” from a classroom-specific context. The questions regarding the teachers make the assumption that teachers have the power to affect language and literacy policy in the classroom, so I asked students these questions to make them more aware that teachers do have this power. Yet, these questions also afforded students a sense of power as well: instead of being evaluated by teachers, the students were put in a position of evaluating their instructors’ work, which gave them a sense of agency.

I then asked the students if there are other solutions to solve the problem of ignoring LGBT student voices in the classroom that were not on the questionnaire, and what they would be. As with the earlier question asking for additional student input that

goes beyond the boundaries of the questionnaire, I asked this question in order to make sure that we covered solutions that the questionnaire did not anticipate. This question enabled me to broaden my understanding of the solutions to assuaging the hegemony of academic literacies. Many of the students' responses, for example, helped me to understand how inclusion of LGBT students needs to occur within all academic contexts, not just the classroom. For example, Tim, a transgender student, made me realize that "residence hall directors" play a role in dictating language policies at any institution, and this was something I had not anticipated prior to designing my questionnaire.

I concluded the interview by asking them the extent to which they feel it's important to include LGBT issues in the classroom, and then followed this question by asking them about the extent to which they think LGBT issues are related to issues of race, gender, class, and age. I employed the first question to discover their perceptions of the classroom as a context for learning about their own identities: can the classroom serve as a literacy community within which they feel comfortable exploring LGBT concerns? Virtually every student interviewed did indeed feel that classrooms should play at least a partial role in addressing sexuality issues. The second question focuses more on intersections of identity, which, in turn, enabled some students to feel more comfortable talking about themselves and their experiences. In fact, when students seemed particularly nervous, I often started with this question as an "icebreaker." When students reflected upon the intersections between their identities, it enabled me to get a strong sense of the oppressiveness that they experience in academic literacy contexts. For example, Hal and Lechele, two African-American interviewees, perceived academic literacies not just as biased against LGBT students, but as racially biased as well.

As the study progressed, I began to realize that my first two questions (on writing behaviors inside and outside of the classroom) were far too specific and didn't really get the students talking much about their own experiences with LGBT issues. Therefore, I came to discover that a series of follow-up questions proved to be useful for these two questions in particular. When asking students about their writing behaviors in the classroom, I often asked many of these follow-up questions:

Tell me about your experiences with LGBT topics in the classroom. Do you make concerted efforts to bring up LGBT concerns? Why or why not? If you did, how did your teacher/classmates react? How did they respond to your writing? Have you done readings on LGBT topics in class? If so, what were they?

And when I asked the students about their writing outside the classroom, I often asked many similar questions:

Tell me about your experiences with LGBT topics outside the classroom. What kind of writing and reading do you do? What do you write about more, personal or political issues? Do you write articles? Editorials? Do you keep any kind of journal? In what kind of environments? Where do you tend to engage in LGBT issues the most? Do you use chat or e-mail? How about student organizations: what's your involvement with them? To what extent do you feel comfortable talking about these issues at friends' houses/coffee houses/restaurants/community groups?

My goal with these questions was not only to get the students to open up, but also to develop more detailed, specific responses to my questions. By asking these follow up questions, I was able to learn a great deal that I would have not have learned if I had asked just the original, more vague questions.

In addition, I found that my question which asked the students to reflect on intersections between their identities as LGBT individuals and other aspects of their lives often resulted in vague responses. Therefore, I often asked two follow-up questions with this question that required the students to give more personal responses:

What was it like for you growing up (e.g., a black lesbian/gay in Jackson, MI/a Jewish bisexual)? Was there anything that you read or saw in the media that helped you to come out?

When I asked these follow-up questions, the students were more likely to focus on specific events in their lives, and therefore started to articulate more clearly their interactions in literacy communities both in and out of classroom environments. In addition, the question on the media enabled them to connect their negotiations of their sexual identities to the major literacy events of their lives.

The demographics of my interview subjects closely resembled those of my questionnaire participants. As with the questionnaire demographics, if interviewees wrote down more than one response to a demographic question, I counted all responses in tabulating my results, which explains why I have more than 32 responses in some categories. Interview participants ranged in age from 18 to 43, and, as Appendix C reveals, with the average age of the interviewees 22.81 (almost identical to the average age of those who participated in the questionnaire—22.79). Similarly, the interview sample resembled the questionnaire sample in terms of ethnic diversity: 22.0% of the questionnaire participants' responses to the "ethnicity" question identified the students as racial minorities, and 21.2% (7 out of 33) of the interviewees' responses to this question also indicated the same. Most of the interviewees (46.9%) self-identified as female; a majority (50.5%) of the questionnaire participants were female as well. And, as with the questionnaire, the most common sexual orientation among the interviewees was "gay" (30.3%). In addition, just like the questionnaire participants, most of the interview participants were humanities or social science majors (27 out of 41) and defined teaching

as their career goal (6 out of 35). Thus the interviewee sample reflects the demographics of those students who participated in the questionnaire portion of the study.

However, there were two key differences in the demographics of the interviewee participants. The first was in terms of gender: while only 4 out of 105 questionnaire participants self-identified as transgendered or intersexed (3.8%), transgendered and intersexed students were much better represented in the interviews. Fortunately, out of the four transgendered and intersexed students, three of them completed interviews; thus, my interview sample had 9.3% transgendered/intersexed students—a percentage considerably higher than that in my questionnaire. Additionally, I noticed a second key difference in terms of career goals. Four out of the five students who defined their career goal as “law” or something involving social justice (e.g., lobbyist, union organizer) were also interviewed. Therefore, students with interests in these fields were much better represented in my interview sample (19%) than in my questionnaire sample (4.4%).

Methodological Complications

Besides these two differences between my questionnaire and interview sample, there were other unexpected complications with the methodology as well. For example, with the questionnaires, six students who identified as either “straight” or “ally” filled out the questionnaire, even though each time I distributed the questionnaire I explained that it was for LGBT students only. While one of these “straight” individuals also self-identified as transgender (which qualified him for the survey), most of them did not. I originally did not intend to include straight students in this study because I assumed that straight students are more likely to accept (and even help shape) the hetero-normative practices of their literacy communities, and thus are less likely to perceive such practices

as “violent” literacies. In fact, they could even be the perpetrators of such “violence” against LGBT students. However, (four) straight students at Grand Valley went ahead and filled it out anyway, without realizing that it was intended only for LGBT students. In addition, one individual wrote on her survey that she was an ally of the community, but wanted to be counted, just the same. Therefore, I decided that if straight students identified with the LGBT community so strongly that they wanted to fill out a questionnaire, then they should be included. I realized the irony of the situation: I was doing a study to try to make LGBT students feel more included in academic literacy spaces, yet I was attempting to exclude heterosexual students by doing so. After all, as allies of the community, these straight individuals may be just as aware of the “violence” of literacy against the LGBT community as LGBT students themselves are, perhaps even more so in some cases. Straight students may engage in literacy practices from queer perspectives that have nothing to do with their sexual orientation. So, even though inclusion of allies (or queer students with straight sexual orientations) was not my original intention in this study, I ended up making an effort to count not just the LGBT individuals, but the allies of the community as well.

Another complication with the questionnaire came with the first statement in Part I. The statement reads, “When asked to do a research paper, I read as much LGBT-oriented material as I can,” and then students were asked to circle the number which best indicates their level of agreement with this statement. However, several times after the questionnaires were passed out, students came up to me and asked, “What do you mean by ‘research paper’ ?” I answered this question by telling them, “Any paper that involves outside research, primary or secondary, rather than just personal experience.”

Fortunately, this response was able to clear up the confusion for most of the questionnaire participants. In spite of this, however, their confusion made me wonder whether the statement had been phrased correctly. I considered that perhaps I should have written “For my college classes, I read about LGBT topics as often as possible,” to correspond with the third statement in Part I, which reads “For my college classes, I write on LGBT topics as often as possible.” However, I also thought about the fact that, for the most part, students are often given more freedom in terms of their writing assignments than their reading assignments in college. In fact, none of my interviewees talked about having the choice to read certain books for their college classes, but several of them were given choices or open topics in writing assignments. Typically, college students must read required texts in their courses assigned to them by their instructors, and, by and large, these texts do not concern LGBT issues. Students are given the most choices about reading, oddly enough, when doing writing assignments that involve outside reading, such as research papers. Therefore, I feel that the “When asked to do a research paper” clause is justified in that statement.

In addition, during the interviews, many of the interviewees wanted to share aspects of their “coming out” stories with me, and several desired discuss the oppressiveness of religious rhetoric in their lives. Even though I had not originally anticipated that they would want to address these issues, I allowed them the opportunity to speak about them as much as they wished. Thus for many of them the interview became a kind of catharsis, an opportunity for them to vent about the oppressiveness they felt, and therefore they often approached the interviews as a kind of a therapy session. Although I knew that I was unlikely to use much of these “vents” in my actual

dissertation, I sat back and listened to their stories, giving them the opportunity to express themselves.

A more difficult problem with the interviews resulted from asking the students about proposed solutions to making LGBT students feel more included in academic literacy contexts. When I asked the students “Which of the proposed solutions on the questionnaire do you feel would not work well? Why?” many of them mentioned the statement from Part III which referred to encouraging “performance as a mode of classroom expression.” Their biggest complaint about it was not that they thought it would be ineffective, but that they just did not understand what it meant. Quite a few of them said “I wasn’t sure what you meant by ‘performance.’” I answered their questions by saying that I was referring to role-play or acting, as one might see on a stage. Once I said this, most of them were better able to comprehend the question; in fact, some of them even changed their minds and said that they would now give that statement a higher rating, since they now understood what I meant. I did wonder, however, why none of the questionnaire participants asked me to clarify the meaning of “performance” while they were doing the questionnaire, as they did for the meaning of “research paper.” After all, the Likert scales on both parts of the questionnaire allowed the students an option to indicate uncertainty (3=not sure in both Parts I and III). Perhaps since the phrase “research paper” occurred early in the questionnaire, they did not mind interrupting the flow of their work at that time. However, since the term “performance” shows up when the students have already completed most of the questionnaire, perhaps they wanted to hurry up and finish, and did not want to be interrupted. Other than this speculation, however, no other reason for this disparity is evident.

Yet another methodological complication concerning both my questionnaire and my interviews involves the degree to which the students in both samples were open about their sexual/gender orientation. Since my questionnaires were distributed at on-campus organizational meetings for LGBT student groups, most of the students surveyed had to be comfortable enough with their orientation to be seen with openly LGBT individuals, and/or to be openly LGBT themselves. I could only distribute the questionnaire, therefore, to those individuals who were willing to self-identify as LGBT; it quickly occurred to me that distributing the questionnaire to closeted students would have been a difficult, if not near impossible, task. So the questionnaire sample was limited in the sense that it could not include those LGBT students who were too fearful of discrimination to self-identify as LGBT, or those who had no desire to align themselves with the LGBT community. I also noticed that most of the students who volunteered for interviews tended to be the biggest activists; quite often, they were officers in the LGBT student organizations, and had the strongest feelings about my topics. These students were most likely to appreciate the social importance of my study; they seemed to perceive it as a way for the LGBT student community to achieve more recognition. Students who were less active in the LGBT community, perhaps still with a long way to go in the “coming out” process, tended to be less likely to volunteer for interviews. Strangely enough, some of the LGBT student organizational officers tended to keep their involvement in the LGBT community separate from other aspects of their lives. For example, some male interviewees in particular, who were officers in their LGBT organizations, told me that very few (if any) people know about their involvement in these groups—they worried that it might hurt their career if they were found out. They

tended to want the door shut during our conversations, or desire to speak in a completely private environment. Overall, though, my study was characterized by openness: the questionnaire participants in my study tended to be openly LGBT, and the interview participants tended not only to be openly LGBT, but also very socially and politically active in the LGBT community. Because of this, it was difficult for me to obtain questionnaire and interview participation from both open and closeted LGBT students.

A final methodological complication involves the limited scope of my study. One might reasonably wonder why I chose not to compare LGBT negotiations of academic literacies with LGBT negotiations of literacies outside academic spaces. After all, academic literacies may afford LGBT students literacy privileges that other, non-college-bound individuals, do not receive. As participants within academic literacies, LGBT students, like all other students, assimilate themselves, at least to some extent, into communities which pride themselves on perpetuating “an ideology of established authority” (Aronowitz and Giroux 185; qtd. in Brown 6), thus separating themselves further from what Gee would call their “primary discourse” communities of their friends and families. In spite of these differences between academic and non-academic language communities, however, I decided to focus only on “academic literacies” here for several reasons. To begin with, most studies on LGBT literacies examine only classroom spaces and avoid discussions of non-classroom spaces as well. As I described in Chapter 1, most of these studies either describe the oppressive conditions LGBT students must endure in classroom spaces, or suggest things that teachers, in particular, can do to make LGBT individuals feel more included in classrooms; my dissertation, on the other hand, asserts that a variety of literacy communities compose academe: as I mentioned in

Chapter 1, these include disciplinary literacies, such as those in classroom spaces, and campus literacies, which often concern student negotiations of their personal and professional lives. Secondly, the few studies which do stress LGBT students' literacy lives outside academic spaces focus on K-12 students rather than students in college, thus rendering comparison between LGBT student literacies and other LGBT adult literacies difficult. Mollie V. Blackburn, for example, reveals that her work at a "youth-run center" for "LGBTQ youths" enabled her to understand how, for LGBT students, "Literacy performances . . . are one way to create opportunities for social change" ("Disrupting" 312; 322). From her experiences at this center, Blackburn learned that young LGBT students "are able to reveal, interrogate, destabilize, and challenge inequitable power dynamics through . . . reading and writing . . . reading and writing of words served, in this case, to reify inequitable power dynamics among queer people" ("Exploring" 487). Similarly, Lamme and Lamme's work celebrates how children have "'figured out their own language'" which helps them to identify their two moms or two dads (Capps H1; qtd. in Lamme and Lamme 13). Carroll and Serwatka, however, take a more negative view on LGBT youths' literacy development in communities outside of academe. They state: "As bad as their school experiences may be, for some GLB youths these experiences may be no worse than their experiences at home" (162); the same culture of silence surrounding LGBT issues in academic literacy spaces tends to persist in youths' home communities as well. Finally, evidence indicates that no major studies exist on LGBT individuals' literacy lives outside the academic world, which further prevented me from doing comparative work between the academic and non-academic literacy communities of LGBT people. As Hart explains: "statistics on literacy have never been

gathered [on the LGBT population] “ (2). However, many stories of LGBT individuals reveal “the insatiable desire for reading, the difficult and dangerous search for books about lesbianism, trips to the library to riffle through the card catalogue looking for the word homosexuality, letters written to confused and often angry parents . . .” (Hart 7). Clearly, LGBT people have stories to tell about their experiences with literacy outside academe, but the importance of the topic merits a much larger, separate study than mine can hope to pursue here.

Data Analysis

Phenomenological Categorization

Because I gathered a huge quantity of data through the questionnaires and interviews, it was important for me to make meaningful categories from it. This creation of meaningful categories can be accomplished through reflective phenomenological analysis, which “interpret[s] the aspects of meaning or meaningfulness” from the collected data (van Manen, “Methods and Procedures,” par. 2). Additionally, Max van Manen claims that “Ultimately phenomenological inquiry cannot be separated from the practice of writing” (“Phenomenological Inquiry,” par. 7). Therefore, a phenomenological inquiry fits well with my study in literacy negotiations. For this phenomenological study, I examined each type of data separately. I first looked at the questionnaire data. I examined each statement of the questionnaire separately. First, I asked whether the students tend to agree with the statements in Part I. A mathematical average of 3.5 or higher on any statement would indicate an inclination to agree with that statement. Then I asked myself whether students tend to find the suggested solutions in Part II effective. Again, a 3.5 average would indicate an inclination to view a solution as

effective. Next, I looked for patterns in the findings, and attempted to discover whether significant demographic comparisons/contrasts existed. After doing this, I tried to discover the meanings of these patterns, and then group them into key themes/ideas. Finally, I integrated the key themes/ideas into a narrative description for my results.

Once the questionnaire analysis was complete, I moved on to my interview data. As I listened to my interviews and read over my notes, I attempted to learn the patterns in the words, phrases, and expressions the students use to discuss their self-negotiations and solutions to the violence of literacy against LGBT students. I also attempted to discover whether significant demographic comparisons/contrasts existed. The rest of my phenomenological categorization was identical to that for the questionnaire data: I established meanings of the major patterns, grouped these meanings into key themes/ideas, and then worked these key themes/ideas into a narrative description to use in describing my results.

The Usefulness of Performative Theory

Performative theory proved helpful to me in my data analysis. The roots of this theory may be located in J. L. Austin's 1955 *How to Do Things with Words*. Here Austin notes that most of the world perceives speech utterances as either true or false; these are called "constative" utterances. However, he proposes a second category of utterances that are not subject to such truth/false conditions. Rather, these utterances are acts in themselves; Austin calls them *performatives*. The performative utterance, in contrast to the constative, *is* the reality it describes. Examples of performative utterances include the acts of naming, marrying, bequeathing and betting (5). Richard VanOort explains: "[W]hen I utter, 'I name this ship HMS Hermes,' I do not describe a state of affairs in the

real world. Rather I bring a state of affairs *into existence* by virtue of my utterance. The act of naming is *simultaneously* the reference of my statement. The performative is therefore, in the most rigorous sense, an *act* and not a representation of something else” (par. 1). In *Gender Trouble* (1990), Judith Butler builds upon this idea by relating it to gender identity. Butler declares: “There is no gender identity behind the expressions of gender; ... identity is performatively constituted by the very ‘expressions’ that are said to be its results” (*Gender Trouble*, 25). Thus Butler reveals that gender is a performance; it comes into being when we act it out in our society. When we self-identity as “male” in our culture, for example, we consciously attempt to act out the ways in which we are told that males behave. In America, traditionally males are expected to wear pants, keep their hair short, support their families financially, love sports, and refrain from displaying too much emotion. Males therefore perform their male gender through such appearance and behavior cues of “maleness”; that is how we know they are male. When individuals who are expected to perform “male” deviate from this performance, they are often referred to as “queer.”

Therefore, one way this theory has been applied is to analyze the cultural construction of “queer.” David Halperin, a professor in gay and lesbian studies at the University of Michigan, defines “queer” as “whatever is at odds with the normal, the legitimate, the dominant. *There is nothing in particular to which it necessarily refers*. It is an identity without an essence” (qtd. in Gauntlett, par. 12). Performative theory works well with queer analysis because the “queer” comes into being through performative utterances and gestures. If the dominant culture names something as “queer,” it becomes queer. Katherine Liepe-Levinson uses performative theory to analyze the cultural and

political significance of strip shows; Sedgwick employs it “to explore techniques for non-dualistic thought and pedagogy”; and Butler has recently used it to examine pornographic speech acts and the censorship of homosexual issues in the military (*Excitable Speech*). Such pornographic, non-dualistic, and homosexual concerns are all considered “queer” in Western culture.

Typically, this theory asks the following questions: How is “queer” culturally performed (Fuchs, Hanson, Rambuss)? What functions do “queer” performances serve in our culture (Liepe-Levinson, Butler)? How do we define deviant sexual or gender identities, and where do they belong in our society (Butler, Bornstein, Brunner)? The examination of such questions helped me to understand my data because, like performative theory, my data concerned notions of queer (particularly LGBT) self-expression and self-negotiation. It explored the extent to which LGBT students perform their queer sexualities or gender identities, their forums for such expression, and possible solutions to prevent the “violence” against LGBT expressions in the academic world. My study shows that, in classroom environments, where students engage in literacy practices, they often choose to perform straight sexualities which conform more to traditional gender identities in order to achieve greater acceptance into their classroom literacy communities. Otherwise, “Lesbian and gay men . . . even when out, are constantly confronted . . . with having to repeat the act of coming out” in their classrooms through their writing or speech (Malinowitz, *Textual Orientations* 257). On the other hand, my study also shows that communities outside the classroom, such as on-campus groups and online “blogs,” serve as safe performative space for these students. In such spaces, they come to terms with their sexual and gender identities, and develop a greater

understanding of what they entail. The literacy communities in which they engage themselves help facilitate the ease of these performances.

The Usefulness of Discourse Theory: Gee and Bakhtin

Clearly, the nature of a performative act depends upon the nature of a discourse community. In fact, in *Bodies that Matter*, Judith Butler claims that any performative act is also “an act of discourse.” After noticing that the students’ responses to Parts I and II of the questionnaire tended to center on talking and speech, I decided that discourse theory would definitely provide a useful lens for examining the reasons behind this result.

James Gee’s work on discourse proves helpful for this study. First of all, Gee’s distinctions between primary and secondary discourses shed some valuable insights on my results. Gee believes that “primary discourses” are developed “in the primary process of enculturation . . . According to Gee, the primary discourse corresponds roughly to the oral mode of communication in which the familiar sphere of living plays a central role” (Gee, “What is Literacy”; Crane et al., par. 11). Apprenticeship into primary discourses usually comes early in life, into “particular families within their socio-cultural setting” (Gee, *Social Linguistics* 137). By contrast, secondary discourses “are those to which people are apprenticed as part of their socialisation within various local, state and national groups and institutions outside early and peer group socialisation, for example, churches, schools, etc.” (Gee, *Social Linguistics* 133). In short, these secondary discourses involve the social institutions beyond the family, including classroom settings. Within secondary discourses, we “build on and extend the uses of languages we acquired as part of the primary discourse” (Gee, “What is Literacy?”). Students may also, for example, acquire language from their secondary discourse and add it to their primary

discourse. One's discourse becomes more complex and acquires more layers the older one becomes. "Additionally, primary discourses influence the secondary discourses upon which they are drawn" (Crane et al., par. 11).

Through Gee's discourse theory, I can better understand the distinction between students' desire to speak with friends on LGBT issues outside of class and their tendency to avoid these issues in the classroom. When students talk with friends outside of class about LGBT issues, or even when they read about LGBT topics, they are engaging in their primary discourse; by contrast, when negotiating academic discourse in a college or university setting, they may have opportunities to apply what they've learned in the primary discourse community to this secondary discourse environment, but they still lack familiarity with this secondary discourse. They are socialized into the secondary discourse of the classroom, but classroom discourse is not often synonymous with the primary discourse engaged in with family or friends. Communication with intimate friends and family friends will be easier for the students than being forced to engage in dialogue with non-intimates, as the classroom environment often requires. Gee thus explains: "[Discourses] crucially involve a set of values and viewpoints in terms of which one must speak and act, at least while being in the discourse; otherwise one doesn't count as being in it" (Gee, "What is Literacy?" 538). When students take on the role of "student" in classroom discourse, they must (at least temporarily) adhere to the rules for the discourse in that more formal setting; if they do not, they will be considered ineffective communicators. Among their fellow LGBT peers outside of class, however, students understand that discourse on LGBT issues is more acceptable, so they switch their "'identity kit'" in order to be recognized and accepted by their LGBT friends (Gee,

“What is Literacy?” 537). A key finding of my study is that, in communities outside of class (such as on-campus groups, listservs, and blog communities), LGBT students are more likely to engage in discourse which allows for open expression of their queer identities. Clearly, through Gee’s work I can more easily see that my study is not only a study of academic literacies, but of academic discourse communities as well: different types of discourses take place in academic literacy communities.

Additionally, Gee’s distinctions between dominant and non-dominant discourses provide a useful theoretical perspective for my work. Gee notes that conflict often emerges between those who possess the dominant discourses and those who lack them. “Very often dominant groups in a society apply rather constant ‘tests’ of the fluency of the dominant Discourses in which their power is symbolized. These tests take on two functions: they are tests of ‘natives’ or, at least, ‘fluent users’ of the Discourse, and they are *gates* [sic] to exclude ‘non-natives’ (people whose very conflicts with the dominant Discourses show they were not, in fact, ‘born’ to them)” (Gee, “What is Literacy?” 528). Such tests serve to marginalize the discourses of the non-dominant groups, ensuring a linguistic hegemony, stripping away all chances that minority groups may have to have their non-dominant discourses validated by the larger, more dominant society. Kadijah, whom I mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, reacted so positively to my interview because it was not part of this dominant Discourse. To compensate for the lack of attention to LGBT concerns in the discipline-specific, dominant Discourses of academe, Kadijah told me that she often goes to a coffee house for queer women in Detroit. This coffee house has women sharing their writing with each other through such activities as poetry readings; it also helps instill in Kadijah some pride in her female, African-

American, and bisexual identities. In this primary discourse environment, Kadijah can at least temporarily escape the constraints of the dominant academic Discourse.

To be “literate” at the academic level means to be able to communicate effectively in this dominant Discourse. However, it must be kept in mind that this dominant Discourse is also a hetero-normative Discourse, which adheres to the rules, values, and mores of the heterosexual community. Therefore, deviations from this dominant Discourse, such as discourse involving the LGBT community, is much less acceptable. When LGBT discourse is introduced into the classroom, even today, it is threatened and challenged. Take David Halperin’s recent “How to be Gay” course at the University of Michigan, for example: Halperin received national attention for his attempts to heighten academic awareness of LGBT concerns when the need for the class was habitually questioned by individuals whom the dominant Discourse serves to protect, such as Gary Glenn of the American Family Association. Glenn claims that Halperin and the University “are guilty of perpetrating a fraud against UM students and the people of Michigan [with] propaganda statements about so-called cultural studies and academic freedom’ as they promote ‘queer studies’ at taxpayer expense” (Archibald, par. 3). However, Halperin responded that the course “does not teach students to be homosexual . . . Rather, it examines critically the odd notion that there are right and wrong ways to be gay, that homosexuality is not just a sexual practice or desire but a set of specific tastes in music, movies, and other cultural forms — a notion which is shared by straight and gay people alike” (Archibald, par. 7). The media controversy surrounding Halperin’s course reveals the tension between non-dominant and dominant Discourses. Glenn’s habitual questioning of the purpose of Halperin’s course is identical to the series

of “tests” of which Gee speaks. Since Halperin’s agenda does not conform to dominant ideologies, it must be challenged by those in power, in an attempt to destroy it. Glenn’s purposes are served by the perpetuation of a linguistic hegemony and an exclusion of LGBT issues from the classroom. As we can see, Gee’s distinction between dominant and non-dominant discourses proves helpful for examining how LGBT students negotiate academic literacy spaces, since the literacy spaces in which LGBT community members often participate are also often non-dominant discourses, as opposed to the institutional, dominant forces of academe.

In addition to Gee, the work of Mikhail Bakhtin is useful for my study on two different levels. To begin with, Bakhtin’s notion of “carnavalesque” speech enabled me to better understand the playful nature of electronic chat room communities (which became an integral part of my study, particularly in Chapter 5). Bakhtin’s discussion of “carnavalesque” discourse also helps complicate Gee’s rather simplistic binary between primary and secondary discourse; it adds another dimension to my work on discourse theory. Carnavalesque discourse, as Holquist explains, serves “as a *means for displaying otherness*: carnival makes familiar relations strange” (89). This discourse also heightens our awareness that “social relations determined by class are *made* not given, culturally produced rather than naturally mandated” (Holquist 89). Similarly, chat room discourse thrives on “otherness”: people often construct new social personae through which to speak and chat room community relations are often ephemeral in nature. LGBT students, in particular, employ chat rooms to negotiate their gender and sexual identities; quite often, it serves as a place of exploration for them before they “try out” their queer selves in the real world. For many LGBT individuals, chat rooms are a place of performing

another social self, a self which enables them to explore their “otherness” without experiencing the negative social repercussions that they would endure in hetero-normative, face-to-face discourse communities. Thus Bakhtin’s conception of the carnivalesque assists me in understanding the fragmentary, playful nature of chat room communities, in which the “otherness” of queer gender and sexual identities is not only displayed, as Holquist suggests, but also constructed and developed.

Secondly, I found Bakhtin’s notion of “heteroglossia” a particularly helpful means of comprehending the nature of literacy community interaction. For Bakhtin, all speech is dialogic, and it is useful to look at speech as heteroglossia: “the collection of all the forms of social speech, or rhetorical modes, that people use in the course of their daily lives. You talk to your friends in one way, to your professor in another way, to your parents in a third way, to a waiter in a restaurant in a fourth way” (Klages, par. 13). Since Part I and II of my questionnaire indicate that LGBT students are much more likely to discuss LGBT issues outside of class with friends than in classroom environments with classmates or faculty, we can see Bakhtin’s heteroglossia at work. Their speech on LGBT issues with their friends is one type of heteroglossia which “shows a fundamentally DIALOGIC utterance--one oriented toward a particular kind of listener/audience, and implying a particular relationship between the speaker and the listeners” (Klages, par. 14). It shows how, during the course of their lives, students will employ different rhetorical strategies at different times. They sense that speaking/writing/reading about LGBT issues in the classroom is not acceptable on some level, but, with friends who share a similar interest on LGBT-oriented topics, LGBT speech becomes transformed: it

leaves the realm of marginalized discourse and becomes a rhetorically acceptable means of communication.

This proved to be true for the online “blogging” efforts of LGBT students: I discovered over the course of my research that many of my interviewees write about personal and political LGBT issues in elaborate online journals, called “blogs.” While most of them publish their words in a public space which technically may be seen by anyone online, for the most part the blog serves as a means of communication between the blogger and his or her friend; the students told me that they will not generally release blog addresses, in fact, to anyone but their friends, and that they sometimes censor their entries such that only certain online “friends” can read them. However, it is interesting to note that, in an online environment, the definition of “friend” shifts drastically for these students. In the world of online blogging, “friends” are often accumulated by reading the “blogs” of others and then making the conscious choice to add an individual to an online list of “friends.” Those “friends” help to form the audience for the “blogs.” Thus we can see that online discourse further reveals the complex nature of literacy; while students in the questionnaire reveal a desire to “talk” about LGBT issues with “friends,” we must consider that, given the increased use of reading, writing, and speaking in electronic environments, the meaning of “talking with friends” may differ dramatically in this type of discourse community, adding yet another new dimension to consider when thinking about Bakhtin’s “heteroglossia.” The language of the blog may be very different from the language of face-to-face speech.

Furthermore, Bakhtin’s heteroglossia also enables us to better understand student writing inside classroom environments. In her study of the heteroglossic features of

student writing, Joan Navarre suggests that heteroglossia “is not only conceptually, but also pedagogically, useful” (1), and then proceeds to describe the heteroglossic features of one student’s essay. In analyzing the essay of “Sean,” one of her freshman composition students, Navarre stresses that heteroglossia “consists of a cacophony of voices . . . we hear social dialects, characteristic group behavior, professional jargons, generic languages, languages of generations and age groups . . . languages that serve the specific sociopolitical purposes of the day, even of the hour” (3-4). From Navarre’s observation here, we learn that heteroglossia helps us to comprehend not just discourse in general, but also student writing in particular. Since much of this dissertation deals with how LGBT students negotiate literacy communities which involve writing, viewing their classroom writing as heteroglossic assisted me in understanding their varying rhetorical positions in different writing situations.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have attempted to explain the collection and analysis of my data. This entailed descriptions of my questionnaires and interviews, the study’s primary methodological complications, and the phenomenological nature of my methodology. Furthermore, it revealed how performative theory, Gee’s distinctions between primary and secondary discourses and between dominant and non-dominant discourses, and Bakhtin’s work on the carnivalesque, the dialogic, and heteroglossia all prove useful for explaining the results of my study. My next section describes the questionnaire results in detail: here I shall contrast LGBT students’ negative attitudes towards writing in weak community contexts with their positive attitudes towards language in situations which build solid community structures. From these results I shall begin to show, for these

students, the building of language communities contributes invaluable to their educational process.

Disabling Writing, Enabling Communities: The Questionnaire Results

Overview

When I interviewed Lauren, a transsexual lesbian, I realized that quite a disparity existed between her writing life in classrooms and her involvement in language communities outside of class. She claimed that she has had virtually “no experience” in writing on LGBT issues for her courses, and that she is “in the closet” in her classes. However, her community involvement in language activities outside of class is quite impressive. She corresponds on e-mail and Yahoo Instant Messenger with her friends on personal and political LGBT issues, belongs to the TRIANG-L listserv, attends meetings and speeches on LGBT issues, keeps an elaborate blog on LGBT issues which offers her the chance to “sound off” as “a form of release,” and edits a local newsletter on the arts. When I asked her to explain this disparity between her lack of classroom literacy expression and her proliferation of literacy activities outside of class, she asserted that society puts too much pressure on people to be heterosexual, and classrooms reinforce this pressure. She clearly feels that, in classroom environments, she does not feel safe revealing either her queer identity:

When I’m outside class, if I’m not on the Internet, I’m with my friends. My friends know me, they know everything about me, I know that they’re cool, I know that they use their heads and think, and they’re not going to prejudge me. I can sound off online because of the anonymity of the Internet, the relative anonymity. In a classroom, on the other hand, I’m in a room with a bunch of other people who don’t know me very well, whom I don’t really know, and, who, as far as I know, could be conservative Christians, could be Neo-Nazis, I have no idea who they might be . . . we’re going to class together, and I have to deal with the fact that they’re going to be there whether I like it or not. If we have some kind of falling out because of my sexuality or my gender identity, I still have to deal with them in class for the rest of the semester . . . so I’m not going to open up to them about that information.

It is clear that Lauren finds the disciplinary literacy communities of the classroom stifling, yet she desires to form literacy communities outside of class. Her expression is consistent with the literacy behaviors of most LGBT students in that she notices a problem with academic literacies, yet she also manages to find a personal solution to this problem that works for her. Similarly, my study concerns both acknowledging the problems that LGBT students experience with academic literacies and coming up with possible solutions. The two major purposes of this study are to examine the ways in which LGBT students negotiate academic literacies and to learn the most effective ways for including LGBT concerns in academic literacy communities. Therefore, the questionnaire for this project was developed with these goals in mind. Part I of the questionnaire asked the students to evaluate the most effective means of dealing with hetero-normative literacy activities in the academic world. In Part II, the students were to indicate the places in which they most often engage in these activities. The final part of the questionnaire, Part III, asked students to rank a series of statements in order to judge the extent to which each activity makes them feel more included in academe.

Lauren's experience reveals the two major trends indicated by the questionnaire data. The first trend concerns writing: the LGBT students surveyed tend to view writing situations with a weak sense of community, both inside and outside classroom spaces, negatively. In fact, they tend to avoid writing on LGBT-oriented topics both inside and outside classroom environments. In addition, they believe that sharing informal writing in class will not help to achieve inclusion of the LGBT community in academic discourse. And finally, the data shows that the students dislike electronic chat. They do not use chat rooms that often, and they do not see anonymous chat as a way to achieve

greater inclusion of the LGBT community in the classroom. Many of their negative views on writing, like Lauren's, were expressed within the context of classroom experiences.

As far as traditional writing situations are concerned, these findings on student attitudes towards writing corroborate much of the existing, more generalized research. Studies by Mahaffey, Royer and Gilles, Brandt, and Sidey, as well as a recent paper delivered by Conway at the 2004 CCCC convention, all discuss college students' negative attitudes towards traditional writing situations. One common thread between all these studies is that they reveal how student attitudes toward writing reach their nadir when their writing efforts lack support from their communities of peers, administrators, and faculty members. They also all recommend the building of language communities as the solution to problems which persist in academic literacy spaces. While the research on students' attitudes towards chat rooms tends to be more positive in tone, due to the common propensity in composition scholarship to view electronic discourse in general as a series of liberating communities which exist beyond the constraints of typical linguistic conventions (Bentley, LaGrandeur, Riley), this research also acknowledges that negative dimensions to chat room discourse continue to problematize classroom pedagogies (Berzsenyi, Catalano, Hum). I will explore the revelations from all these studies in more detail in Chapters 4 and 5.

The second data trend reveals that students desire to be involved in campus communities outside the classroom. Students, like Lauren, enjoy participating in e-mail discussions, listservs, blogs, and campus groups. And, according to the students, administrators and teachers must play a key role in bridging the gap between academic

literacies and LGBT concerns. The data reveals that students want more training of administrators and teachers on LGBT issues, more course offerings on the LGBT community, and more on-campus resources for LGBT students. These students' desires help will to shape my plan for more inclusion of LGBT issues in academe, which I shall explain further in Chapter 8.

Both of these trends indicate several patterns that the interview data will illuminate in Chapters 4 through 7. Together, these two trends show that LGBT students perceive the importance of literacy events on the institutional level. They clearly understand that entire academic institutions need to help assuage the constraints of literacy; expecting teachers in the classroom to do this is not enough. Therefore, this study moves beyond earlier research in suggesting that we must examine LGBT student negotiations with academic literacies from a much larger perspective than the classroom alone. Secondly, the trends indicate that, contrary to prior research on LGBT student use of chat room conversation, LGBT students do not see synchronous chat in the classroom as helpful or liberating, most likely due to the ephemeral nature of chat room communities. Instead, it suggests that we look more at synchronous online literacies, and study more carefully the communities that students form through e-mail, listservs, and blogs.

Trend One: Negative Attitudes towards Writing Activities

Writing as an Ineffective Means of Negotiating Academic Literacies

In Part I of the questionnaire, students were asked to rank a series of ten statements of activities on a scale of 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree) in order to evaluate the extent to which each activity enables them to deal with the demands of

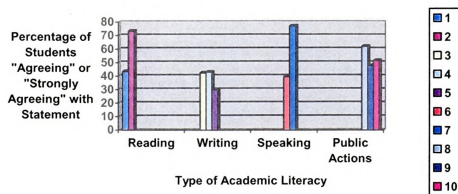
academic discourse. The results suggest that the students do not see writing activities with a weak sense of community as a meaningful way for them to negotiate academic literacies. On the other hand, they seem to view activities involving reading, speaking, or public actions much more positively, particularly when those actions take place outside of class, and involve activities in which solid communal ties can be established.

As Figure 1 indicates, students were much less likely to provide a ranking of 4 (agree) or 5 (strongly agree) to writing activities than they were to activities involving reading, speaking, or public actions.

Figure 1: Student Agreement on Different Academic Literacy Statements

The numbers 1-10 on the scale correspond with the statement numbers on Part I of the questionnaire (see Appendix A for copy of questionnaire).

(Note: All images in this dissertation are presented in color.)



From the figure above, we can see that students view all activities involving reading and public actions much more favorably than writing-oriented activities. And even though the student ranking of statement six (“I bring up LGBT issues during class discussion as often possible”) is comparable with those of the writing activities, students gave the other listed activity involving speaking (statement seven, “I do a lot of talking

about LGBT issues outside the classroom”) the highest ranking on this part of the questionnaire. It is evident that, on average, writing activities ranked lowest overall: the graph shows that three out of the lowest four graphed percentages involve statements dealing specifically with writing.

These results thus provoke several questions. To begin with, what is it about writing, in particular, that makes students perceive it as an activity that’s not particularly helpful to them, either in or out of the classroom? Also, the students indicated that they feel more comfortable with group projects, talking and reading about LGBT concerns, and even LGBT community activism. However, these sorts of activities and writing activities are far from mutually exclusive. People often write as they work on group projects, write as they talk, write as they read, or write in the midst of community activism. Therefore, we should wonder to what extent students are writing as they do these activities; perhaps they are not aware of the “writing” they are doing when they are involved in academic literacy communities. Many students, after all, are used to defining writing as the typical five-paragraph paper, and may often dismiss other sorts of writing activities as unimportant. Thus we have to consider how the students are defining “writing”: what does this mean to them?

To address some of these concerns, let us turn for a moment to statement three on Part I of the questionnaire (“For my college classes, I write on LGBT-oriented topics as often as possible”). While we might believe that this data indicates that LGBT students may be disinterested or fearful of writing on LGBT concerns in the classroom, the interview data suggests that students do not write about these topics “as often as possible” because they feel their teachers do not care about these issues. Many times, the students

noted that they have never had the opportunity to write on LGBT issues, that their professors aren't interested in queer topics, and that their professors don't bring them up. They see themselves as lacking agency in the classroom; if they are fearful of anything, it is the power of the teacher, not their personal expression of LGBT concerns. Because students mainly involve themselves in discipline-specific, secondary discourse communities at the classroom level, they have not built trusting, lasting relationships with their peers or professors that would facilitate dialogue on LGBT-oriented topics. During the interviews, many students were critical of teachers who refrain from providing helpful evaluative comments on LGBT-oriented prose, who fear confronting sensitive topics, and who provide exceptionally negative written feedback on student essays with LGBT-oriented topics. We shall see in Chapter 4 that the students see their lack of writing as a problem stemming from those who hold power in academe, both teachers and administrators. When teachers demonstrate apathy towards LGBT issues, and when administrators refrain from offering courses dealing with such issues, students lose their impetus to write on them. They learn quickly that LGBT topics, which are part of what James Gee would call their "primary discourse," do not fit into the disciplinary literacy communities of academe, and thus they adjust their writing habits accordingly to fit the demands of a new discourse. As Gee would argue, they develop a new "identity kit" for the college classroom through which they mask their LGBT identities in order to cope with the hetero-normative hegemony of the classroom environment ("What is Literacy?").

However, when we examine student responses statement five of Part I ("I do a lot of writing on LGBT issues outside the classroom"), we see that students also tend to

avoid writing outside of class. In this situation, teachers and administrators cannot be blamed (or at least not to the same extent as with classroom discourse), and one might think that, outside of class, the students would have more chances to engage in their primary discourses, and thus engage more in LGBT concerns. Oddly enough, though, the results indicate that students are slightly more likely to write on LGBT concerns in class than out of class (an average agreement of 2.72 for writing outside of class compared to an average agreement of 2.90 for writing in class). So what sorts of experiences have students had with writing on LGBT issues outside of class? In the interviews, students described several incidents in which they posted flyers, projects, or signs concerning LGBT issues on campus only to have them defaced with hate speech. Many other students don't wish to write on LGBT issues outside of class due to lack of time or a conscious effort to remain uninvolved in LGBT community literacies. And some students equate any sort of "writing" with "formal writing," such as the discipline-specific writing they would do for class, and therefore want no part of so-called class work outside the classroom environment. Unlike with the classroom writing situations, the students indicated more apathy about writing outside of class. Some lacked confidence in their writing, and others wished to avoid drawing attention to their viewpoints in public. Chapters 4 and 5 will further explore the trials that LGBT students have endured in attempting to negotiate academic literacies outside of class, thus inhibiting the building of literacy communities between groups. We will look at specific examples of how the written word has the power to perpetrate hate crimes against LGBT students as they attempt to negotiate their way through the literacy communities of academe. When they try to fit LGBT concerns in a public academic forum, they are

sometimes degraded by both students and administrators for expressing their views.

This chapter will also examine in more detail whether LGBT students resist and/or demonstrate apathy regarding outside-of-class writing situations because they have been taught that their words cannot make a difference.

So far, we have seen that the students believe that writing on LGBT issues is an ineffective means of negotiating academic literacy communities both inside and outside classroom settings. Similarly, in the next section, we will notice that students do not perceive classroom activities involving writing as an effective means of including LGBT concerns in academic discourse. In particular, the next section will stress how students fail to see how sharing their writing on LGBT issues will give them more of a voice in academe.

Writing as an Ineffective Solution for Facilitating LGBT Student Inclusion

In Part III of the questionnaire, students were asked to rank fifteen different proposed solutions for achieving LGBT student inclusiveness in academic discourse on a scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree), just as with Part I. Three of those solutions dealt specifically with classroom writing activities: “Require students to write on LGBT-oriented topics” (statement 1); “Encourage the classroom use of anonymous electronic chat to discuss LGBT issues” (statement 6); and “Encourage more sharing in class of informal writing (such as journals)” (statement 8). These three statements received three of the lowest rankings on Part III of the questionnaire. “Require students to write on LGBT-oriented topics” ranked 13th out of 15th with an average agreement of 3.39; “Encourage the classroom use of anonymous electronic chat to discuss LGBT issues” ranked 14th out of 15th with an average agreement of 3.23; and “Encourage more

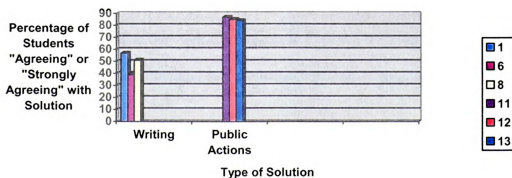
sharing in class of informal writing (such as journals)” ranked 12th out of 15th with an average agreement of 3.40.

Figure 2 graphically displays how these results contrast with the three most popular statements in Part III. The three most popular statements all happen to deal with public actions: statement eleven, “Develop more courses on LGBT-oriented topics” (average agreement 4.33); statement twelve, “Require teachers to receive more training on LGBT issues (average agreement 4.38); and statement thirteen, “Require administrators to receive more training on LGBT issues (average agreement 4.4).

As with Figure 1, the percentage of students who either “agreed” (provided a ranking of 4) or “strongly agreed” (provided a ranking of 5) are graphed here:

Figure 2: Student Agreement on Different Statements of Solution

The numbers on right hand side of the scale correspond with the statement numbers on Part III of the questionnaire (see Appendix A for copy of questionnaire).



As we can see from Figure 2, agreement in Part III for activities involving writing was much lower than for those involving direct, public actions on LGBT concerns. For writing activities, the agreement tended to hover between 39-57%, whereas all of the public actions had an agreement which ranked over 80%. Along with Part I, these results

support the conclusion that LGBT students do not view most of their writing tasks very highly. While Part I examines student use of academic writing both in and out of the classroom, Part III focuses on classroom writing in particular. From the low rankings—12th through 14th out of 15 statements—we can see that LGBT students fail to see how their classroom writing activities can be an empowering means of achieving LGBT student inclusion. They do not see their writing as a public performance or social action. Such results must further cause us to wonder whether LGBT students have the agency in writing classrooms that they need to pursue those concerns which matter most to them. Are LGBT students being given the opportunity to engage in written discourse on topics to which they can relate? Or, even worse, are they being discouraged from doing so? The interview data reveals that students are given opportunities to write on LGBT topics only when the assignments are broad enough such that the students are allowed to choose their own focus. Only in courses which deal specifically with LGBT concerns are students given specific LGBT topics to focus on in writing assignments. And instances do exist in which students are indeed discouraged—and even shamed—by their teachers for writing on LGBT issues, so they lack the impetus to perceive their writing as a means of social empowerment. Unfortunately, these writing situations reveal a lack of solid, lasting literacy communities with shared values: students, administrators, and teachers all have different ideas as to what academic literacies entail, thus preventing writing from being seen as a viable solution to LGBT student inclusiveness. These issues will be explored in more detail in Chapter 4.

One possible solution to the problem of LGBT student inclusion was “Encourage more sharing in class of informal writing (such as journals).” We might originally

predict that, when LGBT students write informally about their concerns or experiences, and then share those writings in class, this would provide them with some much-needed agency in the classroom, and thus assuage the hetero-normativity with which they contend. However, the results indicate that students fail to see the sharing of writing as a means of providing them with the voice they crave. Thus this result raises an important question: Are the students too shy to share their writing with others, or do they perceive informal writing as unnecessary? The interview data suggests that, for the students, it is mainly an issue of comfort. These complaints about “comfort” tended to take two different forms. Some believe that sharing “informal” writing places that writing into the realm of the “formal”: once that writing is shared with students and/or teachers, it becomes public discourse, and therefore more likely to be judged and criticized. Others asserted that sharing informal writing would make them (or others in their class) “uncomfortable”; for that reason alone, they would avoid sharing their work. Chapter 4 examines this finding in greater detail through the perspective of discourse analysis. It explores how LGBT students’ reluctance to share informal writing in groups exemplifies Gee’s distinction between primary and secondary discourses. We are reminded that, once these students find themselves in a classroom, they must take on a new identity in order to adapt to the demands of a disciplinary literacy community, because it also serves as a secondary discourse community for these students. Unfortunately, they come to understand that, in the classroom, playing this new role involves hiding their interests in LGBT issues.

This chapter has indicated that students perceive writing activities which lack a strong sense of community as neither helpful means of negotiating academic literacies

nor viable solutions to problems of LGBT student inclusiveness in academic literacy spaces. When we consider the questionnaire results in light of different types of literacy communities, they suggest that students have a particular dislike for writing in electronic chat rooms. The next section will explore how this dislike manifests itself and examine some of the reasons behind the students' negative views of chat room environments.

A Dislike of Writing in Chat Rooms

Since the results reveal that many LGBT students have negative views on writing activities as they pertain to academic discourse, we should wonder whether the forums in which these activities take place affect the students' views. Parts II and III of this questionnaire indicate that LGBT students have low opinions of writing in electronic chat rooms. Out of the eight listed forums in Part II, "Electronic Chat Rooms" ranked as the second least popular forum for discussion of LGBT issues (the least popular was "Faculty Offices"). The results suggest that students are twice as likely to use e-mail, classrooms, coffee houses/restaurants or community groups to discuss such issues, and about four times as likely to talk about such issues in campus groups or at friends' houses. In this section, students ranked their use of the forums on a scale of 0 (never) to 5 (every day). The average score for "Electronic Chat Rooms" was only 1.29 (about once a month), whereas for the rankings for e-mail, classrooms, coffee houses/restaurants and community groups ranged from 1.62-2.48 (once every two weeks). The ranking for "Campus Groups" was 2.87 (about once a week), and the ranking for "Friends' Houses" was 3.42 (over once a week).

Figure 3 graphically reveals the distinctions between their frequency of use in three different types of literacy communities—Electronic, Campus, and Community

forums (Community forums include numbers six through eight on Part II of the questionnaire: “Community Groups,” “Friends’ Houses,” “Coffee Houses/Restaurants”— See Appendix A):

Figure 3: Student Use of Different Literary Forums

The numbers on right hand side of the scale correspond with the numbers of the listed forums on Part II of the questionnaire (see Appendix A for copy of questionnaire).

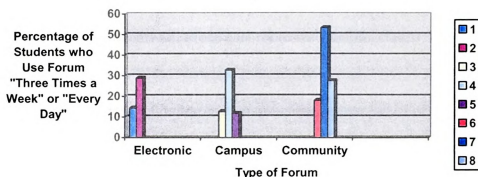


Figure 3 helps us to understand which forums have high frequencies of use; that is, it enables us to learn which ones are used “three times a week” or “every day.” It shows that over half (53.3%) of the students frequently talk about LGBT issues at friends’ houses (forum seven), but only 14.3% of them do the same in chat rooms (forum one). The graph also indicates that about 30% of students frequently use e-mail/listservs (forum two) and campus groups (forum four) to discuss LGBT concerns; this is twice the percentage of students who use chat to do the same. The graph indicates that two of the three “Campus” categories (“Classrooms,” forum three, and “Faculty Offices,” forum five) also lacked a high frequency of use comparable to the infrequent chat room usage; students instead preferred to interact in asynchronous online environments and in on-

campus groups. However, out of all the five listed forums in Part II for discourse on LGBT issues outside campus settings, chat room rooms ranked the lowest of the five.

As I indicated in the previous section of this chapter, in Part III of the questionnaire, “Encourage the classroom use of anonymous electronic chat to discuss LGBT issues” (statement six) was the second least popular solution to making LGBT students feel more included in academic discourse. Figure 2 (see page 69) visually displays the disparity between this solution and the most popular ones. This result, combined with the infrequency of use of chat rooms shown in Part II of the questionnaire, leads us to believe that students fail to see chat rooms as a helpful means of achieving inclusion of LGBT students in the academic community.

These negative views of online chat communities are explained in the interview portion of the study. To begin with, students explain that they use chat infrequently because they perceive that most individuals who use chat rooms only use them to set up romantic or sexual trysts. They further used such words as “impersonal,” “phony,” and “confusing” to describe the chat rooms. However, the interview data also indicate that many of the students claim that they used to frequent chat rooms during their “coming out” process. But many of them now feel that they’ve moved “beyond” the chat rooms and are now ready for face-to-face interactions in the queer community. Chapter 5 will explore this issue in greater length through the lens of discourse analysis. It will demonstrate how some LGBT students use electronic chat rooms as a conduit through which they develop a sense of the discourse of the LGBT community, and then, once they’ve learned how to blend its language into their own primary discourse, they feel more comfortable venturing out into face-to-face conversations, and joining a new

community. However, in this process, the chat room communities are abandoned, and often criticized. So in spite of the fact that some students initially use chat rooms to educate themselves on the discourse of the LGBT community, they do not continue to use the rooms after these initial introductions, mostly due to negative experiences with meeting people or a growing disenchantment with the nature of chat room conversation.

The interview data confirms that most students seem to perceive use of chat rooms in the classroom—even anonymous ones—as flawed in two distinct ways. First of all, many claim that the nature of chat results in a lack of focus in class discussion. People get distracted and fail to remain on topic. Secondly, other students see anonymous chat on LGBT issues as merely another means to perpetuate the idea that discourse on LGBT concerns should be shame-based. For these students, the chat room serves as yet another closet in which they must hide. And they don't want to holler from this electronic closet to get noticed; they'd much prefer to deal with LGBT issues face to face. Chapter 5 will explain in more detail the different ways in which students see chat room discussions as lacking focus and anonymous electronic classroom chat as shame-based. It will also examine the complexities involved in chat: interacting in chat, after all, involves reading, writing, and (at times) relying images or emoticons to substitute for non-verbal language. Thus we shall see how LGBT students negotiate these complexities. Overall, their experiences in chat have lead them to view it as a fragmentary discourse that may perpetuate stereotypes more than assuage them; therefore, it fails to contribute to the inclusion of the LGBT community in academe.

The first half of this chapter has shown that students fail to see writing as a means of achieving agency in academe. Classroom writing, writing outside of class, sharing

informal writing, and writing in electronic chat rooms are all either ineffective means of dealing with academic literacies or unhelpful steps towards including LGBT students in these literacy communities. These writing situations often result in weak, ephemeral writing communities, within which very little trust exists. The next section, however, stresses that when LGBT students belong to campus communities outside of class, they facilitate their negotiation with academic discourse and their inclusion in academic life.

Trend Two: A Desire for Campus Communities

Forums outside Class

According to Part II of the questionnaire, the four most popular forums for discourse on LGBT issues all exist outside the classroom. The most popular forum for discussing such issues is friends' houses: the numerical average for this forum is 3.42, or over once a week. Campus groups (2.86, or once a week) are the second most popular, followed by e-mail/listservs (2.48, almost once a week) and coffee houses/restaurants (also at about 2.48). The least popular forums are those which involve the least amount of face-to-face interaction and the weakest sense of community. Faculty offices are the least popular (1.20, or once a month) and electronic chat rooms, as discussed previously, ranked as the second least popular choice (1.29, also about once a month).

Figure 3 (see page 73) reveals that students were at least twice as likely to discuss LGBT issues frequently at friends' houses (forum seven), in campus groups (forum four), and over e-mail/listservs (forum two) than in chat rooms (forum one), classrooms (forum three), or faculty offices (forum five). Less than 15% of all students reported a high frequency of use of chat, classrooms, and faculty offices for discussion of LGBT concerns, whereas 29-53% of the students reported a high use of friends' houses, campus

groups, and e-mail/listservs to discuss these issues. This result suggests that the students prefer being a part of face-to-face literacy communities outside of class to brief one-on-one conversations. In faculty offices, students are likely only to interact with their professors about these issues, if they discuss them with their professors at all. And, in online chat, students may often chat with only one person at a time, and the nature of this conversation is often brief and fragmentary: it is difficult to develop extended ideas in a chat room. Most classrooms consist mainly of secondary discourse communities, and usually very little group work, so LGBT students lack opportunities in these environments to engage in their primary discourses, which include LGBT concerns. We should notice, however, that when a strong sense of community is developed among the discussion participants, as is often the case on non-classroom campus communities, the LGBT students are more likely to bring up topics of interest to them.

The interview data corroborates this finding on two different levels. To begin with, it shows that many LGBT students do use e-mail and listservs on a regular basis. They use this medium of communication to write e-mails to friends and to take part in discussions on LGBT listservs. In addition, Chapter 6 will reveal that about 40% of the interview participants keep elaborate “blogs,” or online journals, which often discuss their personal lives as students and their political involvement in on-campus events. These blogs combine the best elements of e-mails and listservs: instead of just e-mailing one person, or sticking to one subject on a listserv, they end up posting their thoughts on anything they like to a global audience, so anyone in the world may find their discussion board postings on their “blogs” and add them to their “list of friends.” This chapter will further elucidate the distinction between e-mail/listserv communication and blogs and

explain how LGBT students often use blogs as performative space. The term “performative,” coined by Judith Butler, asks us to consider gender as “a relation among socially constituted subjects in specifiable contexts” (*Gender Trouble*, 1999). Therefore, gender is a performance that is determined not by the biological sex one *is*, but by what one *does* in specific social contexts. The chapter will show that, through their blogs, the students create space for themselves to “perform” not only gender, but also sexual orientation.

Not only do LGBT students form campus communities in online environments, the interview data also confirms that they form these communities in face-to-face campus groups as well. It shows that students often belong to several LGBT groups at once, and use the groups to develop friendships. Some use their groups for activism opportunities, yet lack an activist life outside the group. The findings also indicate that the groups instill a sense of pride in the students; several proudly discussed their accomplishments as members of groups, most of which involved successfully challenging the hetero-normative dictates or stereotypes of their campus communities. With these campus groups, students have the opportunity to formulate a primary discourse community within a world of secondary discourse (academic life). In fact, these groups help them to learn how to blend the two discourses together. Many students interviewed spoke of bringing the concerns of their groups into their classrooms or to on-campus meetings with administrators: thus we see Bakhtin’s heteroglossia exemplified here, as students learn to speak differently for different types of audiences: their disciplinary literacy communities and their campus literacy communities require different kinds of language involvement. On the whole, the groups appear to educate their members on how to use language to

serve the purposes of the LGBT community; those heavily involved in campus groups have a political and social awareness of the power of language that the non-activist students lack. Chapter 6 will further explore the benefits that campus groups have for these students: by reading, writing, and speaking in activities on behalf of their campus group(s), students enhance their awareness of literacy as an agent of social change.

In this section, we have seen that the questionnaire results suggest that LGBT students desire to form language communities over e-mail and through campus groups. These findings are corroborated by the interview data. The next section will reveal the ways in which students believe that the most viable solutions towards achieving LGBT student inclusion in academic discourse are achieved by getting teachers, administrators, and students to work together towards this goal.

Community Solutions

Statements one through nine in Part III of the questionnaire focus on activities inside the classroom, whereas statements ten through fifteen in focus more on possible solutions that existing outside of class (see Appendix A). The statements receiving the four highest agreement rankings (eleven through fourteen) all dealt with solutions outside the classroom involving a variety of individuals in academe, whereas the statements receiving the four lowest agreement rankings (one, five, six, and eight) all dealt with classroom solutions.

Figure 4 elucidates the contrast between the classroom solutions and the solutions involving the academic community outside of class:

Figure 4: Student Agreement on Classroom versus Community Solutions

The numbers on the scale correspond with the statement numbers on Part III of the questionnaire (see Appendix A for copy of questionnaire).

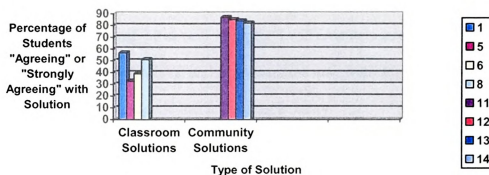


Figure 4 indicates that, while the lowest-ranking, classroom-oriented solutions to LGBT student inclusion received a score of “agree” or “strongly agree” from only 30-56% percent of the students, all the highest-ranking, community-oriented ones received agreement rates of 80% or higher. From this evidence, we may infer that LGBT students see the inclusion of LGBT concerns in academic discourse as an issue that should involve the entire academic community.

The results indicate that students want administrators and teachers to get training in LGBT issues and desire that these individuals use their positions of power to assist in the creation of more LGBT courses as well. This result should make us question the extent to which LGBT students perceive themselves as having power/agency to make a difference in changing institutionalized academic literacy communities. The interview data suggests that they perceive that the best solutions to the problem of LGBT student inclusion are in the hands of administrators and teachers, because they view themselves as lacking power within the institutional setting. They often do not feel that they can

make a difference within the bureaucratic power structure of a college or university, so they look to LGBT-friendly administrators and teachers to support their positions. Most of the students tend to believe in a “top-down” approach to power distribution in academe: they feel that if the administrators and teachers are educated on LGBT concerns, then the students will be as well. Chapter 8 will articulate a research plan which suggests that students, teachers, and administrators may work together to make LGBT student inclusion in academic literacy spaces a reality.

Positive student responses to “Increase the number of on-campus LGBT student resources,” along with corroborating interview data, allow us to conclude that LGBT students see themselves as having a role in the formation of academic discourse. Many students are aware that they can often work together with faculty, staff, and administrators to increase LGBT student resources; they see themselves as playing pivotal roles in such concerns. In other words, while students may see the most important decisions resting in the collective hands of the administration and teachers, it is also possible to infer from these results that LGBT students do see themselves as part of important literacy communities: ones that exist outside the classroom setting, in which students read, write, and discuss LGBT topics for academic audiences in order to achieve their desired goals. Chapters 6 through 8 clarify the ways in which students see themselves working together in language communities to reach their objectives. Chapter 8, in particular, suggests that LGBT students may work with administrators to achieve their desired resources. It also offers a variety of suggestions for individuals who wish to integrate LGBT-oriented resources into their classrooms or other academic spaces. These

important resources include panel discussions, speakers, on-campus groups, the Internet, and films.

Student responses to statements eleven, twelve, and fourteen reveal a key demographic difference in the study: lesbians are more likely than gays or bisexuals to view literacy activities involving a broad range of the academic community exceptionally positively. Here we see that while most students tended to rank their agreement with the aforementioned statements around the 4.2-4.3 range, lesbians usually ranked them around the 4.5-4.6 range, indicated that they strongly agreed that solutions involving community involvement in literacy activities would be very effective for achieving LGBT student inclusion in academic literacies.

Both performative theory and discourse theory raise interesting questions for analysis regarding this result. The interview data suggests that performing the role of “lesbian” in our culture involves participation in community discourse. The lesbian students see a clear need for more resources, meetings, teacher training, and courses on LGBT concerns—they want everyone in academe to get involved, as a community, to hone their awareness of LGBT issues. They are more likely than either gay men or bisexuals to challenge the wrongs that they perceive in the academic system; they accomplish this task by identifying the problems and then using written and oral language to correct them. From the perspective of discourse analysis, we might conclude that lesbians draw upon community linguistic resources more than gays to form their primary discourse community; this idea will be explored further in Chapter 7. This chapter also suggests that a connection may exist between the performance of lesbian identity and lesbians’ involvement in community discourse: I argue that lesbians’ stress on

community involvement may stem from the fact that they exist as a minority within a minority community, and thus have a stronger desire than either gays or bisexuals to reach out to other lesbians to feel less alone.

Conclusion

The questionnaire data points toward two major trends. First of all, it suggests that, out of all literacy activities, LGBT students appear to feel the least comfortable with those involving weak, secondary writing communities. In particular, the data reveals that LGBT students often view writing as neither an effective means of negotiating academic literacies nor an effective solution towards the inclusiveness of LGBT student concerns in academic literacy spaces. The questionnaire data shows that LGBT students tend to avoid writing situations both in and out of the classroom, particularly those writing situations with a weak sense of community. It also reveals that students fail to see either sharing informal writing in class or using anonymous electronic chat as effective means of assuaging the hetero-normative hegemony of academic literacy communities. This information is corroborated by the interview data in Chapters 4 and 5 of the study, which further details the reasons behind the students' views on writing. Chapter 4 will indicate, for example, that LGBT students avoid writing on LGBT issues in the classroom because their teachers and classes do not provide the opportunities to write on such issues. It further shows that many LGBT students do not wish to share their writing on LGBT issues because doing so makes them uncomfortable. We will also see the students' chat room behavior discussed more thoroughly in Chapter 5. The chapter suggests that LGBT students often do use chat rooms as part of their "coming out" process, but that they

abandon these chat rooms once they become more comfortable with the discourse of the LGBT community or begin to have negative experiences with particular individuals.

These findings add much to our understanding of LGBT student attitudes towards writing. Most studies on LGBT issues examine how to fit LGBT topics into classrooms, but refrain from looking at how LGBT students, in particular, feel about writing. Several scholars do acknowledge the discomfort that LGBT students feel in academic writing situations (Davis, Malinowitz, Olano), but these individuals do not investigate whether writing activities are possible solutions for facilitating LGBT student inclusiveness. Moreover, few scholars note LGBT student attitudes towards chat room writing. Therefore, my findings on LGBT student attitudes towards writing make three major contributions to the field of composition-rhetoric: (1) they enable us to understand more clearly why LGBT students feel that writing activities inside and outside the classroom provide ineffective means of negotiating academic literacies; (2) they help us realize that many classroom writing activities are not an effective means of achieving LGBT student inclusion in academic discourse; and (3) they teach us more LGBT student attitudes towards electronic chat rooms in campus literacy communities.

The second major trend revealed by the questionnaire data suggests that students see a need to establish language communities outside the classroom environment. The most popular literacy forums all exist outside of class, and they include e-mail/listservs and campus groups. The results further indicate that students see the most effective solutions to heighten LGBT inclusiveness involve a broad range of the academic community. Teachers, administrators, and students all need to be involved to make this goal happen. The students see three key issues as central to achieving this inclusiveness:

the training of administrators and teachers, the creation of more courses which include LGBT concerns, and the increase in availability of LGBT resources on campus. The results further indicate that lesbians, in particular, view community literacy activities much more positively than most other students: from their perspective, involvement of the academic community is essential for achieving LGBT student inclusion. Chapters 6 and 7 of this dissertation will explore the complexities of this second trend in much more detail. Chapter 6 will show, for instance, that much of the students' electronic communication in campus literacy communities takes the form of "blogging," or online journaling rather than just traditional e-mail or listservs. In addition, Chapter 6 will show that LGBT students often involve themselves in on-campus group activities to instill a sense of pride in themselves while negotiating hetero-normative academic literacies. Towards the end of Chapter 7, we will examine the relationship between performing "lesbian" in our culture and involvement in the academic community. In Chapter 8, on the basis of my research, and after analyzing the viability of the students' perspectives, I suggest a research plan for future research to create more inclusiveness of the LGBT community in academic discourse. This plan asks as to consider literacy from institutional perspective rather than just a classroom one; it focuses on how literacy operates on a variety of levels outside classroom spaces. We shall see how students desire to work with the campus literacy communities outside classrooms to achieve their goals, and we will explore the process for achieving inclusion of LGBT issues in academic discourses. All individuals within the academic community—students, teachers, and administrators alike—need to work towards inclusion of LGBT people in order to create substantive change.

These findings on LGBT students' desires for language communities outside the classroom contribute much to the discussion of LGBT studies in composition-rhetoric. Most studies on LGBT students which stress solutions to problems of inclusion are brief in terms of scope of coverage (McConnell-Celi, Cahill and Theilheimer, Harris), definitions discussed (Cady), or focus just on classrooms (Donelson, Brunner). None of these discussions stress the role that campus communities outside classrooms may play in facilitating LGBT student inclusiveness in academe, and most of them do not draw their conclusions from primary research on college student populations. In addition, no recent scholarly work has been done on how LGBT students use "blogging" as a means of forming language communities outside of class, or on how lesbians, in particular, formulate language communities outside classroom environments. My study, on the other hand, elucidates the following findings on LGBT student disciplinary literacy and campus literacy communities: (1) it clarifies the central role that primary discourse communities outside of classrooms play in LGBT student language development; (2) it focuses on how LGBT students "blog" as a means of performing gender and sexual orientation; and (3) it explores further how lesbians negotiate the literacy communities of academe, both in and out of classroom environments.

“She Didn’t Think It Was Right”: LGBT Student Negative Attitudes towards Writing

Overview

In my English 102 class . . . I had let my professor know that I would not be speaking [on the 2003 National Day of Silence], and she said that was fine . . . on the Day of Silence, she announced to the class that one of the classmates would not be speaking . . . that we would still be discussing Matthew Shepherd, but first we were going to do a reflective writing to open people up. After the reflective writing, I basically sat there and listened to 30 other students talk about how Matthew Shepherd deserved everything that he got because he had tried to flirt with someone out of a gay-designated area . . . the professor said that she didn’t believe that anyone deserved to die because they were gay, but she didn’t think it was right. And, at the end of the class period, she thanked the entire class, praising their critical thinking skills in saying that Matthew Shepherd deserved to die and they would kill any gay person that hit on them.

--Lisa, a bisexual interviewee
from my study

Even though the freewriting activity Lisa’s teacher introduced to her class had the purpose of “opening people up” to discuss Matthew Shepherd, Lisa feels that she was chastised for remaining closed. She had chosen to give up her voice for that day to honor Matthew Shepherd, a young man from Wyoming brutally murdered for his gay sexual orientation, so she could not defend the LGBT community in general or Matthew Shepherd in particular, and she felt that the teacher and students decided to take advantage of her voicelessness. It is possible that Lisa might have overreacted; after all, the teacher may have originally intended to deal with the Matthew Shepherd issue in a positive way by including his memorial as part of the classroom’s activities. However, we must also note that Lisa still had to endure listening to homophobic remarks about someone whose memory she wanted to honor, and, regardless of her intentions or

personal views, the teacher could have played a more objective role in the discussion, challenging the students' opinions instead of merely agreeing with their viewpoints.

Unfortunately, Lisa's experience with the writing prompt is not uncommon. As noted in Chapter 3 of this dissertation, many LGBT students surveyed revealed negative attitudes towards activities involving writing, both inside and outside classroom environments. This chapter will explore the reasons behind these negative attitudes, which were learned from a series of 32 interviews with LGBT students. During the interviews, the students were asked several questions about their negotiations of academic discourse and their views on solutions for facilitating inclusion of LGBT concerns in academic literacy communities. The questions asked that pertained the most to writing activities were "Why do you choose to write/not write on LGBT topics in the classroom?" and "Why do you choose to write/not write on LGBT topics outside the classroom?" The question "Which of the proposed solutions on the questionnaire do you feel would work well/not well [towards achieving LGBT student inclusion]? Why?" also resulted in some in-depth responses about writing activities. The results of the interviews indicate that, in the secondary discourse spaces of academe, where students, teachers, and administrators interact, weak writing communities exist. We shall see that teachers and LGBT students often have polarized values about what matters in a classroom, LGBT students generally do not trust their peers to provide them valuable feedback on their writing, and administrators sometimes ignore students' written concerns. (All students' names in this chapter have been changed to conceal their identities.)

Overall, this chapter helps us understand the argument of this dissertation that stronger language communities need to be built to heighten the presence of LGBT issues

in academic literacy communities both in classroom-oriented, discipline-specific contexts and in campus contexts outside the classroom. Along with Chapter 5, it makes us aware of ways in which academic literacy communities often fail LGBT students. It stresses the point that, when writing communities have only tenuous, fragile bonds, as they often do in the secondary discourse environments of academe, they cannot assist LGBT students in negotiating the literacy demands of academe. Chapters 6 through 8, on the other hand, are more solution-oriented: instead of pointing out the ways in which writing communities do not work or are not formed, as Chapters 4 and 5 do, they explore the ways in which LGBT student inclusion in academic literacy spaces can be accomplished through the forming of campus communities outside the classroom involving writing, reading, and speech. However, let us now turn our attention to Chapter 4, which shall begin with an exploration of some of the research on students' attitudes towards writing, much of which corroborates my findings here.

Students' Attitudes towards Writing: The Research

General Research on the Attitudes of Writers

Much of the research shows that students tend to have negative attitudes towards their college writing experiences. Many students loathe their first-year writing courses, since they perceive them as merely another requirement that they must endure to graduate. Cynthia Mahaffey explains that such students who take first-year composition courses can be classified as “writing resisters,” since they enact their resistance to classroom writing in a variety of ways, such as by becoming “needy” students who expect their teachers to answer all their questions or by giving their teachers the impression that they are “students for whom writing seems truly irrelevant” (4). And

Mark Sidey notes in his study on workplace writers that, even after graduation, students tend not to see the relevance of their first-year writing courses to their lives. Sidey explains: “The participants could not relate what they did in their freshman writing classes to the writing they do in the workplace” (16). Most of the students in Sidey’s study hated first-year writing when they took it, and they still hate it to this day. Students’ negative views on writing applies to their placement into writing courses as well: Royer and Gilles note that, until the implementation of Grand Valley State University’s directed self-placement system, students placed into the developmental writing course “started the class with a chip on their shoulder after having been told during orientation that, despite their ‘B’ average in high school, they were required to take a no-credit class” (59).

Other studies reveal negative attitudes not just about first-year writing, but also about writing in general. In *Literacy in American Lives*, Deborah Brandt reveals that writing was a shameful experience for many of the interviewees in her study. She claims that they remembered their writing “as occurring out of the eye of adult supervision and, often, involving feelings of loneliness, secrecy, and resistance” (149-50). Furthermore, many of Brandt’s interviewees did not view themselves as writers. She asserts that, when she spoke with them about writing, “many . . . assumed the topic was handwriting, whereas others equated writing exclusively with literary or creative composition. Many of the latter group initially reported that they did no writing, when, in fact, with more probing, they reported using writing for an array of purposes” (156). Similarly, at the 2004 CCCC conference in San Antonio, Glenda Conway explained in her paper entitled “Making Composition Matter to Students” that, due to their negative experiences with

writing throughout their lives, most students experience a “disengagement” with writing. Hence, students come to writing classrooms with the attitude “that papers are stupid, boring, a waste.”

Interestingly enough, all of these studies recommend the building of language communities as solutions to making students feel more included. Mahaffey, for example, notes that teachers need to “acknowledge to trusted colleagues the actions of students which enrage, aggravate, and frustrate” them (4). By talking about the issues with others, teachers will become better equipped to deal with their students’ resistance. Sidey suggests that, to make students feel that writing is worthwhile to learn, teachers should “teach writing as a process—now we need to teach students to recognize various genres, the conventions of these genres, and to apply the appropriate processes to various genres as they draft and revise” (18). This approach enhances students’ understanding of the social nature of writing and their recognition that different writing situations require different rhetorical standards. By learning the process approach, students learn how to become more linguistically fluent in different discourse communities. To assuage student resentment regarding their placement into writing courses, Royer and Gilles recommend that universities develop a system of directed self-placement, in which they ask students to consider a series of questions about their own reading and writing, but ultimately require them to make their own decisions about their own writing. This allows students to be trusted with a decision that faculty and administrators normally make, thus lessening the power disparity between these new students and those who normally have the most influence over campus policies. Brandt also calls for lessening of the power disparity between students and faculty in her study on attitudes towards literacy. Calling

for the democratization of literacy practices on the institutional level, Brandt recommends the building of communities through the “management of resources, including curriculum, staff, equipment materials, time, space, and other forms of subsidy, to compensate within the school for economy equality beyond the school” (186). Thus Brandt envisions schools as possible levelers of inequality, through which literacy gaps may be bridged. Conway suggests that we “Validate student voices . . . respond with warmth and concern . . . [and] respond to students as we would our colleagues.” All of the actions to which Conway refers would assist in creating a bond between students and teachers that would make students feel less threatened, and more like they have a sense of agency in the classroom.

In spite of the valuable contributions of all these studies to our understanding of students’ attitudes towards writing, it is worthy to note that none of them examine how LGBT students, in particular, negotiate literacies in and out of the classroom. And, as we shall see, most of the articles which do explore this topic tend to do so only briefly.

Research on LGBT Students

Many studies on LGBT students and literacy have offered ideas as to how integrate LGBT topics in the general classroom setting (Harris, Brunner, Misa, Norton), but very few have examined LGBT student populations in particular, nor have they considered in-depth the role that institutions play in determining LGBT student attitudes towards writing. The works of Joseph Cady, Pamela Olano, and Harriet Malinowitz, however, do reveal a particular interest in LGBT student negotiations of literacy. Cady’s primary interest, though, does not lie in individual LGBT student voices; his primary concern is how to construct a historically-contextualized course on gay and lesbian topics

to appeal to LGBT students and their allies. And while Olano does discuss the place of gay and lesbian students in writing classrooms in particular in her 1998 article “The Unclaimed Self,” she stresses student writing performance from a classroom context rather than an institutional context. In addition, due to the brevity of her article, we do not learn a great deal about LGBT student attitudes towards writing. Malinowitz’s *Textual Orientations*, in which she interviews gay and lesbian students from her writing course on gay and lesbian issues, discusses findings which most closely corroborate my work here. She notes that, in rhetorical situations, LGBT students often most deal with issues of “secrecy, concealment, and disclosure, as well as anticipating the consequences of disclosure . . . all of these things have produced a form of rhetorical self-consciousness” (254). Thus she rightly acknowledges the complexity within gay and lesbian rhetorics. My work differs from Malinowitz’s in that it notes more of a student dislike of writing, in particular, not just complex attitudes towards various rhetorical acts. Secondly, while Malinowitz habitually refers to “gays and lesbians” in her study, mine includes lesbians, gays, bisexuals, and transgendered individuals.

My study builds upon the work of other scholars on LGBT student literacies by focusing in much more detail on LGBT students’ attitudes towards writing and looking at these views within the context of institutionalized literacy communities beyond the classroom, such as LGBT student interactions with administrators or with hetero-normative peers. I have noticed that LGBT students’ negative views of writing express themselves in three different ways: writing in class as an ineffective means of negotiating academic literacies; writing outside of class as an inadequate means of dealing with academic discourse; and sharing informal writing in groups as an ineffectual solution to

achieving LGBT student inclusion in academe. These findings often mirror those discussed earlier regarding students' attitudes towards writing overall. Let us begin our look at the interview data by examining the first of these three observations: the perception of the students that writing in class is not an effective means of dealing with academic literacies.

Writing in Class: An Ineffective Means of Negotiating Academic Literacies

The students interviewed do not perceive writing activities in the classroom as effective means of negotiating the literacy communities of academe. I came to this conclusion mainly through student answers to the question "Why do you choose to write/not write on LGBT topics in the classroom?" Out of all the interview questions, students tended to give the most full, detailed responses to this one. Many of them had stories about their experiences with LGBT issues in the classroom that they wanted to share. Consequently, students provided a wide variety of responses to this query.

Interestingly enough, all of the students interviewed cared about LGBT topics to at least some extent. Some students commented that they did not write on LGBT issues because there was no place for these issues in their classrooms. However, even these students tended to base their views on concerns external to LGBT-oriented subject matter, and many stated that they often find their own ways to involve themselves in LGBT issues (in or out of class) to compensate for the lack of attention to these concerns in the classroom.

Taylor, an intersexed student who prefers a male name and a female pronoun in describing herself, remarked that, in her Hotel Restaurant Management Program, LGBT topics are not appropriate in the cooking classes she takes. She explained that this is due

to “money, mostly. I just take the classes that I need to graduate and that’s really about it . . . I don’t have the funds,” but that she would take LGBT-oriented classes otherwise. Outside of class, Taylor is very involved in LGBT communities. She declared: “In terms of writing . . . I’m working on a couple different things right now. I’ve written, we do transgender monologues so I’ve done that a couple times and I’m working on creating a new one . . . I write a lot of poetry for myself, and also I’m working on a article for [a university publication] on intersex . . .” She created a gay-straight alliance group, and is involved in several university and state-wide groups which concern gender and sexual orientation issues. She explained that she sees her extra-curricular activities as an integral part of her community involvement: “I have a lot of friends, and I’m involved in a lot of communities. A lot of community projects related to LGBT issues. It’s something I do for myself.”

Herman, a gay graduate student in agronomy, similarly claimed that LGBT concerns are “not an issue” in his classes. Yet, interestingly enough, he plans to make concerted efforts to compensate for this in his research: he hopes to bring up genetic and international developmental issues in his work that unveil the concerns of the LGBT community. He explained: “There are a lot of gender issues in international development [and] . . . they pretty much ignore gays and lesbians and transgendered and intersex people.” It is important to him that stereotypes are combated in scientific discourse, and one way in which he plans to combat these stereotypes is to research Latino attitudes towards gay people in his research on the bean population in Honduras. He revealed that “A lot of traditional societies believe that [the presence of] gay people can make their crop less fertile or . . . can make an animal less likely to conceive . . . that’s an issue for

me . . . because, when I'm working in Honduras, I'm not out, because I don't want that to be a factor in my research, basically." Even though Herman is not currently out when doing his research in Honduras, he still desires to make people more aware of the stereotypes against LGBT people that do exist there by writing articles on this topic; he wants to address issues of sexual orientation by entering into a community of scholars who will read his work. Through this written work, he hopes that he can help change international views on the role of LGBT people in agriculture and will therefore feel less inclined to hide his sexual identity.

Erica, a self-described "dyke," also compensates for the lack of attention to queer concerns in her classes. She noted that she hasn't taken classes where she's been able to discuss those topics; even her Women's Studies classes did not sufficiently address LGBT concerns. For example, she revealed that "In my Psychology of Women class, the textbook tries to address LGBT issues and concerns of lesbian and bi women but I think that it's sort just of a generalization." Therefore, to compensate for these concerns in her classes, she brings up issues dealing with lesbian feminism as often as she can in her disciplinary literacy communities, such as in her personal responses to class writing assignments. When one of her Women's Studies classes was taking about feminism, lesbian feminism was not brought up in class, so she made sure to bring up lesbian feminism in her journal entry. And to deal with the generalizations in her textbook, for example, she reminded her classmates during class discussion that the experiences represented there are "not the experiences of everyone . . . think about the different communities in all areas."

Lechele, an African-American lesbian activist at her university, also noted during her interview that, much to her dismay, her classes don't address LGBT issues at all. She explained: "The classes that I'm in, they don't talk about LGBT topics. I'm not in English classes, I'm not in writing classes, so I guess that's why, but I don't think they'd bring it up anyway." She thought that the issues might have appeared in her course on substance abuse problems or in her interdisciplinary arts and humanities course; however, she found that LGBT issues never came up. She finds that many of her arts and humanities classes generally "[don't] allow those topics"; consequently, she feels strongly that her university "discriminates against race, and discriminates against sexual orientation also." When I asked her if it was possible to work LGBT issues into classes on her own, she replied "It's really not possible. Because if I have a paper to write, it's on a certain topic, and it has to be on that topic. And they don't give you choices. So they say . . . you have to write this, and if you don't write this, well, then you're not doing it right." Clearly, Lechele perceives the demands of discipline-specific classroom literacies as constraining. However, through her on-campus activism, her involvement in a local AIDS network, and her online petition drive to memorialize 15-year-old Sakia Gunn (who was murdered for being a lesbian), Lechele involves herself in campus literacy communities which do discuss LGBT concerns. Regarding her involved campaign to establish a moment of silence and a community center in Sakia's honor, Lechele stated, "I'm not just going to send a letter and be like, ok, that's it, no. I want something done. I won't stop until she gets recognized, because I didn't do that for nothing. It's a lot of hard work." Lechele took up this project on Sakia on her own,

without any prompting from a class assignment, because she wants so badly to engage in LGBT issues, and her classes, she feels, do not provide this engagement for her.

From this data, we can conclude that, even when students note that LGBT concerns do not belong in their classes, they tend to say this not because they themselves feel apathetic towards LGBT issues, but because they feel powerless to overcome this decision which, in their view, has already been made for them. After assimilating themselves into academic discourse communities, they come to understand that one of the pervading ideologies of academe is that LGBT topics should not be a part of classrooms. However, instead of agreeing with the academic bureaucracies which deem that LGBT topics are inappropriate at the classroom level, most LGBT students do create strategies to compensate for the lack of attention to these concerns, either in their own research and classroom study (as in the cases of Herman and Erica) or in their activism (as in the cases of Taylor and Lechele). Perhaps we as instructors need to join our students in making concerted efforts to challenge the boundaries of institutional structures. As Porter et al. argue, “Institutions are hard to change . . . But they can be rewritten . . . through rhetorical action” (610). If teachers of writing “reconceived [them]selves as ‘writing experts’ working in the public realm instead of ‘composition teachers’ working in the university” (Porter et al. 632), we could begin to initiate this kind of change.

Other students, instead of saying that LGBT concerns “don’t belong” in certain classes, noted a lack of assignments on LGBT topics. Donna, a Jewish bisexual student, remarked that, even though she is a women’s studies major and is ostensibly supposed to deal with gender and sexuality issues in many of her classes, she has only been given an

assignment on an LGBT-oriented topic once in her college career (on Adrienne Rich's "Compulsory Heterosexuality"). When asked what she thought accounted for the lack of LGBT-oriented assignments in her classes, she replied: "Instructors don't want to discuss LGBT issues unless they have [a] personal interest" in LGBT topics. So unless the covering of LGBT concerns interests the instructor, the issues are not addressed in her courses; LGBT-inclusive communities are absent from her classrooms.

Rena, a lesbian first-year student, also expressed a desire to know more about LGBT culture, but feels that, in her classes, she hasn't had assignments dealing with these issues. She stated: "I would like . . . to educate myself, to know more about the culture and issues that go on in gay and lesbian society. That kind of stuff, from day to day. And I think it's important to educate others, teachers and other people, about it. It's part of our culture and needs to be talked about, just like anything else." However, she also noted that she has not been asked to deal with issues concerning gay and lesbian society in her classes. She claimed that she once had a sociology teacher who asked the class to write on a "political or social issue," but this instructor did not ever ask the class to write on LGBT concerns. Rena took advantage of this open topic to write on an LGBT issue, but she also noted, "It wasn't like I was asked to do it, I wanted to do it." Consequently, some of her peers "made some comments against her paper," and she felt that they did so because the topic was LGBT-oriented. While it is possible that the "some comments against" Rena's paper were made for other reasons, such as weak organization, or poor description, we should also realize that her peers could have given Rena a more affirming response, describing the paper's strengths as well as its flaws. If they had done so, perhaps Rena would have taken the criticism less personally.

Similarly, Kate, a lesbian junior, noted that she never had a teacher specifically ask students to address LGBT issues in a writing assignment. Instead, she revealed that in her composition class, for example, she would receive broad, ostensibly simple journal assignments which would make her panic:

KATE: We had to do, basically, she asked us questions, and we had to answer them . . .

BRIAN: About?

KATE: It was just . . . stupid questions, like “Who’s your best friend,” and things like that . . . I had problems with that whole thing, as far as lesbian and gay issues go.

BRIAN: Why did the writing prompt, “Who’s your best friend,” cause you anxiety like that?

KATE: Because I was in love with her [*laughs*].

Kate was therefore confronted with the choice of whether to “out” herself to her teacher or to make something up. She did decide to write on the topic, but, according to Kate, the teacher decided that it would be best if Kate did not share her work with others in the class, to “protect” Kate from other students’ vindictiveness. While Kate was happy that she “never had any trouble with anyone reading [her] papers” in this class, the instructor also denied her the opportunity to receive feedback on her work or engage others in dialogue on LGBT concerns. If the instructor had at least on occasion acknowledged the possibility of love between LGBT individuals in her journal assignments, perhaps Kate would have felt more comfortable addressing her feelings toward her friend.

And, oddly enough, Todd, a gay student at a prestigious northern California institution, remarked that he is currently taking an interdisciplinary studies course called “Interpreting a Queer Past,” but it seems to emphasize other minorities besides the LGBT population. Instead of looking at the LGBT population in particular, Todd claimed that the course stresses how “passing” for straight affects other minority groups. Similarly,

his “Minority Public Health” course and “Sociology of Gender” courses at his school completely ignored LGBT concerns. From his stay at his school, Todd has concluded that, even in this ostensibly liberal environment, “Everyone is presumed to be heterosexual.”

Overall, the interviews reveal that teachers only allow students to write on LGBT topics under two different circumstances. The first circumstance occurs when the course itself specifically deals with queer concerns. This most often takes place in graduate-level courses or specialized undergraduate programs (in Jason’s courses at a prestigious college within a Midwestern university, for example, he is encouraged to explore his own areas of interest). However, as we saw in Todd’s case, sometimes the titles of courses indicate that they will cover LGBT issues, but the content of the courses differs dramatically from the way it was originally advertised.

The second circumstance under which writing on LGBT issues takes place happens when teachers allow for open topics. On the few occasions in which students wrote on LGBT issues in the classroom, they remarked that they did so because their teachers left the topics for their writing assignments open (as in the cases of Rena and Kate). Journals, in particular, seem to serve as a particularly popular space for the exploration of LGBT concerns. Julie, a bisexual student, revealed in her interview that being allowed to keep an online journal in her Writing about Literature class enabled her to open up on LGBT topics in ways that she never had previously. She felt “excited” to write on LGBT topics for this class. Even though it was at first “scary” for her to write about such issues, it made her feel more comfortable knowing that her instructor encouraged her to write on these concerns. For the most part, though, the interviewees

claimed that opportunities to write on LGBT topics in the classroom have not been present for them because their teachers have chosen to ignore these topics. In all likelihood, this has occurred because many teachers have chosen conduct their classrooms within a “complex web of signification forged by homophobic discourse” thereby ignoring the concerns of LGBT students (Malinowitz, “Construing” 47). But it is the responsibility of writing teachers to help LGBT students “clarify the complex intentions, possible interpretations and reader-responses, and consequences that they will have to negotiate,” and this can only be done by “establishing a counter-homophobic discourse” in the classroom (Malinowitz, “Construing,” 47).

Some students told stories in which their teachers not only ignored LGBT topics in the classroom, but even went so far as to discourage their students from writing on such issues. Donna mentioned that her teaching assistant for her “Sex and Gender” class wrote disparaging remarks on student essays whenever the students attempted to write on LGBT issues. This TA told one student in Donna’s class that she wrote “‘too much about lesbians.’” In addition, Donna herself habitually received exceptionally rude comments from her TA on her papers such whenever she wrote on queer issues. Donna explained: “She was pretty negative. She would pick out the parts about queer issues and circle them and write nasty comments [like] ‘not well written’ or ‘poorly phrased’ or something . . . She would sort of pretend that they were mechanical things, but they really weren’t . . . It was a pretty hideous experience.” One might reasonably assume that a teaching assistant of a “Sex and Gender” class would be reasonably open to queer concerns, but Donna informed me that her TA refused to use the word “transgender” in class and instead referred to transgendered people as “God’s experiments.” While we should

acknowledge the possibility that Donna received negative comments on her essay because her essay was indeed lacking in quality, the fact that Donna made three different types of negative comments regarding this TA's treatment of LGBT individuals should lead us to at least question whether this TA could have been more sensitive to the treatment of her LGBT students.

And when Kaleb, a gay student at a rural community college, wrote a paper for his Composition 1 course on coming out issues, he received a "mildly disturbed" response from his teacher. His teacher not only expressed surprise that Kaleb would write on an LGBT-oriented topic, he did not allow it to be discussed in the classroom. Consequently, Kaleb's paper was ignored by his peer review group, and he had to seek out non-traditional students in the class to give him some feedback. While his instructor gave him a 4.0 on the paper, the instructor warned him against submitting the paper for outside evaluation in the final class portfolio for "it may not be received well." Ultimately, an anonymous outside reader gave Kaleb's portfolio a grade of 3.5, and claimed that he or she lowered Kaleb's grade because the "coming out" paper was "too controversial." On another paper Kaleb wrote for the same class, on gay marriages, the teacher again chastised the "controversial" nature of the subject matter and disagreed with some of his arguments. Disgusted with his instructor's reaction, Kaleb decided to show the essay to other professors he knew, who concurred that it was 4.0 work. Perhaps Kaleb's instructor was only trying to protect him by warning him that his work might be received poorly by outside readers, and there may have been other reasons for the 3.5 on Kaleb's portfolio other than its controversial content. However, the teacher could have made more affirming comments to Kaleb throughout the class, explaining what he did

like about his work, instead of habitually commenting on the work's "controversial" nature. If he had done so, then perhaps Kaleb would not have seen the negative comments as a personal attack, and a greater sense of unity would have been established between student and instructor.

So far in this chapter we have seen that LGBT students avoid writing in class for several different reasons. Some of them refrain from writing on LGBT issues in their classes because they felt that the issues did not serve a purpose in their discipline-specific classes. However, these same students also tend to view LGBT topics as important, and they attempt to seek alternate ways for involving themselves in LGBT-oriented literacy communities both inside and outside the classroom, in both disciplinary literacy communities in class and campus literacy communities outside of class. Other students commented that they do not write on LGBT issues in the classroom because they lack opportunities to do so. Their instructors never present them with such opportunities, and they are given writing assignments on LGBT-oriented topics only in special circumstances. Finally, other interviewees remarked that the negative feedback they received from their teachers discourages them from writing on LGBT-oriented topics in the classroom.

In all three of these situations, we are reminded of the influence that teachers have over the classroom setting. The discipline-specific literacy community of the college classroom can either setup power disparities between teacher and student or acknowledge multiple student voices; the teacher's attitude towards that community sets the standard for the term. When students come into the college classroom, they feel that it is necessary to take on a new identity in their new community to please their teacher and

peers. If the members of their new discourse community refrain from acknowledging LGBT concerns, then they learn that LGBT issues are not valued in this secondary discourse environment, so they feel uncomfortable writing on these topics for their teachers and peers. As Gee would argue, the students “bring out [a new] store of videotapes”—the ones that “are most relevant to understanding” the classroom context (“Reading,” 716). The interviewees in this study tended to conclude that writing on LGBT issues in classroom setting is, for the most part, ignored or discouraged by the teachers who create the classroom community. Lauren noted that she will not out herself in her classes because, in academic settings, “[the] teacher has too much power.” She worries that if people discover that she’s transgendered, “their view changes completely,” and this would adversely affect her course grade. Kadijah, an African-American bisexual at a Midwestern university, noted the importance of paying attention to links between race and sexuality. She claimed that because “Teachers are generally white, middle-aged, upper-class males . . . [they] haven’t evaluated the privilege within themselves [and] are uncomfortable viewing other people’s empowerment.” Thus Kadijah rightly points out that most college and university teachers, who are in positions of power in their classrooms because their race, gender, age, and sexuality all fit within the accepted social norms, do not want to spend time considering that those individuals different from themselves have that right to empowerment. If they were to “evaluate the privilege within themselves,” then they might start to question whether their empowerment is deserved. Instead, LGBT students in the classroom are too often “distracted from the possibility of intervening in the making and remaking of reality. This serves the needs of the oppressive class, in that it retains control over [hetero-normative] descriptions of

reality and the hegemonic social structures that are legitimated and locked in place by those descriptions” (Malinowitz, *Textual Orientations* 96).

I will now shift the focus to student writing outside the classroom. This section reveals that, even outside of class, LGBT students tend to view writing activities as ineffective means of negotiating academic literacies.

Writing outside of Class: Another Ineffective Means of Dealing with Academic Literacies

Just as LGBT students fail to see writing in class as an effective means of negotiating academic literacies, they also tend to perceive writing outside of class as an equally ineffective means of dealing with academic literacies’ constraints. When considering student responses to the interview question “Why do you choose to write/not write on LGBT topics outside the classroom?,”

Having no time to write on LGBT topics was a frequent complaint of many interviewees, particularly graduate students. Jacinda, a bisexual medical student who is also working on a Ph.D. in neuroscience, cited lack of time as her most common reason for not writing on LGBT topics outside of class. “I don’t have that much time . . . I like to read about it, learn about it . . . [but] talking is more within my community.” She also claimed that reading, unlike writing, helps her “connect with others.” Jacinda explains: “I’ll discuss these things with new people that I meet just because, especially if they don’t seem comfortable with LGBT issues, I sort of discuss it with them, and I feel like having reading material helps me understand myself and it also helps me discuss it with new people.” For Jacinda, reading, not writing, helps facilitate interaction in her campus literacy communities.

In addition, Esther, a lesbian graduate student who also is a graduate assistant in the LGBT concerns programs office at her university, remarked that she preferred “verbal expression to reading or writing.” Esther declared: “I’m not a writer . . . it frustrates me to do it. I hate to type [a paper] out or write it out . . . it’s time-consuming.” She mostly reads “what [she] has to,” and would “rather attend a conference on LGBT issues” than write or read about them. She explained that both reading and writing frustrate her because they “take . . . too much time . . . Verbal expression is more efficient.”

Therefore, as with the students mentioned in the earlier section who commented that LGBT issues do not belong in their courses, it is not that the interviewees refrain from writing on LGBT concerns because they feel apathetic towards these concerns. Instead, they avoid writing on these topics because they often perceive *the act of writing itself* as a time-consuming source of frustration. They want their communication to be fast, and, in their view, most traditional writing situations cannot meet that requirement because they do not assist them in developing a sense of community with other LGBT individuals.

Other interviewees explained that they do not write outside of class because they do not want to share their writing with others; oddly enough, however, these same individuals often have writing lives outside of class. Erica mentioned that she does not write papers or journals outside of class because she doesn’t see herself as a good writer. However, she did mention that she is actively involved in writing flyers for the Women’s Council group at Michigan State and that she discusses political and personal LGBT issues with her friends over e-mail. She also talked about forming a coalition with other on-campus groups, in which she helped pen a list of fourteen issues concerning LGBT

students to bring to the administration. Clearly, Erica has a writing life outside of class; yet, still she habitually insisted that she was “not a good writer.” When I asked her why she didn’t see herself as a writer outside of class, she explained that she felt that her words were not having any effect on the campus’s administration. She chastised the President and Board of Trustees for being “not educated on gender identity issues,” and explained that the Board of Trustees “admitted to not reading gender identity pamphlets” given to them by the students within Erica’s coalition. In addition, she revealed that no members of the Michigan State administration showed up when invited to gender identity forums on campus, which help to educate the MSU community on gender identity concerns. Still, Erica feels a strong need “to react to [the] unfairness” that she perceives on campus:

BRIAN: Tell me about why it’s so important to you to be involved in these kinds of issues outside the classroom.

ERICA: It’s something that I’m passionate about . . . I guess it’s personal . . . I’ve seen where things aren’t right, how they’ve affected me, and how they affect others, as far as just, I mean, the oppression, and, the unfairness, I guess, in the world. I want to try and change that . . . I don’t think that anyone should have to be afraid, or be alone, or be oppressed, or made to feel like they are less than someone else.

Erica diminished her writing abilities mainly because she felt that she did not have an audience who cared about her concerns. Since the administrators did not take her coalition seriously, she did not take her own involvement as a writer seriously, either.

When asked about her writing involvement outside the classroom, Erica replied:

ERICA: I don’t really write.

BRIAN: Why is that?

ERICA: I don’t consider myself a very good writer. I don’t think that’s one of my strong points. I don’t do a lot of writing.

BRIAN: How are you defining writing, though?

ERICA: I guess I don’t write papers or essays, or even a journal about anything.

When I asked her whether she felt her varied flyers and brochures for the Women's Council were considered "writing," she reluctantly responded, "Yeah, I suppose." As a consequence of the administration's ignoring her coalition's work, Erica seems uncertain that her very political, purposeful writing for a student organization outside of class is meaningful. From Erica's perspective, the definition of "meaningful" writing is determined by those in positions of power in academe, those who shape the definition of "real" academic writing by assigning only traditional essays and who largely ignore the relationship between in-class writing and student social activism through literacy which takes place in campus communities outside the classroom.

Devin also fears judgment from others when he writes outside of class. He told me that he doesn't feel that he has many outlets to express his opinions on LGBT issues. It is important to Devin that people not "criticize [his] opinions." Additionally, he does not want his words to generate "talk" about his sexuality; he feels that this will "create drama" that he wants to avoid. On his personal website, he avoids any reference to his sexuality because he "doesn't want to start conflict." Part of Devin's suspicious nature stems from the fact that, in the past, he has had people in his life "gossip" about his relationships. Oddly enough, however, Devin is not completely "in the closet." He regularly attends one of his university's caucuses for LGBT students, and even serves as the group's secretary. And he often uses the HRC (Human Rights Campaign) website to fax and send letters to people in Congress on such issues as the Defense of Marriage Act, hate crime legislation, and workplace discrimination against LGBT people. He does sign his name to these letters, and often gets positive responses from many Democratic senators and representatives. Apparently, using the Internet to express his political

viewpoints creates for Devin a level of anonymity with which he is comfortable. He will express his views in writing as long as the writings concern national political issues rather than local ones, and as long as he can use the Internet as a conduit for his written expression. Comstock and Addison suggest that LGBT student Internet involvement such as Devin's may best be referred to as a "cyberculture" instead of a "discourse community": "[This] is a naming that respects the ways this group has positioned itself in resistance to a more dominant . . . heterosexist culture" (248). From their participation within this "cyberculture," students like Devin "may more readily be able to engage in [sexuality] issues in less safe spaces, such as our classrooms" (Comstock and Addison 252).

Clearly, some LGBT students make conscious efforts to isolate themselves from public discourse and see themselves as weak or unwilling participants within it, yet, paradoxically, they simultaneously engage in literacy activities in campus communities, most of which they perceive as invalid due to their unresponsive audiences. Therefore, we may conclude that these students do not isolate because they naturally hate writing; they degrade their own writing lives because the audiences for whom they have written have expressed apathy and derision towards their written expressions on LGBT concerns. We will see in Chapters 6 and 7, however, that when LGBT students can establish a strong sense of community through their writing processes, they are much more likely to view them as empowering.

In addition, students who participate frequently in the literacy communities of their institutions have become victims of hate crimes through the written word. The word "fag" serves as the most common invective used against the gay community, and the

results of this study indicate that this word is invoked in both oral and written forms to discourage the presence of gay students on college campuses. Ed, a gay activist, serves as president of an LGBT student caucus at a midwestern university. To facilitate communication between himself and his peers, he keeps a message board on the door of his dorm room. One day, someone scrawled the word “FAG” in permanent marker on Ed’s message board, yelled the word, and then took off. When Ed filed a complaint to report the incident, nothing was done; his message board was ruined. Similarly, last year, when Dan, the former president of his LGBT support group at his university, worked on a collaborative project on LGBT concerns for one of his courses, students literally wrote demeaning messages on the project when it was posted for public display. One person wrote “Fags—we don’t want to see this crap.” These situations reveal that, ironically, sites that are ostensibly used to facilitate communication and understanding between homosexuals and heterosexuals—a message board on a dorm room door and an educational project—become sites to reinforce hetero-normative literacy standards. By writing the word “fag” on the possessions of these gay students, heterosexual students reveal their resistance to any subversion of power. The words “we don’t want to see this crap” on Dan’s project suggest that “we”—the heterosexual students whose views dominate the campus climate—do not wish to view the project because it reminds “us” that there may be other, valid ways of knowing the world that differ from the hetero-normative majority. If it were not visible, then the LGBT community can remain invisible, and hetero-normative power is not threatened. The project is “crap” to these students because it challenges their own viewpoints in ways that cause them discomfort.

The reactions that Raya, a transgender student activist, received to posting flyers advertising her campus group reveal how the written “violence” of literacy against LGBT students is multi-layered. The flyer, which she designed, showed people from a Gap clothing ad in provocative poses. The word “Gap” on the original ad was changed to “gay” for the purpose of advertising her campus’s LGBT group. The intent of the ad was to get the students’ attention in an offbeat, humorous way. But as a consequence of her posting this ad all over campus, people shouted “You fucking queer, we don’t want you here” at her, and wrote such expressions as “faggot,” “queer,” and “You need to get out of here” on the Gap parody flyers. Ironically, the purpose of the flyer was to encourage students to come to an on-campus group discussion on heterosexism. But most students reacted negatively to its message. One on-campus Christian group began to put posters directly over Raya’s flyers advertising their group meeting. Other students ripped down the flyer; when they did so, they found a smaller one beneath that calmly stated “You have just committed a hate crime.” Typically, her original Gap parody postings “would be gone less than a half hour” after she put them up, so many students saw the smaller flyer as well. This new flyer produced an even stronger reaction from the students, who often replied to it by writing detailed messages underneath, in which they vehemently denied any “hate crime” wrongdoings. According to Raya, one message read: “You don’t need to be here. I didn’t commit a hate crime. I’m just trying to teach you guys a lesson.”

With this example, we see LGBT student literacy used to perpetuate hatred and division between hetero-normative and LGBT groups. When Raya took an idolized, commodified symbol of heterosexual sexuality/culture/economics (the Gap ads) and

subverted its meaning for a predominately heterosexual audience (university students) through the change of one letter (“Gap” to “Gay”), she threatened the hetero-normative dominance of her university’s culture. The cultural myth of heterosexual desirability displayed in the Gap ad was subverted. As Barthes would argue, this is a challenge to the notion of “*myth as depoliticized speech*.” Barthes claims: “If I *state the fact* of [a myth], I am very near to finding that it is natural and *goes without saying*: I am reassured [sic]” (143). The ad’s original underlying message—that heterosexual desire is natural and normal--also “goes without saying” in our culture, but Raya’s change to the ad complicated this idea. Her intent was not to produce this threatening feeling within the students, but to extend an invitation to a discussion on heterosexism, to create an alliance of understanding between the LGBT and straight communities. Oddly enough, she produced the flyers as part of an assignment for her Women’s Studies class on activism rather than of her own volition. However, even though her teacher sanctioned the project, other individuals within the university repudiated her work. Even when she reported the defaced flyers to her Residence Hall Director, the Director’s reaction was “‘Oh, well, tough shit.’”

When the Christian group placed its flyers over Raya’s, they were asserting their power over LGBT issues on both a literal and metaphorical level. By deliberately placing its message perpetuating dominant religious ideologies on top of Raya’s flyer, this group symbolically reinforced its power over those viewpoints, such as Raya’s, which differ from the social norm. As far as the Christian group was concerned, the possibility that “heterosexism” exists is best kept hidden from society, and should instead be replaced with a reminder of dominant Christian ideologies. Thus we see the Christian

group using literacy as an agent of power and control. However, by reminding those who ripped down her Gap flyer that they had just created a “hate crime,” Raya was able to use a popular, recognizable phrase to infuriate those who were suppressing her message. At the suggestion that they might be prejudiced, many students were driven into a fury that far surpassed their response to the original flyer, writing full response paragraphs denying their wrongdoing, thus revealing that messages expressed through written literacies can serve as a public battleground. The literacy statements from both sides became increasingly volatile: Raya’s flyer was followed by some students’ angry words, which were followed by Raya’s public “hate crime” accusation, which were followed by the students’ written rants. It is worthy to note that the students who objected to Raya’s second set of flyers did not rip them down, ignore them, or cross them out; instead, they wrote their own messages. As Raya wryly explained, “They would take the time to find a pen and write a full-length message. And that’s a lot of effort for most college students.” They preferred to use literacy as a means to express their indignation against the LGBT community and its views that “heterosexism” and “hate crimes” exist; a conflict of performances therefore resulted.

The debate in which Raya engages herself is an example of what Miller calls the “textual corridors.” Campus walkways, mailboxes, and lamp posts serve as texts on which debates between student groups reveal themselves in ambiguous contexts. He thus explains: “In these spaces, all well away from the classrooms, one or more students or perhaps competing groups of students have been carrying out a heated, accusatory, and highly coded discussion [about sexual issues on campus]” (401). Miller cites one poster that he found on campus as an example of “textual corridor” writing. It blared in capital

letters, “DON’T MAKE YOUR MOTHER HAVE TO TELL HER FRIENDS THAT YOU’RE A RAPIST.” One student responded to this poster by writing, “‘What are you, a feminist?’” at the bottom of the poster (400). The context for this corridor debate cannot be fully understood by the passerby: no one knows who wrote these words, nor do we know precisely why they were written. Similarly, a student walking by the flyers posted by Raya and the Christian groups would not fully understand the context of their debate. However, this “textual corridor” debate reinforces the notion that complex, conflict literacy worlds do indeed exist outside classroom environments. We can see that “contact zones” (as Pratt calls them) are formed in which students use written literacy as a means of expressing animosity towards each other. So a key question remains: Can these “contact zones” be regulated such that the hetero-normative power expressed through literacy is assuaged in on-campus environments? If they can, then much work still needs to be done. Raya told me that, as a result of her experience with the flyers, she now feels more unsafe expressing her views on campus, and she has not tried to post similar flyers since. She stated: “I just didn’t feel safe. Hall directors didn’t give a shit . . . All of them were like, ‘We don’t want you here’ or ‘Tough shit.’ I was definitely contemplating moving out of the dorm complex.” The reactions to the flyers clearly made Raya feel unwelcome in her academic community.

In this section of the chapter, we have seen how written expression outside of class is not an effective means of negotiating academic literacies for LGBT students. Some view themselves as lacking time to write about LGBT concerns; however, they do desire to participate in LGBT discourse communities through other means, such as through talking or reading. Others tend to view their participation in campus literacy

communities through the written word as ineffective, and therefore see their written participation with LGBT concerns as unimportant. It is important to note, however, that responses from their audiences to their words have provoked their feelings of self-doubt. Even students who are actively involved in promoting LGBT discourse on campus have paid a price for their involvement: they tend to be victims of hate crimes through the written word. In Raya's case, in particular, we have seen how the "violence" of literacy is multilayered on both literal and metaphorical levels. As one flyer covers another, a battlefield of writing takes shape, thus reinforcing a division between heterosexual and LGBT students, and forcing Raya to fear for her safety on campus.

Therefore, while none of these students expressed an apathy towards LGBT concerns, all of them perceive writing as an ineffective means of expression on some level. To help students move past their negative perspectives on writing situations outside of class, teachers and administrators can help create situations both in and out of classroom settings to (1) give students plenty of time to express their interests in LGBT concerns through writing and (2) encourage the social activism in their written expression. Teachers may encourage this activism by serving as models for community involvement for their students. As Cushman suggests, "One way to increase our participation in public discourse is to bridge the university and community through activism" (7). If teachers can accomplish these tasks, LGBT students will likely see their out-of-class written expressions on LGBT issues in a more positive light. A stronger sense of community, with a greater sense of respect and trust between students and teachers, must be a part of academic discourse if LGBT students are going to feel included within it.

The next section of this chapter examines one aspect of writing pedagogy in more detail: sharing informal writing with others. We shall see the ways in which LGBT students perceive this task as a source of anxiety; unfortunately, most students do not trust their peers and professors enough to share their writing with them.

Sharing Informal Writing with Others: A Source of Classroom Anxiety

When asked “Which of the proposed solutions on the questionnaire do you feel would not work well?” the interviewees in this study answered by explaining that the sharing informal writing with others in a classroom setting is an ineffective means of increasing LGBT student inclusion in academe. Their views on this topic tended to fall into two categories: (1) informal writing perceived as formal writing and (2) informal writing as a source of discomfort. Some students claimed that, if they shared their informal writing with students in the classroom, that writing automatically becomes “formal,” and thus they did not wish to have their informal writing subjected to criticism in a formalized context. Other students used the word “uncomfortable” in describing their feelings toward sharing their informal writing. Some claimed that they did not want to make themselves uncomfortable, while others asserted that they did not wish to subject their heterosexual peers to discomfort either. LGBT students’ reluctance to share informal writing in groups exemplifies Gee’s distinction between primary and secondary discourses. Once LGBT students are in a classroom setting, they must take on a different identity in order to adapt to the demands of a secondary discourse community. Hence, their informal writing becomes formal, and they become more reluctant to share their views on LGBT concerns with others.

“Informal” as “Formal”

Some of the students took issue with the word “informal” used on the questionnaire to describe their classroom writing. These individuals seemed to equate all classroom writing with “formal” writing. For example, Jason claimed that, in the classroom, informal writing automatically becomes “formal” because students typically are writing for a “mass audience.” He does not feel informal classroom writing should be shared; journals, for example, should be “private.” For Jason, classroom space

just discourages informal writing. If I had to share what I write in my journal, if I was encouraged to share, in the sense that I would either receive academic credit for it, or something like that, it becomes coercive in the sense that, “Well, I want to do better in the class, I might as well read this,” I think it becomes less genuine than my own informal writing . . . in most situations where I’ve been in, it’s been like, “We’re going to have so-and-so day, you can share what you want to, and if you read you get five extra credit points,” and at that point it becomes coercive.

In fact, Jason resists any sort of performance of gender or sexuality through role-play or sharing writing in the disciplinary literacy community of the classroom; he worries that such performative behavior “may reinforce stereotypes,” and he mentioned that he has had “poor experiences” involving the performance of gender and sexuality issues in the classroom. Oddly enough, however, outside the classroom setting, Jason is a campus activist for LGBT concerns, and readily takes part in campus literacy activities, such as editing a campus queer newspaper. He is also Vice-President of the main LGBT student group on campus and President of a student LGBT caucus. In spite of his involvement, though, he perceives classroom space as an unsafe space for LGBT students, and feels much more uncomfortable dealing with sexuality concerns in classroom environments that are discipline-specific.

Similarly, Ed explained that he dislikes the sharing of informal writing because it becomes more formal in the classroom context. In fact, he also equated sharing informal writing with “performance” in his response, explaining that both performance and sharing writing require students to speak their mind in the classroom, and this “might make them feel more withdrawn.” In particular, Ed mentioned the example of “informal writing” cited on the questionnaire—journal writing—as a type of writing that becomes more formal if it’s shared with peers. Ed explained:

The whole wording of [“sharing informal writing” on the questionnaire] makes it seem contradictory . . . I see informal writing such as journals as a very personal thing, and to say that “Well, you’re going to write this journal, and then you’re going to share it with other people,” it’s kind of saying it’s not informal. It becomes formal writing then.

For Ed, there is not enough trust in classroom writing communities for him to feel comfortable sharing his informal writing. Even though his classmates are his “peers,” he still perceives sharing his views with them as a “formal” situation.

In addition, Todd also wondered why informal writing would be shared, and seemed very uncertain about the purpose of such an activity. He stated: “I don’t really know what exactly that’s going to do. I don’t really see the end goal of that. That’s I why I guess I put ‘not sure’ [on the questionnaire]. . . Why would you be sharing informal writing? . . . I can’t really see that as being really effective.” He acknowledged that sharing informal writing “may create community” in the classroom, but he does not feel that such a community would be an effective one in the classroom. For Todd, “informal” writing, by definition, is not to be shared with others in the classroom setting; only “formal” writing should undergo that sort of scrutiny.

It is interesting to note that, in their responses, none of the interviewees stressed the subject matter being shared—writing on LGBT issues—but instead emphasized the sharing of writing in general. For them, “informal” writing is also “personal” writing, and, in their perception, personal writing should not be shared with others. The sharing of “personal” writing, in Ed and Jason’s view, is also a “performance”—one that might make students feel more excluded than included in classroom discourse. In *Bodies that Matter*, Butler reminds us that any act within a discourse community is also “a ritualized production, a ritual reiterated under and through constraint, under and through the force of prohibition and taboo, with the threat of ostracism and even death controlled and compelling the shape of the production” (95). For the words of LGBT students to have an impact in the classroom, the students “must break apart the usual ideologies that have accrued [within that community] as ‘the effect of fixity’” (Wallace 53; Butler, *Bodies* 95). However, most LGBT students do not wish to make this kind of transformative effort; they would rather adapt to the classroom community’s discourse demands than resist them. Therefore, to adapt to the secondary discourse of the classroom environment, LGBT students are more likely to perform a heterosexual self to make themselves less “withdrawn” from their new environment. When they reveal their true, queer selves while participating within the disciplinary literacy communities of the classroom, they are sometimes ostracized by their secondary group. For example, when Kaleb tried to discuss a draft of his paper on coming out issues with his peer review group, one student told him he was going to hell, one got up and left, and one made what Kaleb referred to as “smart-ass comments” such as “If two guys are together, which one’s the woman?” Since Kaleb risked writing on a topic that his peer review group viewed as unacceptable,

Kaleb could not get the feedback that he needed on his writing. Therefore, from Kaleb's situation, we see that, even when student writing on LGBT issues is more formalized (such as the draft of Kaleb's essay), it is still unacceptable within a disciplinary literacy community due to the nature of its subject matter.

"Informal" as "Uncomfortable"

Several interviewees mentioned that they would be "uncomfortable" sharing their informal writing in class. Tim, a transgender graduate student, remarked that it would be nice if LGBT students could feel free to share their informal writing, and that this is a "goal" to strive for. (He prefers the term "transgender" to "transgendered" because he feels "transgendered" implies that challenging gender identity boundaries happens only once.) Tim remarked that it would be nice if LGBT students could feel free to share their informal writing, and that this is "a great goal" to strive for. However, according to Tim, the on-campus hostility towards the LGBT community needs to be assuaged before this goal can become a reality. He explained: "First, the classroom setting needs to be non-hostile. Other things need to happen to make those [heterosexual] students feel comfortable and say [to LGBT students] 'Yes, I want to hear your story' and 'Yes, you are welcome in this classroom' . . . and then ask for experience sharing." Tim believes that when teachers start "putting [LGBT issues] in the curriculum," then this classroom hostility towards LGBT students will be eased. In the meantime, Tim asserted that people don't need to be placed "in a fishbowl," exposed to the scrutiny of the heterosexual peers. In other words, Tim could sense the discomfort that LGBT students might feel when sharing their writing with others in the class: they would feel like fish in a bowl to be stared and gawked at, but not helped. Unlike Tim, Donna objected to

journals in particular, on the grounds that “they may make students uncomfortable to have to address themselves . . . [and] I also don’t necessarily care what’s in other people’s journals . . . I do want to hear about other people’s experiences, but I think that journals aren’t necessarily very interesting” and she added that they “don’t require much thought.” When asked how she believed students would respond if asked to share their work in groups, Donna claimed that “group work is ineffective . . . only one or two people end of doing the work.” Like Donna, Kaleb brought up the “comfort” issue in his discussion of informal writing. He mentioned that students have a hard time sharing their informal writing because “for students to learn, they need comfort,” and this activity would not contribute to that. Unlike Donna, however, and in spite of his negative experiences in groups, Kaleb suggested such activities as “group work . . . peer review, introductions, and icebreakers” to increase student comfort level in the disciplinary literacy communities of the classroom. He asserted that “comfort” in the classroom is established when students “get . . . to know one another,” and this can best be done through communal classroom activities. Thus teachers must consider how they want students to present their informal writing. If they have students read their work in front of the entire class, the students will feel more like they are in the “fishbowl” that Tim mentioned. Within groups, on a smaller level, however, students might feel more comfortable sharing their writing. Anne Gere argues that such groups work best when “groups are sufficiently prepared and committed, when appropriate tasks are clear and/or agreed upon by all participants, and when debriefing or evaluation is built into the life of the group” (112). Therefore, if teachers are going to employ groups in their writing classrooms, they need to make sure that students clearly understand the directions given

to them, and use activities such as group self-evaluation forms to ensure that everyone does his or her part.

Conclusion

This chapter has shown that LGBT students possess negative attitudes towards traditional writing activities that involve little or no sense of community-building. To begin with, the chapter reveals that students do not see writing in class, in discipline-specific literacy communities, as an effective means of dealing with academic literacies. They feel this way not because they are apathetic towards LGBT subject matter; on the contrary, many students make concerted efforts on their own to include LGBT issues in their own studies. However, the students feel that they lack opportunities to write on LGBT topics in the classroom: they have few assignments that deal specifically with LGBT concerns, their professors lack interest in LGBT topics, and at times they are given exceptionally negative feedback from their instructors when they attempt to address LGBT issues. Similarly, the interviewees also feel that writing outside of class in campus literacy communities is often an ineffective means of negotiating academic literacies. Some students feel that they lack time to write on LGBT concerns; others do not actively engage in public discourse due to the negative feedback that they have received from others; whereas others are sometimes discouraged by the hate crimes perpetrated against them through the written word.

The students also perceive sharing informal writing with others as a fruitless exercise on two different levels. Some students claimed that any writing that is ostensibly “informal” automatically becomes “formal” in the discipline-specific literacy community of the classroom, and they did not wish to expose their writing to criticism in

a formalized context. Secondly, many students asserted that sharing their writing would make them (as well as their classmates) “too uncomfortable”; they would rather conform to the dictates of the classroom environment than subject themselves to ridicule.

Overall, we can already see that the interviewees’ views on writing add to our understanding of minority discourses in ways previously unexplored; this will become even more apparent in the next chapter of this study. From this chapter, we can begin to develop an increased understanding of the performative nature of discourse; the political nature of academic language and the disparity which exists between empowered and disempowered groups; the importance of inclusiveness of minority concerns; and the identity politics involved in minority assimilation into primary and secondary discourse communities. This chapter thoroughly reinforces the idea that LGBT students’ views on writing are heavily influenced by their interactions with others. The students do not dislike writing on LGBT concerns because they have internalized homophobia or because they are lazy and do not want to write; their negative opinions tend to be influenced by the lack of community-building in the social and cultural contexts in which they have interacted. In the classroom, their teachers have ignored the issues. In public forums, their peers have degraded their desire to stray from hetero-normative literacy standards. Many of the LGBT students see themselves being placed in situations by their institutions in which they are made to feel that their identities are not “right”; hence, I named the chapter after Lisa’s remark that her teacher didn’t think homosexuality “was right.” But students such as Lisa do not need to despair that they will remain forever voiceless. In its exploration of LGBT student negotiations with electronic literacies, the next chapter will reveal how, in spite of their negative views on the tenuous nature of chat room

communities, many students still do manage to form communities in these chat rooms with individuals who assist them, at least temporarily, in the “coming out” process. Then, Chapters 6 through 8 shall reinforce the argument that LGBT students can most easily negotiate academic literacies and feel included within them when they participate in strong language communities, particularly those outside classroom spaces on campus.

LGBT Students' Perceptions of Problems with Online Chat

Overview

Mike, a gay university student, expressed many negative views on synchronous online chat during his interview. He claimed: "I haven't really chatted in chat rooms, really, in years . . . once in a while, a long time ago, I would go to like gay.com or something. But it wasn't like really high quality chat . . . it was like those [trashy] magazines and other publications, so I tend to stay away from those." Furthermore, he noted that, in the classroom, that anonymous chat

allows for closed-mindedness to prevail. It doesn't necessarily force [students] to read others' posts as well or to look into [LGBT] issues as well as they should . . . because they can choose just to post there one time . . . [students write] "I agree" or "I disagree" without any further elaboration. A lot of responsibility lies in the teacher's hands to push for productive responses.

Like Mike, most students in this study view chat rooms as both an ineffective way to negotiate academic literacies and an unproductive solution for facilitating LGBT student inclusion in academe. They claim that they infrequently use chat rooms and they complain that too many people use them as conduits for sexual trysts, so they often dismiss chat rooms as "phony." However, the interview data also indicate that many of the students claim that they frequented chat rooms at some point during their "coming out" process. But once students learn how to blend the language of the LGBT community into their own primary discourse, they feel more comfortable venturing out into face-to-face conversations. They also see chat rooms as an ineffective means of including LGBT issues in classroom environments and claim that anonymous chat in the classroom contributes to fragmentary, non-focused discussion which may make students

uncomfortable, or even ashamed, of their identities. The students would rather deal with LGBT issues face to face in the classroom than use classroom chat to address them.

Like Chapter 4, this chapter reveals another way in which LGBT students find themselves inhibited by writing situations which lack a sense of strong community. While Chapter 4 explored this topic regarding traditional writing situations both in and out of classroom environments, Chapter 5 considers LGBT student interactions with synchronous chat communities. In considering Chapters 4 and 5 together, we can more easily see that secondary discourse communities—often ephemeral in nature, and lacking trust among their members—fail to enhance LGBT student literacy development. By contrast, Chapters 6 through 8 stress how the building of strong literacy communities on campus—both in person and online—facilitates LGBT student negotiation of academic literacy barriers and contributes to the greater inclusion of LGBT student learners in academic literacy communities both inside and outside the classroom.

Before venturing too far into Chapter 5, let us review the current research on students' negotiations of electronic chat rooms. As we shall see, there does not seem to be a clear consensus on this topic. While most research on students' attitudes towards chat reveals that students respond to chat room literacies positively, it also reveals that chat room expression does have its limitations. On the other hand, research on LGBT student negotiations of chat rooms, in particular, tends to stress how LGBT students see chat rooms as liberating means of expressing their queer identities. My research, in contrast to most research on LGBT students' use of chat rooms, tends to corroborate the overall findings on student views of chat rooms: it indicates that chat is at least

somewhat helpful for LGBT students during the “coming out” process, but cannot sustain the building of long-lasting literacy communities.

Research on Students’ Attitudes towards Chat

General Research on Attitudes towards Chat Rooms

Many articles on student views on chat rooms tend to stress both the positive and negative aspects of electronic chat room communities. In his article “Teaching Science Online,” Michael Bentley notes that his use of chat in his graduate courses at the University of Toledo has “works very well and student feedback has been positive” (4). However, Bentley also notes that the chat did not seem to work as well in larger groups. He states: “The chat sessions with twenty-some participants were, to me, only somewhat worthwhile. I found it difficult to trace and respond to multiple conversations that inevitably erupted with so many participants” (4). Similarly, Kevin LaGrandeur claims that he has seen “more participation by women and ethnic minorities in electronic discussions than oral discussions” (2) in his composition courses, but students also often use chat room space for “personal insults and off-topic discussion” (1). And while Tim Catalano suggests that chat “creates a strong sense of community between not only students, but also students and instructors” (1), he focuses primarily on the “offensive and oppressive discourse that is likely to occur” in chat rooms” (2). He reminds us that the “networked classroom,” in which synchronous chat takes place, “asks students to respond quickly into a network in which there is no readily visible audience” (7). Consequently, students develop the perception that “what they say on-line has no permanence or lasting consequences” (Catalano 7; Hawisher and Moran). Similarly, Berzsenyi asserts that chat enables students to “experience the rhetoricity of writing . . . they realize that their

audience have thoughts, aims, and feelings” (15). Nevertheless, she explains that even though chat is a “mutually interactive, interpersonal medium of communication,” it also presents “the tremendous opportunity to emotionally injure participants through rudeness, hostility and silence” (15). To support her point, Berzsenyi cites a short excerpt from her technical writing class in which one student, Tad, writes that “no one has any feelings behind a monitor” and then another student, Ray, responds by saying “I think it is cool to piss people off on-line <g> [grin]” (2).

Research on LGBT Student Negotiations of Chat Rooms

Unlike most general discussions of student use of chat rooms, which often provide balanced commentary on students’ views on chat, the few articles on LGBT student dealings with electronic chat rooms tend to view chat spaces as transformative spaces for the negotiation of queer sexual identity. Jonathon Alexander claims that synchronous chat enables “powerful” conversations to take place between heterosexual and homosexual students, thus facilitating understanding between disparate groups (208). Similarly, Randal Woodland describes CMC as “free of the oppressive forces” that LGBT students typically must encounter (8); he sees it as a means of building community among LGBT people. In fact, articles which address LGBT student interactions with the World Wide Web in general tend to be overwhelmingly positive in tone (DeWitt, Comstock and Addison). And while LaGrandeur does not discuss LGBT students in particular in his article “Splicing Ourselves into the Machine,” he does mention that classroom chat rooms allow “those members of the class . . . who are traditionally marginalized . . . to talk more” (1-2); presumably, this group would include LGBT

students. In short, when scholars do discuss the role of minority students in chat rooms, including LGBT students, they stress its liberating potential over its capacity for injury.

However, this dissertation differs from most studies on LGBT students' negotiations of chat room discourse in that it argues that students perceive online chat as neither a helpful means of dealing with the constraints of academic literacies nor an effective solution for achieving inclusion of LGBT students. In this sense, it conforms more to the general scholarship on student chat room writing, which tends to stress both the positive and negative aspects of student negotiations with synchronous chat. For the most part, though, the interviewees in this study reacted negatively to their experiences with chat room literacy communities. This could be due in part to the "misperceptions of homosexuals" that are often perpetuated in chat room discourse, both in and out of the classroom, which reveal "a cultural bias . . . in the language that our society uses to frame most discussions of homosexuality" (Catalano 8). Alison Regan notes that when the subject of homosexuality is presented in the classroom, it is often framed in the context of "a limited pro/con approach," and synchronous chat on this topic may actually "reinforce . . . the marginalized status of lesbians and gays" (7). But are LGBT students always marginalized in chat rooms? And does this marginalization occur in chat rooms both inside and outside the classroom? A need exists to explore further the purposes that chat rooms serve for LGBT students. We shall see that, while most of those I studied view the chat rooms as neither an important part of their campus literacy communities nor their disciplinary literacy communities in the classroom, many of them do see the chat rooms as providing helpful assistance during their "coming out" process. Let us begin our exploration of LGBT student use of chat rooms, however, by examining the reasons

behind their negative opinions: the first one we shall explore involves infrequent use of chat rooms.

Infrequency of Chat Room Use

Many of the students interviewed claimed that they infrequently use chat rooms for a variety of reasons, yet they also revealed that they do use Instant Message software, such as Yahoo Instant Messenger. When asked if there are other strategies besides the ones listed on the questionnaire that she uses to engage with LGBT issues in the academic world, Donna replied, “No, not really. I don’t have Internet access at home, and I don’t find chat interesting.” She added that she finds chat conversation “shallow,” and that she much prefers face-to-face conversation. However, Donna also admitted that she uses Instant Message software on occasion to talk with friends about people they’re dating or what’s going on in school. Sam, a gay undergraduate, similarly avoids chat rooms because they “are too impersonal, and, in a sense, too phony. You never really know who you’re talking to. And you can’t get the feeling of emotion and . . . that’s the big thing, you can’t get emotion . . . chat rooms tend to be [full of] strangers.” However, like Donna, Sam also uses Instant Message software to discuss personal or political LGBT issues at least once a week. He enjoys having “in-depth conversations online with the people who mean the most to [him].”

We must consider why LGBT students would perceive chat rooms as “shallow” and “impersonal,” yet readily admit that they use Instant Message software. With chat rooms, several people often speak at the same time, and it becomes difficult to follow who said what. However, when people communicate through “instant messages,” a different communication dynamic takes shape: one that simulates face-to-face, one-on-

one conversation. Even though the speakers cannot (usually) see each other, the discourse pattern more closely replicates that of one-on-one conversation: person A types, person B responds, person A responds back, and so forth. Therefore, we cannot conclude from Donna and Sam's responses that they loathe writing with technology; in fact, both indicated that they are comfortable using it, but their preference is to employ software that more closely simulates the one-on-one conversation of their primary discourse communities. In chat rooms, on the other hand, the contributions of individuals are more likely to be ignored, and, instead of listening to words, people have to read a screen to discover the speaker and content of the conversation: these features differ dramatically from most individuals' primary discourses. Since chat rooms are secondary discourse communities for these students, they may seek out Instant Message software as a way to incorporate some of the advantages of primary, face-to-face discourse into secondary, online chat communities. Michael Johanyak suggests that, when we evaluate different forms of CMC, we need to consider how CMC users "negotiate and establish new discourse genres through their own cognitive, social, and contextual experiences, experiences constructed at least partially by culture." In other words, the CMC technology alone does not determine the users' responses; instead, we need to look at how the users approach different CMC methods in "different yet familiar" ways which are socially and culturally determined by the users' prior experiences (Johanyak 106). So, the students in this study may be viewing Instant Messenger more positively because they are coming to it with much prior experience in one-on-one communication. Chat Conversation, on the other hand, is a carnivalesque form of speech with which they are less familiar, particularly in academic settings. Rouzie suggests that chat room literacy

is “rife with contradictions, abrupt shifts in register, ambivalence over juxtaposed positions, and laughter at all targets including the laughter . . . [this] stands in sharp distinction to the solemn, rational diction of academic culture” (256).

While neither Jacinda nor Lauren discussed using Instant Messenger, both use other writing technologies besides online chat. Jacinda claims that she “doesn’t use chat rooms” because she “can’t type fast,” and she feels that she needs to in order to keep up with the ongoing chat room conversation. However, Jacinda very much enjoys using e-mail to talk to her friends: she sees e-mail as “comfortable and convenient.” She likes to write long e-mails about LGBT concerns to her friends—this process, unlike chat, helps her to think through her ideas, “like an online journal.” Like Jacinda, Lauren also dislikes chat rooms. She avoids them because they are “too confusing” and she “can’t chat with one or two people at a time.” And, similar to Jacinda, the idea of a journal appeals to Lauren; in fact, she keeps a blog—an online writing journal—as “a place to sound off.” She deliberately narrows her audience for her blog; she explained that “the only people who know it’s there are friends and members of the blog community.”

Like Donna and Sam, Jacinda and Lauren see the value of electronic writing and enjoy expressing themselves in online environments. However, all of them want to write for more limited audiences that more closely simulate those of their strongest discourse communities. Just as Donna and Sam enjoy using Instant Message software to simulate one-on-one conversation, Jacinda and Lauren would rather talk only to specific people, and have one-on-one relationships with those individuals. Jacinda’s preference for e-mail shows that she would rather write for one individual at a time, and Lauren limits the audience for her written words to those who have invited to participate within her blog

community. Clearly, personal, private discourse is valued by all of these students, and they cannot take part in private discourse in a public chat room. Therefore, when participating in electronic literacy communities, they devise other strategies to privatize their words as much as possible, to simulate that of their primary discourses, thereby engaging in strategies to strengthen their sense of community in electronic writing spaces. In fact, many LGBT students are even developing their own e-zines as a way of establishing more personal, private relationships with others in the LGBT community. Comstock and Addison indicate that, in these e-zines, LGBT students will write personal narratives, offer advice to each other about “coming out,” and negotiate the political concerns of their community (248-49). One young man best summed up this turn of events in the May 1995 issue of the LGBT e-zine *Oasis*: “Now, via the youth-dominated technology of the future, young gay people are finding one another online and staking their claim for attention and recognition” (qtd. in Comstock and Addison 248). Through the e-zines’ articles and discussion boards, voices are heard individually and one-on-one conversations occur; the ambiguity of chat room discourse is avoided, and stronger campus literacy communities may be formulated.

Chat Rooms as “Hook Up” Sites

The most frequent complaint about chat rooms by far was that the students perceive them as places for sexual or romantic trysts. In describing these trysts, all of them used the expression “hook up” in a derisive way. Lechele mentioned that she avoids chat rooms because of the anonymity and the sexual atmosphere. She declared: “I don’t like to go into chat rooms because there are all different kinds of people in there, and it’s basically a hook up scene.” Julie longs to find a community of LGBT students

on the Central Michigan campus, but she claimed that her efforts brought her little success. Therefore, she began to explore the chat rooms in Yahoo. But she explained that she has been disappointed with her experiences there: "Every so often I'll go on a Yahoo chat room to try to find different people to talk to . . . normally it doesn't last very long . . . [people] are just looking to hook up, and that's not what I'm there for, so normally it doesn't really work." Similarly, in her discussion of chat rooms, Lauren agreed that "most people [in chat rooms] are looking to hook up." In elaborating on her views, she stated: "In general, the chat rooms I've been to, I find them really confusing because you're talking to a lot of people at once . . . And I like to have substantial conversations and that generally entails one or two people talking . . . Quite frankly, most of the people in the chat rooms are not interested in electronic discourse." All of these students saw chat rooms as electronic cruising spots; to them, chat rooms serve as the 21st century equivalent of gay bars, where people cruise for sex and/or look for significant others.

From these students' comments, we can see that students talked about "hooking up" in negative contexts. For them, "hooking up" does not just mean "meet," but "meet for sex or dating." Their discussion about "hooking up" in a pejorative context repudiates one of the major stereotypes about the LGBT community: that LGBT people are promiscuous. Clearly, LGBT students want something more from chat rooms than just sex or dating. But why do chat rooms within the LGBT community become "hook up" spots rather than centers for conversation on topical issues? Rouzie suggests this might be the case because chat discourse "is set off from official reality, allowing exploration of 'latent sides of human nature'" (256). In American culture, speech on

LGBT issues largely remains an anathema. Only in LGBT-specific contexts do we see same-sex displays of affection or any non-judgmental discussion of LGBT-concerns. Therefore, chat rooms serve as one of these social contexts for the LGBT community. Since it is not socially acceptable for LGBT people to openly seek out same-sex partnerships, they must do so in more clandestine ways. Chat rooms specifically designated for LGBT individuals, therefore, become the equivalent of electronic gay bars (or, some might argue, electronic whorehouses). Repressed due to their sexuality for so long, many LGBT people use these environments to express their sexual desires. This becomes a carnivalesque atmosphere, as Bakhtin would argue, in which “a new mode of interrelationship between individuals” manifests itself in “a consciously sensuous half-real and half play-acted form” (qtd. in Rouzie 256). Since LGBT individuals have so few outlets to perform their sexuality, oftentimes in these environments chat speech becomes highly sexualized: some people clearly express their sexual desires in their online chat profiles and even include nude pictures of themselves. With the nudity and emphasis on sex, LGBT chat rooms become more like cruising areas than centers for conversation. LGBT individuals who want to take part in substantive conversations are forced to seek out chat rooms which prize hetero-normative speech. So, due to the sexualization of LGBT concerns in electronic environments, chat rooms do not serve as viable resources for conversation on non-sexual personal and political issues that involve the LGBT community; for the most part, only those LGBT people seeking sex or romance find LGBT chat room communities serve their needs.

Chat Room Use during “Coming Out” Process

In spite of the students’ views that chat rooms mainly serve as “hook up” sites, many of the interviewees admitted that they did at one time in their lives heavily use chat room communities to meet people, but now rely more on face-to-face communication within the LGBT community. Consequently, the students view chat rooms as “training wheels” for their rides into LGBT discourse communities. Tim, for example, used to frequent chat rooms, but since he met his current partner he has “no use for them.” When asked whether he still uses chat rooms, Tim replied:

I used to, especially back home [in Cyprus]. The Internet was my only source of anything non-straight, non-traditionally-gendered . . . I would put up my profile and see what kind of interest I would generate . . . My first half-semester or so [in college], I wasn’t out, and I kept on doing the whole chat thing . . . any time I started dating, I would stop using profiles, or chat rooms, or whatever. And with my current partner, I’m done. I found what I’m looking for.

Similarly, when Esther first began to come out, she explored Internet chat rooms. Doing so helped her to connect with others. She stated: “When I was online, and chatting with another woman [who] talked to me about the many different ways that lesbians can reach out to each other, I realized that [lesbians] were everywhere. I then started to become more comfortable with my lesbian identity.” Now, however, she “no longer talks in chat rooms,” but, like Donna and Sam, she sends her friends instant messages on occasion. In fact, she has not used chat rooms in “about three years”; once she got involved with “end-of-semester activities [on campus] . . . junior year,” she discontinued her chat room use.

In addition, early in his coming out experience, Sam revealed that he had “negative experiences with online chat.” In particular, he “talked to one person online through chat for six months,” but their chatting came to an end when he discovered that

this person often lied to him. Tina, a bisexual student at Grand Rapids Community College, also revealed that she liked to chat online when she first came out. She claimed, “Chatting with people about my sexuality increased my comfort level with it.” Chatting enabled her to get “to know people. Sometimes they’d discuss whether [their] parents knew about their orientation, and how to tell them.” Now, she only uses chat rooms about twice a month, and prefers e-mail and listserv use to chatting.

The students’ use of chat rooms clearly reveal a pattern. To become engaged within the discourse of the LGBT community during the “coming out” process, many of them used chat rooms. As Randal Woodland indicates, there is often a ““trying out”” of one’s gay identity online before one ventures into other discourse communities as a LGBT individual (par. 11). Woodland explains: “In these online spaces, on topics deeply meaningful to them, [students] ask questions, form hypotheses, test evidence, develop a personal voice and discourse style, see themselves as members of a community, and form themselves into thinking, writing, acting selves that they may (or may not) transfer to their lives offline” (par. 27). However, they tired of the chat rooms once they found a partner (as in Tim’s case), learned how to integrate better into LGBT culture (as in the cases of Esther and Tina), or simply became disgusted with how people lie (as in Sam’s case). Now, none of them use chat rooms as often as they used to. Therefore, for LGBT students, we can see that chat rooms serve as a common step in the “coming out” process, but the students’ involvement in chat rooms does not continue. As a campus literacy, the chat room serves as a nexus for practicing discourse with the LGBT community, but eventually the students move away from these practice areas and start building literacy communities with LGBT individuals face to face.

Anonymous Use of Chat Rooms in Courses

The interviewees had two primary objections to the use of anonymous electronic chat rooms in their courses: (1) the inability of students to use chat as a serious learning tool and (2) discussing LGBT issues anonymously makes students uncomfortable.

Student Failure to “Take Chat Seriously”

First of all, they complained that their peers did not take chat seriously. Mike, a gay Michigan State undergraduate, complained that students don’t get engaged with classroom chat. Kaleb provided some insights as to why this might be the case when he described one experience he had chatting on LGBT issues in class. He revealed: “When we were told in class . . . <to> stay on topic. Because it was anonymous, people would write absurd things like ‘who’s the man’ and ‘who’s the woman.’” Similarly, Raya noted that, in chat rooms, “people can multitask” and avoid putting “in a full effort” to their work. Furthermore, she suggested that a problem with chat anonymity is that people would be “more likely not to listen to others.” The research supports these students’ claims: Abrahams notes that, in chat rooms, students are “exempted from full moral judgment” (30). And Rouzie suggests that students will often write “outrageous comments in synchronous conferences followed with the ‘this is humor or play’ framing device: ‘just kidding!’” (265).

Kadijah and Lauren, however, expressed positive views on the anonymous nature of chat room conversation. Kadijah claimed that she is “not into computers” and that “face to face conversation is more valuable”; in fact, she first stated that chat has “too much anonymity.” However, later in the interview, she also claimed that anonymity could also be valuable, for it makes people “more expressive and open.” Lauren echoed

Kadijah's thoughts; she believes that classroom chat would be better if it were anonymous. However, she feels it would work best only in a strictly online class, where the students do not see each other on a regular basis; otherwise she fears that her own transsexual identity would be discovered. She claimed: "[Anonymous chat] would encourage people to be more open about their sexual identity. Particularly, for example, with an online class, it would be most useful because I feel that in a regular class, it would kind of encourage people to be suspicious, like 'Who's the tranny here?'"

As we can see from the students' comments, the students tended to object to the nature of chat discourse itself rather than any LGBT content discussed in the chat rooms. They tend to perceive chat as fragmentary in nature, and they feel that it prevents students from staying focused. On the issue of anonymity, these students seem divided: Kaleb felt chat encouraged students to have "too much" freedom to say what they like, whereas Lauren and Kadijah both made positive remarks about the anonymity that chat could provide when discussing LGBT concerns in the classroom (even though Lauren did qualify her statement by asserting that it would work best for an online class). The comments from the students here should force us as instructors to consider some key questions concerning how we want to use chat room in the discipline-specific literacy events of the classroom. Is chat a distraction that keeps students from being focused, or are there ways in which it can be used as a viable learning tool? Do students have too much freedom with chat? And how do we decide how much freedom is "too much," particularly when dealing with controversial topics, such as LGBT concerns? In the secondary discourse environment of the classroom, many of the interviewees perceive chat as a threat to "official versions of language and the marketplace [they] will enter"

(Rouzie 256). They know that, to succeed professionally, they must master Standard English, hetero-normative discourses that do not allow for carnivalesque play. However, judging from the students' more positive responses to Instant Messaging, perhaps integrating chat discourse into classroom pedagogical practices should involve more one-on-one or small group work than full class involvement. After all, a chat of twenty students would be difficult for anyone to follow, whereas small group or individual conversation more closely simulates student speech in their primary discourse communities, thereby assuaging the fragmentary dynamics of chat room expression.

Dislike of Anonymity

In spite of Kadijah and Lauren's affirming comments on the anonymous nature of chat room conversation, some of the students in this study did object to using chat anonymously to discuss LGBT issues in the classroom. Unlike the students who complained about the ephemeral, unfocused nature of chat room conversation in particular, these students tended to focus more on the content of the chat and their rights to make their voices heard as LGBT individuals. Taylor suggested that, regardless of whether the chat rooms were anonymous, the students would still be expressing their views in public, and the chat would still cause discomfort for the LGBT students trying to get their points across and for the heterosexual students as well. In other words, Taylor noted that the artificiality of the classroom environment would still affect the ways in which the students use chat room conversation in the classroom, even if the chat were anonymous. She declared: "Sometimes it can be really uncomfortable for people . . . It would be really hard to make it completely anonymous because I know people who can go into computers and figure out who said things and whatnot." She further added that

“someone can look over your shoulder [in a public place] . . . if you’re a straight person, that can make you a little bit scared about ‘Oh, they’re gonna think I’m this way,’ and I’m really not.” Taylor clearly does not trust the anonymity of the chat to heighten the comfort level of discussion on LGBT concerns, and she further feels that straight students engaging in chat on LGBT concerns in the classroom might fear being labeled as queer, so they will not be honest in how they feel.

Sam, on the other hand, argued even more strongly against anonymity during his interview. He asserted that he had a “lack of respect” for chat rooms, and suggested that they need to be more heavily moderated. He strongly feels that there is too much inappropriate language, even in classroom chat, and that there is “nothing to stop one from going overboard.” For Sam, the chat anonymity represents a loss of control of the discourse: he wants to be able to understand and appreciate what his classmates are saying, and anonymity would not enable him to do this. Additionally, Sam doesn’t “want to have to see the words”; he would rather hear what people are saying than read their anonymous comments on a screen. He declared:

You really don’t know who’s on the other end. It can’t be monitored at all times . . . Instead of a chat, the way I almost see it being done is a forum of some sort where people can express their opinions beforehand maybe on paper. . . and somebody moderates it, somebody looks at these opinions, and if there’s inappropriate language used then they throw out those opinions.

Sam is clearly afraid that “inappropriate” opinions will be expressed in the classroom context against LGBT people, and he sees a need for the expression of those opinions to be moderated in some way. He also seems to believe that the more traditional method of having students express their opinions on paper would be preferable; that way, a moderator, such as a teacher, can more easily decide whether such opinions should be

expressed in a classroom context. Sam's remark also should make us wonder: in classroom chat, who should be the moderator? Should it always be the teacher? And who decides which opinions should get "thrown out"? Perhaps one way to provide a sense of moderation to classroom chat is to have individual students evaluate the performances of their groups and their own individual performances within those groups. This type of self-assessment will assist both students and teachers in understanding whether the course's learning objectives are being accomplished in chat room discourse. It is a reflective exercise that should enable all members of the class to decide, as a community, what constitutes "acceptable" classroom literacies.

Esther claimed that she felt that chat was not an effective solution towards achieving LGBT student inclusiveness because it makes LGBT students more ashamed of their transgressive sexual and gender identities. In Esther's view, therefore, the chat perpetuates what she defines as "the shame factor" surrounding discourse on LGBT topics:

ESTHER: Society already makes us feel like you can't talk about it, you can't be with your partner in public, you can't do this and that, so if you're only going to open up in the avenue of talking about it in an anonymous way to a screen, that's just like, the Internet's already there for people to go ahead and do that in chat rooms . . .

BRIAN: So if you're only going to open up online it increases that "shame factor"?

ESTHER: I just think it just . . . to me, what I would feel, what I perceive it as, is that it would be a perpetuation of the shame factor in that, you know, once again, we have to do it behind closed doors. You know, once again, it's a discussion you have to be shamed, you have to feel shameful enough that you won't put your name on it.

Clearly, Esther believes that if LGBT students are asked to express the concerns of their community only anonymously in online environments, then this practice perpetuates the ideology that LGBT issues should be shrouded in a veil of secrecy, and that students

should feel ashamed to self-identify as LGBT. She also concurred with Sam that students have “too much freedom” in expressing themselves in classroom chat. Instead of chat, she argued that “conservative people,” in particular, “need to have the face-to-face impact” of conversation on LGBT issues. If conservative, homophobic students are forced to see and hear LGBT students expressing their views on LGBT issues, then the experiences and concerns of LGBT students are more likely to be perceived as legitimate and real by the class as a whole.

In our culture, when we allow for anonymous discourse, we like to believe that we are allowing more freedom for people to express their views without fear of repercussions. However, some students in the LGBT community believe that chat anonymity may hinder expression on LGBT issues more than it helps. Taylor, Sam, and Esther all expressed some level of discomfort about using anonymity in online classroom chat: Taylor feels that the classroom space would prevent people from being honest regardless of whether the chat is anonymous; Sam worries that people expressing themselves in classroom chat might hide behind their anonymity and hurt people’s feelings; and Esther thinks that anonymous chat on LGBT concerns reinforces the stereotypical notion that LGBT people should be ashamed to discuss the concerns of their community. In considering these students’ remarks, we must conclude that anonymity in the classroom really does not assist students in discussing LGBT concerns. As Esther pointed out, if we perpetuate the “shame factor” by only discussing LGBT issues in the classroom anonymously, we fail to dignify LGBT student experiences. Instead, we send the message to students that LGBT issues are “too sensitive” to be dealt with face to face. Perhaps honest, face-to-face collaboration and discussion between LGBT students and

heterosexual students on LGBT concerns would be a better alternative to enhance the classroom presence of the LGBT community. Jonathon Alexander points out that LGBT issues have a “contemporary socio-political relevance” that may “excite class discussion . . . sexual orientation is a subject that engages many students’ interest at more personal levels” (208). Today, “acquiring cultural literacy—as one is supposed to do in school [means] . . . acquiring sexual literacy . . . learning how to read the private as it is everywhere obliged to manifest itself in public” (Litvak 20). Therefore, discussion of LGBT concerns should be integrated not just into chat, but into the entire classroom experience. The electronic conversations could still become part of the students’ discipline-specific literacy communities in academe, but only once students have formed a sense of community with each other and have better learned to validate the experiences of LGBT students both in and out of the classroom.

Conclusion

For the most part, LGBT students view their chat room experiences as neither effective means of negotiating academic literacy spaces nor as solutions for LGBT student inclusion in academe. They use chat rooms infrequently because they find them impersonal, fragmentary, and phony. Furthermore, many commented on the salacious reputations of public LGBT chat rooms, and asserted they are used only to perpetuate the stereotypes of the promiscuous queer. However, several students did note that they did at one time frequent chat rooms during their “coming out” process, but now refrain from doing so because they have more thoroughly assimilated themselves into the LGBT community. Several students also objected to the anonymous use of chat rooms in college classes. Some objected due to the fragmentary nature of the chat room

encouraging unfocused discourse, whereas others stressed that electronic chat's anonymity gives students too much freedom to criticize the LGBT community, and perpetuates the idea that LGBT students should be ashamed of their identities.

In the last two chapters, we've examined what doesn't work for students in negotiating the discourse of academe. In general, they have negative attitudes towards writing in general, and electronic chat room writing in particular. With the next chapter, however, we will begin to look more at the solutions that promote LGBT student inclusion in academic discourse: what does work for the students? In an attempt to answer this question, Chapter 6 examines how LGBT students form strong literacy communities on campus, both in online and face-to-face environments, to achieve inclusion in academic spaces. We shall see that, in spite of students' dislike of electronic chat room use, students do use electronic technologies to form online communities through e-mails, listservs, and blogs (online journals) which they view as important solutions to achieving LGBT student inclusiveness. The chapter will also explore how students' interactions in on-campus groups help them to feel included as well. It will help us to see, along with Chapters 7 and 8, the impact of community-building on LGBT student literacy development.

LGBT Student Campus Literacy Communities outside the Classroom:

Online and On-Campus

Overview

In addition to revealing LGBT students' negative attitudes towards writing activities that lack a strong sense of community, the questionnaire data in this study also suggests that LGBT students see a need to establish strong campus literacy communities outside the classroom. Let us begin this chapter by re-considering Mike, the student with whose chat room experience I opened the last chapter. In contrast to his chat experience, Mike seemed very excited about how he can use his online blog to discuss LGBT concerns, in spite of his mother's concerns that Mike is "outing" himself online:

If I do [write on LGBT issues], it's in a personal journal. I have a LiveJournal, and my friends all read my LiveJournal, and I do occasionally write about . . . civil unions and things like that . . . It's an online journaling site where you can add friends to your website and read their journals as they update . . . My mom reads my LiveJournal and she still doesn't want me putting lesbian and gay issues on my LiveJournal because she's pretty conservative. I still do sneak them in there [for a public audience] every once in awhile, like I did last night, but I make a lot of [entries] "friends only" because of that.

Unlike chat rooms, Mike perceives his blog site as place for him to establish a sense of community with others. Since he can control whether his mother or other family members read blog entries, he is able to engage in multiple rhetorics. With Mike's online blog, we see Bakhtin's heteroglossia at work: Mike clearly wants to provide information on his gay identity for some, but not for others, such as his mother, who are more critical of his performance of a gay identity. He is able to write in different voices for his different blog audiences.

However, Mike's interest in asynchronous online communities also typifies that of most students interviewed. This study shows that most LGBT students use e-mail and listservs on a regular basis, mostly to communicate with friends and to take part in discussions on LGBT listservs. In addition, almost half of the interview participants keep elaborate "blogs," or online journals of their personal and political lives. The students tend to use these blogs in two different ways: (1) as confessional space to negotiate very personal topics and (2) as performative space for the development of their gender and sexual identities. Instead, we need to look more at the other, asynchronous online spaces in which students involve themselves outside the classroom, as Comstock and Addison suggest. Students are e-mailing each other, participating in listservs, writing blogs, and even creating LGBT e-zines online; we see that they desire to form literacy communities online outside of class. So, this chapter will investigate the online campus literacy communities which students form that they perceive as viable solutions to negotiating the constraints of academic literacies in general.

The interview data also shows that students form communities in face-to-face campus groups. It shows that students often belong to several LGBT groups at once and use the groups to develop friendships. Some students interviewed reveal that these groups serve as their activist lives; outside these groups, though, in hetero-normative discourse communities, their activism sometimes disappears. The face-to-face groups give the students a sense of pride in their identities and assist them greatly in assimilating into academic literacies. These groups also educate their members on how to use language to serve the LGBT community; by employing their literacy skills in activities

which support their group, students increase their awareness of literacy as an agent of institutional change.

Overall, this chapter focuses on the corroborating interview data for the second questionnaire finding, which reveals the reasons behind the students' need to establish such communities. Over the course of the interviews, the 32 interviewees responded to many questions pertaining to their negotiation of academic literacies and possible means of achieving LGBT student inclusiveness in academic discourse communities. Two of the questions from the questionnaire, in particular, tended to result in discussions on literacy communities outside classroom environments: "Why do you choose to write/not write on LGBT topics outside the classroom?" and "Which of the proposed solutions on the questionnaire do you feel would work well/not well [towards achieving LGBT student inclusion in academic literacy communities]?"

In Chapters 4 and 5, I revealed that LGBT students have negative views of writing when they participate in writing activities as members of weak literacy communities, which lack trust among their members and consist of ephemeral relationships. The primary purpose of this chapter, however, is to reveal the types of literacy communities which LGBT students find most valuable for negotiating the discourse of academe and for including themselves in the academic world. It serves as the place in this dissertation for me to begin an exploration of LGBT students' primary discourse spaces in on-campus spaces. While Chapter 7 examines how lesbian students, in particular, build strong campus literacy communities, and Chapter 8 offers a research plan for the promotion of LGBT student inclusion in academic literacy communities, this chapter identifies some of the strongest literacy communities that LGBT students build

on campus, and it is worthy to note that all of these communities exist outside classroom spaces. This finding has tremendous implications for the research plan that I describe in Chapter 8, because it helps us to realize that achieving solutions to LGBT student inclusion in “academic literacies” involves the examination of academic literacies both in and out of classroom environments. Before revealing the findings of this chapter, though, let us review some of the research on community-building as it applies to online environments and on-campus organizations, most of which corroborates my findings in this chapter.

Review of the Research: Online and On-Campus Communities

Building Communities Online

While no major studies have been conducted which examine LGBT student use of e-mails, listservs, or blogs in particular, several have asserted that these new technologies help to build new language communities, both in and out of classroom environments. O'Connor and Kellerman discuss how such asynchronous online communication brings “new meaning to the word ‘community’” (9), and they assert that “An online community is a terrific place to find like-minded people and share experiences” (28). E-mail, in particular, may even be integrated into academic literacies through such activities as e-tutoring. Eric Buswell notes that, during his e-conferences with students, he was able to follow “the same strategies of questioning that a face-to-face conference often reflects” (Tarvers and Buswell 6), thus simulating the rhetorical pattern of literacy communities more familiar to student writers. Similarly, in her analysis of a series of e-mails on the September 11th tragedy, Laura K. Smith notes that people are often able to approach e-mail discourse in ways which resemble the rhetorical patterns of more common writing

situations. She states: "Many argue their points in a way that parallels much of what we know about rhetorical theory [and] rhetorical genre" (273). Since the individuals within Smith's study were able to write their e-mails by drawing upon their knowledge of accepted written argument patterns, they were able to establish a sense of community in their discussion.

Like e-mails, research indicates that listservs also may help to establish a stronger sense of literacy community than a synchronous chat room environment. Randy J. McGinnis's students in his elementary science education course, for example, saw their class listserv as a helpful way to establish a sense of community in the classroom, even though much of the discussion took place outside of class. One student commented, "I believe the e-mail [listserv] encouraged a stronger camaraderie in the class. It was an extra way to communicate with and support each other," while another student remarked "Using LISTSERV to communicate is a wonderful idea. We can transmit messages without meeting each other . . ." (12). And LuJean Baab asserts that both e-mail and listservs can be used to establish a sense of connection among participants in online literacy communities. In this asynchronous environment, teachers "can encourage sidebar conversations and email between students to help establish connections and encourage discussion. Many students are more open in the online environment than they would be in a traditional classroom setting and, despite concerns to the contrary, can be even more connected to their classmates" (6). Kathryn Jansak makes similar comments in her article "Building a Supportive Online Instructional Environment": she asserts that effective online teaching involves sending e-mails, setting up asynchronous discussion, and using collaborative groups (8-9).

Similarly, in his article “Mad Blogs and Englishmen,” Jim Duber suggests some reasons why blogs, in particular, are becoming increasingly popular as online writing communities. He comments that their universal use “should not be surprising at all. They are, after all, exceptionally easy to use and there are many no-cost hosting service available” (1). Even though Jesse James Garrett, the editor of *Infosift*, noted only “23 known to be in existence at the beginning of 1999,” the proliferation of blogs began shortly after the mass distribution online of Garrett’s list (Blood 1). Now blogs have become a ubiquitous “training ground for writers . . . They are platforms of intelligent reaction to current events” (Blood; qtd. in Duber 1). Since Duber himself was able to set up a free blogging account in “under 2 minutes” and had published his first blog entries “Only 20 minutes later,” he became convinced that “anyone can master the basics of blogging in no time” (2). The blog’s ease of use and low cost ensure greater inclusion within its online community; it is not just for the technology-savvy or the wealthy but for anyone with computer access. Clearly, blogs create functional writing communities with a greater number of people. As Bob Godwin-Jones notes, “Blogs are easily linked and cross-linked, to create larger on-line communities. That is now the case with technology-related blogs, which form what is essentially one, large, loosely interwoven net of information, as blog entries are linked, referenced, and debated” (2).

Building Communities in On-Campus Groups

Unlike research on electronic literacy communities, research on the forming of academic literacy communities through on-campus groups often refers to LGBT individuals. Andre Grace notes that his on-campus group for queer students at the University of Alberta served a variety of purposes in bringing “students, faculty, and

staff” together; the meetings of Agape (the group’s name) serve such purposes as building educational practices to “counter heterosexism and homophobia” and using “role plays and other forms of drama as pedagogy to explore queer issues and concerns in relation to education” (Grace 5). Similarly, Dick Scott notes that gay and lesbian student organizations serve a wide range of community-building purposes. The groups “organize social activities, act as political action groups, provide emotional support, run services, and organize educational programs. Such activities may be provided for their members, for gay and lesbian students in general . . . or for the campus community as a whole” (118). Croteau et al. focus their work on one community-building activity in particular: they examine how an LGBT group may work with other student organizations in the academic community to educate themselves on HIV/AIDS issues. Participants within the activity were able to examine such topics as “how oppression operates in our culture” and explore their feelings about being members of minority groups without feeling judged or shunned for their minority status (Croteau et al. 170-71; 179).

Several book-length texts which devote themselves to the amelioration of the queer climate in college settings also explore the role of LGBT on-campus groups in bringing about change for students. These books include *Working with Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender College Students*, which has several articles on LGBT organizations. Within this volume, Sherry Mallory enumerates several activities which could contribute to the inclusion of LGBT students in academic discourse: “Speakers, film series, panel discussions, art exhibits, workshops, conferences, safe zone programs, and awareness weeks” (323). And Charles Outcalt suggests some ways in which LGBT student organizations can last over time, in spite of students frequently leaving academic

communities; these include sharing a common vision and appreciating all the group's participants (333-34). The text *Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Campus Organizing* suggests several reasons for LGBT students to create literacy communities on-campus. These include organizing against hate (175-190), responding to AIDS (191-198), establishing an LGBT resource center (213-238), and organizing floors in residence halls (289-293).

Connections to My Work

As we can see from the research discussed above, scholars tend to view both asynchronous online discourses and on-campus LGBT student organizations as means of building strong communities through literacy events. The research on online discourses reveals how new types of literacy communities are increasingly being established in electronic spaces, and the scholarship on LGBT campus groups indicates how students build communities through a variety of literacy events outside the classroom, many of which involve speaking. My findings in this chapter tend to corroborate the positive impressions that many researchers have of these communities. It shows that, like their heterosexual peers, LGBT students view asynchronous online writing communities as helpful alternatives to negotiating the literacy demands of the classroom. And it underscores the positive value that on-campus organizations have on student literacy development. Unlike previous research, however, my dissertation paints a clearer picture of how LGBT students, in particular, interact in asynchronous online spaces; because it does so, we learn more about how LGBT students often use online spaces for the performance of their gender and sexual identities. And, in contrast to most research on LGBT student groups, my work pays more attention to student voices, allowing them to

self-identify the ways in which they perceive the building of their own academic literacy communities. Let us begin our exploration of LGBT student communities by examining how the students form campus literacy communities online.

Online Communities

This study reveals that LGBT students form strong campus literacy communities online in three different ways: through e-mails, through listservs, and through “blogs,” or online journals. We shall begin here by examining student use of e-mail.

E-mail Communities

In spite of the LGBT student dislike of chat room communities revealed in the previous chapter, the data show that most LGBT students enjoy establishing communities online over e-mail. Taylor, in fact, went so far as to call e-mail her “main form of communication.” She claims that it “works well” because most people are “difficult to get a hold of.” For Taylor, e-mail is a way of establishing contact with individuals on a daily basis. Tina has used e-mail for a more political purpose: she once did an online interview with a woman over e-mail on step-parenting in alternative families (a topic which has personal relevance for Tina, since her girlfriend has two children).

Other LGBT students often use e-mail for the sole purpose of developing their relationships with friends. Kate, for example, claims that she often uses e-mail to keep in touch with friends, and she mostly discusses romantic topics. As she explained, “[When] e-mailing, I talk to my friends about different things, for instance, ‘Ooh, I met a nice girl today’ or something like that. But other than that I’m not much of a writer.” Erica also discusses political and personal issues with friends over e-mail. In these e-mails, she addresses such topics as gender identity and feminism. Even though she’s addressing

political topics with her friends, she simultaneously perceives e-mail as a form of “personal writing” that “is easier” for her to facilitate.

Jacinda’s views on e-mail as a means of communicating with friends, in particular, are exceptionally positive. Her “long e-mails” to friends are a convenient means of communicating with people all over the world. Even though Jacinda is a medical student stressed for time, she views writing e-mails as a way to “help [her] think through” her life and her bisexual identity. For Jacinda, e-mails are “like an online journal.” They enable her to express her views openly on personal and political topics. She claims that she often “writes on sex” and “exchanges information on bisexuality with a friend in London.” Her conversations with her London friend serve as a way for her to negotiate the bias against bisexual communities: she feels that bisexuality is often left out as a topic of conversation both in and out of classroom environments—from her perspective, the “B” in “LGBT” is too often dismissed.

Evidently, LGBT students value the convenience of e-mail, and they also treat it as performative space. Taylor sees e-mail as the main way in which she can contact people in a busy world, and Jacinda views it as an important method of keeping in touch with her friends from all over the world. Many other students, such as Kate, Erica, and Lechele, also see e-mail as a convenient way for them to develop friendships, in particular. By communicating with individuals one-on-one, these students manage to nurture valuable relationships with people who share their interests both on and off campus. However, it is also interesting to note that several students, such as Jacinda, Erica, Tina, and Lechele, are also employing e-mail space to negotiate their gender and sexual identities. For them, e-mail provides a forum to discuss issues that are not allowed

as part of classroom discourse, such as sex, alternative marriage, bisexuality, and feminism. The political subjects that these students discuss reveal that, from their perspective, the political and personal intertwine. Since e-mail serves as a “journal” for Jacinda and a key means of “personal writing” for Erica, and both use e-mail as a means of addressing the political concerns of the LGBT community, we can see how closely tied political and personal spaces are for LGBT students. Through e-mail, they obtain an outlet to perform their queer identities; it becomes a primary discourse community for them, even though they are not seeing the people with whom they converse face-to-face.

Listserv Communities

By contrast, the students avoid using campus LGBT listservs as sites for performing gender and sexual identity, but do integrate them into their primary discourse(s). As part of her job as an LGBT on-campus student advisor, Esther often posts to her university’s LGBT listserv as part of her job duties. Even though she normally dislikes any kind of writing, Esther declared: “With my job, I have to be on that listserv, and I have to read and I have to post. And I have to communicate. So I guess I do [use] it about every day because of my job.” Todd often reads things from listservs from various groups on his campus. Tina belongs to several listservs, including ones for a local gay bar, the e-mail list for her GSA (Gay-Straight Alliance), and one which discusses alternative families. On these lists, she recently posted information about Sakia Gunn, a murdered African-American lesbian from New Jersey, to inform people of the hate crimes that are still being perpetrated against the LGBT community. She attempted to encourage people to sign a petition (created by Lechele, another interviewee) which asks the principal of Sakia’s high school to give Sakia a moment of silence, honoring her

memory. Tina feels that it is “important to sign the petition . . . to show people that lesbianism is a way of life . . . to show [Sakia’s] family that people care.”

As we can see, listserv membership is an important part of the LGBT student campus community for the sense of belonging it provides to the students. Student involvement in these listserv communities tends to take two forms: “lurking” and “posting.” Some students, like Todd, are silent “lurkers” of the listserv community: they sign up for the listservs, and read the postings, but they never contribute postings of their own or participate in discussion. In fact, because they never make any postings to it, other members of the listserv community may not even be aware that lurkers like Todd are on the listserv. However, these “lurkers” are proud of their listserv membership, and do feel that these listservs provide an opportunity for them to gain knowledge of happenings of LGBT events on their college and university campuses. Simply belonging to a listserv community provides a sense of validation of their queer identities that they would ordinarily not receive in a discipline-specific classroom environment. Most of the interviewees in this study, however, indicate that they do often post to listservs. Overall, their postings consist of informational announcements rather than discussion on political issues. While the listservs serve as conduits for the transmission of information on political topics, and, in this sense, they allow students to perform identities that they hide from their disciplinary literacy communities (such as classroom environments), they tend not to use listservs for personal writing, as they do with e-mails or, as we shall see, blogs. On occasion, usually once or twice each year, issues will come along that encourage commentary from almost everyone on the listserv, such as last year’s discussion on a university LGBT listserv of whether drag queens were anti-feminist. However, by and

large, such intense discussions on these listservs are non-existent, and are more often used to promote events or announce meetings. Unlike e-mails, which students treat as more personal, performative space, listservs are mainly employed for the exchange of information. Perhaps this occurs because, while the listserv is a “community” for LGBT students, they do not know who all the members are, and thus feel less comfortable imparting personal information than they do in a one-on-one e-mail to a friend. Most interviewees, however, spoke very positively of the campus listservs they belonged to: since many learn about the LGBT community by reading postings and/or exchanging information, the listservs enable them to feel more strongly tied to the LGBT world. And, for students like Tina, the listservs can serve as a way to get people involved in important issues: listservs may bring LGBT communities closer together by encouraging students to support activist causes. In this sense, the students are learning a great deal about not just the social nature of writing, but of the impact of the Internet on acts of writing as well.

Blog Communities

The most serendipitous finding of this study involved the discovery of “blog” communities among LGBT students. These “blog” communities serve as interactive online journals for students. While I did not originally begin this study with the intention to ask students about “blogging,” I learned that, for them, it is a popular mode of self-expression. Out of the 32 students interviewed, I discovered that 12 of them (38%) have at least attempted an online blog, and, with the exception of two students, all write in their blogs on a regular basis (at least once a month). As some of the first students I interviewed volunteered that they kept online blogs, I was excited to realize that, with

blogs, we have a largely unexplored literacy community, a hidden literacy that most members of academe would normally not consider as a part of students' everyday writing lives.

By learning about the students' blogs, I learned that blogs tend to complicate traditional definitions of audience. While most students publish their blogs in a public space which technically may be seen by anyone online, the blog mainly acts as a means of communication between the student blogger and his or her friends. Those who keep blogs told me that they will usually only release the URLs of their blogs to their "friends" whom they "know" online (or in person) and that they sometimes censor certain entries such that only certain online "friends" can read them. In the world of online blogging, one often chooses to read the blogs of others and then chooses to add individuals to an online list of "friends." Those "friends" help to form the primary audience for the "blogs." However, in spite of the privatized nature of this literacy community, all the students except one in this study willingly gave out their blog URLs to me so I could examine them further. Thus with these blog communities, we see Bakhtin's heteroglossia at work here: multiple voices, multiple interactions, varied audiences. "Talking to friends" has an entirely different meaning in blog communities than in face-to-face settings, and blog discourse empowers bloggers a great deal in the sense that messages sent may appear and disappear at the blogger's will. The writer may choose to limit his or her words to certain audiences, and then change his or her mind, and make that written discourse available to all, and then decide to limit the audience again, and so forth.

Students' blogs tend to serve two different purposes: confessional space and performative space. At times, it seems as if these two purposes intertwine. Moira, a

lesbian from the University of Toledo, named her blog “The Diary of a Lesbian(hehehe)! [sic].” By giving her blog this title, it is already clear that she is using the blog to perform her sexual identity (lesbian). And since Moira writes “(hehehe)!” after the word “Lesbian,” it is equally apparent that she knows that she is using this online space to share a secret with her global audience. We can almost hear her snicker with glee as she announces her sexuality to the world. Her blogs are confessional, in that she writes at length about the various women in her life, yet they she also uses them to perform her sexual identity, on several different levels. Part of the URL of her blog is named “lesbodyke,” thus combining two popular labels of the LGBT community to formulate her own online presence. Moira uses her blog almost exclusively to write about her romantic relationships with women (or lack thereof): she uses very public space to write about very personal topics. Finally, Moira’s main audience consists of two on-campus peers: her ex-girlfriend and (oddly enough) her ex-girlfriend’s ex. She is writing for people who know her and who can appreciate the negotiations of her lesbian identity. However, she also told me that she “doesn’t get too personal because [she doesn’t] know who’s reading it.” Yet, Moira’s blog often reads like a personal diary. One entry declares:

well, as many would imagine. the friends w/ benefits thing isn't working out. but the friends part is so i guess its all good. i am still kind of lost however. i am still in love with her. i don't really know what to do about it. she wants to move out of town and wants me to move too. i don't want to. i have just started to get my life in order. going to college, got a job, and moving into a house (w/o the parents). if she wants to move out of town, thats fine but i don't need to ruin my life for it. damn emotions and having a conscience. (i know its a good thing)
~me

As we can see from this entry, in spite of her assertions that she's trying to avoid being personal, Moira uses her blog here both as a space for the negotiation of her feelings toward her ex-girlfriend, and, simultaneously a negotiation of her newly-forming identity as a lesbian college student. It is also worthy to note here that, even though Moira claims that her ex-girlfriend (of whom she writes here) is part of the primary audience for her blog, she chooses to address this entry in the first person rather than the second person. Hence, the entry reads more like a personal, confessional diary entry, a cathartic display of private feelings.

Similarly, Herman's blog mingles the confessional with the performative. For example, Herman often writes heart-wrenching accounts of how he was sexually abused as a child. In this entry, he talks about how he and his therapist are working through the relationship between his sexual abuse and his homosexual identity:

We talked today about my episode of childhood sexual abuse, and it hit home that it wasn't really about sex for the man who abused me; it was about power. I have always associated this abuse with sex in my head, and grew on some level to believe that sex was bad because my first experience with a homosexual was also bad. And it followed in my head that since sex was bad, that I was also bad because I have those "bad" sexual feelings. Now I see that it wasn't the sexual part of this episode that was bad, it was that this man took advantage of me, that he abused the power that adults have over children to fulfill one of his needs in a very inappropriate way.

Interestingly enough, Herman claimed that he keeps the blog "mostly for friends" within his campus community, but he does not censor his entries in any way. Since he so readily allowed this very personal entry to be made available to me, for example, I inferred that he is unquestionably using online, public space not only to let go of his personal shame, but also to negotiate his identity as a gay man on a college campus. The

act of writing in this blog is helping him learn not to equate homosexuality with “bad” sexual feelings simply because his first sexual experience with a man was abusive.

Moirra and Herman’s willingness to write on such intensely personal topics for online audiences outside of class should make us as teachers question the extent to whether this kind of confessional, performative campus literacy may be used in the disciplinary literacy communities of classroom settings. Because so many of these LGBT students are creating these blogs on their own, it shows that they are clearly longing for a literacy outlet outside the disciplinary literacies of the classroom. They desire to form communities with others on campus and beyond, and they want people to listen to what they have to say. Chapter eight will explore in further detail the extent to which Internet literacies may be used to enhance LGBT student presence in classroom pedagogy.

Forming Communities through On-Campus Groups

Not only do students form online campus literacy communities, they also form them by establishing face-to-face campus communities outside the classroom. Campus groups provide ample opportunities for LGBT students to negotiate academic discourse face-to-face. The interviewees in this study tend to see these groups as a very positive force in their lives. This is evidenced by their memberships in multiple LGBT campus literacy communities; the friendships that they form in these groups; the activist lives they develop within the groups’ contexts; the pride in their identities that they gain from the groups; and the source of education that the groups provide.

Multiple Group Membership

Many of the interviewees, to begin with, are involved in several on-campus groups simultaneously. Taylor, for example, attends meetings of a transgender group, a Gay-Straight Alliance, a university LGBT Alliance, and university caucus group. She is also the president of a state-wide group on intersex issues. Raya participates in a meeting for students with disabilities, a “womyn’s” group, and the black caucus on campus. Kadajah is a member of her university’s LGBT Alliance, SGL (Same-Gender Loving) Social, and a progressive co-op on her campus. And Jason is the editor of a queer magazine on campus, an officer in his university Alliance, and member of one of his university’s caucus groups. For these students, joining multiple campus literacy communities provides them an opportunity to engage in multiple discourses. It is also a means of establishing a queer presence in multiple campus environments. Raya, for example, attends the disability group and black caucus meetings in order to “be a supportive ally” of other minority groups and to extend LGBT presence beyond the norm. She declared: “The LGBT community tends to be very, very white, very sexist, very ableist [sic]. I personally try to combat that every day . . . it’s really hard for people to understand two different oppressions unless there are two different groups [to attend].” So, to enhance her understanding of the special oppressions that other minorities endure, Raya attends multiple on-campus meetings of these groups, thereby developing a better comprehension of their unique experiences.

Friendship

Some students perceive these groups as a source of friendship, as a way of fitting in. Jim, a gay MSU senior, mentioned that, while is not currently active in the gay

community, he is trying to muster up the courage to attend on-campus groups and their events as a way of “meeting people.” Julie also tries to find different groups to fit into on the rural campus. She asserted that this is a difficult task: “It’s hard to start a community when you don’t know where to look,” she sighed. Still, like Jim, she is convinced that on-campus group membership is the key to belonging; her search continues to try to find different groups into which she may fit. And, even though Kate currently attends Western Michigan, she still attends meetings of the Gay-Straight Alliance at her rural college because her “friends are there,” and the group presents “opportunity for involvement.” For Kate, even talking about political issues important to the gay community represents “involvement.” However, when the gay marriage issue was brought up in her business class, she felt antagonized. “I felt it was me against everyone in the classroom,” she declared. However, whenever she goes to her group at her community college, she often “talks about gay marriage issues” with others in a way that enables her to feel comfortable about her own identity, since most everyone in her group shares her views. This example reveals that, in contrast to the disciplinary literacy communities of the classroom, campus literacy communities serve as primary discourse communities for LGBT students within which they feel comfortable talking about the issues that matter to them the most. A majority of the LGBT students interviewed, like Jim, Julie, and Kate, all desire to seek out opportunities in which they can engage in conversation on LGBT topics in campus literacy communities; they want opportunities in which they can nurture their identities as LGBT individuals.

Activism

Part of the process of nurturing LGBT student identity comes from the opportunity to take part in activist lives. At the time of our interview, Lechele was running for External Vice-Chair of her LGBT group on campus. Her job, she explained, would be to “attend all caucus meetings” and “attend every ethnic and multi-cultural group meeting. She wants the job because she hopes to have the opportunity to “bridge gaps between LGBT students and students of color.” Lechele feels that most LGBT African-Americans on her university’s campus, for example, “are hiding” because they fear that “their friends won’t talk to them” if they were to come out. Her involvement stems from her desire to help minority students feel that they have voices and to enable conversations across different social and ethnic groups. Similarly, Marie, an on-campus lesbian activist at her community college, relishes the opportunity “to organize things,” and she “jumped in head first” when she was given the opportunity to serve as the Vice-President of her college’s Gay-Straight Alliance. For Marie, activism serves as an opportunity “to learn” as well as “a comfort thing.” And even though Tina is normally a very quiet, shy individual, she serves the role of secretary in Marie’s organization because she also values opportunities to be involved. By taking notes at meetings, she does not have to speak a lot, but she remains involved by carefully listening to what’s going on around her. Overall, LGBT student activism in on-campus groups affords students several opportunities that they do not normally receive in classroom environments. By bridging gaps between literacy communities, learning about the discourse of their own community, achieving their comfort level with themselves, and actively listening to LGBT speech, the students become assimilated simultaneously into

the LGBT community and the literacy communities of the academic world. Hence, the groups serve as bridges between their primary discourses and the secondary discourses of academe.

Pride in Identities

In addition, the on-campus literacy communities provide the students a chance to earn pride in their identities as LGBT individuals. Devin enjoyed participating in the 2002 “Fruit Bowl” on his university campus, a football game played by LGBT students, because it gave him a sense of “community involvement.” This event empowers LGBT students on two different levels. To begin with, the name of the event itself, the “Fruit Bowl” reveals an example of the LGBT community reclaiming hostile language as their own, as with the term “queer.” Both “fruit” and “queer” are often shouted at the LGBT community as invectives, but recently LGBT college students have begun to take back such terms in order to integrate them in a positive way into their own literacy communities. Secondly, the event enables LGBT students to conquer a stereotype. By having fun playing football, the LGBT students deliberately subvert the pervading ideology which asserts that “queers” shouldn’t play sports. Thus through this event, Devin could gain pride in his own identity as a “fruit” playing football, challenging a hurtful name and harmful stereotype that individuals often use to ridicule the LGBT community. The Pi Kappa Phi incident at his school also provided Devin with pride in his identity as a gay man. During this 2002 incident, fraternity brothers from Pi Kappa Phi, as part of the “hazing” process, strolled his campus wearing T-shirts with such slogans as “FAG HAIRSTYLIST” and “CAPTAIN OF GAY SEX.” They also ran through his dorm screaming that it was “a fag hall.” His on-campus LGBT caucus played

a pivotal role in making sure that those directly participating in the incident were kicked out of the fraternity. Consequently, Devin “developed respect” for this organization, and became more involved within it. He took on the role of treasurer, thus enhancing his willingness to being labeled as “gay” on campus. So, as we can see, after some association with this caucus’s community, Devin learned to admire them, and thus became more comfortable with his homosexual identity in the process. He stated:

I’ve seen [the caucus] struggle in the past through very low attendance and low interest, but I think it’s a positive thing we can have in the complex, and it’s a good way to show that we’re out there, to show we have a place. A lot of people don’t see me as a gay person . . . I don’t want to be the sole [gay] representative . . . but I would be . . . as a part of [the caucus].

Clearly, Devin’s willingness to associate himself with his university’s caucus enabled him to become more comfortable self-identifying as a gay male on campus.

Hal, a gay African-American graduate student, learned to use his membership in his SGL (Same-Gender Loving) Social group to become comfortable with his conflicting minority identities: his gay identity and his African-American identity. Unlike some students on campus, who involve themselves in multiple LGBT literacy communities, Hal insists on participating only in SGL Social because he feels that his university’s Alliance “has not dealt with people of color.” In other words, he perceives the main on-campus LGBT group as exclusionary, and predominately composed of white, middle-class undergraduates. However, he feels that more organizations on campus need to concern themselves more with the particular needs of the African-American community. According to Hal, the black community likes to pretend that “there’s no homosexuality”; many African-American men, for example, present themselves as “bi” to avoid the “gay” stigma. Both he and Roger, my other male African-American interviewee complained

about how, in African-American culture, LGBT men feel they must keep their queer identities on the “DL,” or “down low,” which means that they have added pressure to hide their identities, creating an atmosphere of secrecy and tension. Consequently, Hal asserted that African-Americans want to avoid labels altogether. “‘SGL’ is a way of avoiding ‘white’ labels of ‘gay, lesbian,’ etc.,” Hal claimed. He explained that to be an African-American “gay” man is to be a “traitor” to the “white man’s culture.” As Kevin Kumashiro reveals, “Afrocentric discourses have defined ‘Black’ as ‘straight’” (12).

Therefore, for Hal, the SGL group provides the alternative that he needs to become comfortable with the intersections of his minority identities, since issues such as the disjunctions between a queer identity and an African-American identity are often brought up during SGL’s discussions. The group primarily consists of racial minority students, many of whom can empathize with Hal’s feelings about the Alliance.

Education

Finally, the on-campus groups also serve an educational purpose for their members. Erica’s membership in the Womyn’s Council and her university’s Alliance, for example, affords her the opportunity to get engaged in discussions “on gender and identity, domestic partner benefits, and connections of multiple identities.” These campus groups provide her a linguistic space to engage in topics that she finds politically and socially relevant; she has been surprised that, thus far in her college career, she has not been given opportunities to address queer issues in her gender studies courses. Moira mentioned that, at her last LGBT group meeting, an HIV+ gay man talked about his experiences living with AIDS. She felt she learned a lot from his presentation, and she was also pleased to see so many straight people in the audience. The presence of straight

people enabled her to understand that “LGBT issues were impacting the straight community”; she learned that AIDS was not just an issue for the LGBT population to confront. Roger, a bisexual African-American student, purposely attends SGL meetings “to combat stereotypes.” He does public relations work for the group. However, since Roger is not completely out on campus, and fears “strange reactions” from his peers (particularly the male ones), he employs clandestine methods for the group’s publicity, and avoids more public actions, such as giving speeches. For example, he claimed: “Instead of dealing with [people’s negative] reactions up front, I’ll put this stuff up passively, like I’ll put out a flyer [advertising one of the group’s on-campus events] . . . If they decide to go, then they go, but I’m not gonna force nobody or throw it in anybody’s face.” For Roger, “SGL is about it” in terms of his LGBT on-campus involvement, because he leads a life completely separate from his LGBT activism. As a resident hall mentor on campus, he feels that he must shield his bisexual identity from the students he mentors. Because of this, he insisted that our interview take place in a completely private environment within the dorm; he did not feel safe talking about his sexuality in his own dorm room.

Conclusion

To assuage the demands of academic literacies, LGBT students form lasting language communities outside classroom spaces both in asynchronous online and face-to-face campus literacy communities. They see e-mails, listservs, and blogs as ways for them to connect with other LGBT people. In addition, on-campus groups provide many benefits for them, including opportunities for activism, ways to develop friendships, and pride in their identities. The next chapter will focus on one group of individuals in

particular—lesbian students—and explore the reasons why they so highly value their experiences in these campus literacy communities. By exploring the definition of “lesbian” and relating its components to the literacy lives of three lesbian interviewees, I shall offer a theory as to why lesbians tend to value their involvement in literacy communities even more than their gay male and bisexual peers do.

“You Just Have to Speak Up”: Lesbians and Campus Literacy

Communities

Overview

As we learned previously in Chapter 4, Erica, a lesbian university student, feels that even though she makes concerted attempts to take classes in gender studies and women’s studies, she often finds herself disappointed with the way that LGBT-oriented subjects are approached in these courses. In one of her women’s studies courses, for example, she was asked to take a test to determine her “masculinity” or “femininity.” Her instructor expressed surprise when Erica’s gender score indicated a predisposition towards femininity; she told Erica that, because Erica was a lesbian, her score should have indicated a predilection for masculine behavior. Outside the classroom, however, Erica, like many lesbians in this study, is able to use campus literacy communities to combat such stereotypical views. She involves herself in several on-campus groups, including a women’s group and the LGBT Student Alliance on her campus. These groups often discuss issues concerning the LGBT community, such as gay marriage and definitions of gender identity. In fact, due to her involvement with these groups, she participated in an activity in which her groups formed a coalition with racial and ethnic student groups on campus to educate both the President and Board of Trustees at her university on gender identity issues. When asked why she felt it was important for a broad range of the academic community to be involved in making LGBT students feel more included, she replied: “There needs to be education at all levels about the issues and, with the education, make people realize that there is a need for change. I don’t think it’s the responsibility of the oppressed to educate the oppressor, but sometimes I think

that's the only way to start the ball rolling . . . You just have to speak up, you just have to be loud about it." From Erica's perspective, institutional "oppressors," such as administrators and faculty, need to listen to the voices of the "oppressed" student populations when they "speak up," including those of LGBT students. Judging from her involvement in several on-campus groups, Erica believes that bridging the gap in this institutional divide comes from the building of campus literacy communities.

In the last chapter, we examined some reasons why LGBT students negotiate academic literacies by establishing both online communities (through e-mail, listservs, and blogs) and face-to-face communities (on-campus groups) on campus. But the need still exists for us to examine more in-depth why the students seemed to value these literacy communities as much as they did. Therefore, this chapter attempts to fulfill that objective. To this end, I would like to focus on the lesbians in this study in particular here, because, according to the questionnaire results, they seemed to value these communities more than either the gay or bisexual students did. After doing some review of contemporary definitions of "lesbianism," I realized that cultural perceptions of the term "lesbian" as a consummate outsider could possibly strengthen the lesbian student's desire to form language communities outside the classroom. So, as I discuss the literacy communities of three lesbian students (Gabrielle, Marie, and Lechele), I will attempt to explain how the communities that they form (or desire to form) with other students, faculty, and administrators in campus spaces outside the classroom may lessen their "outsider" status. The discussion of lesbian communities here will provide us some perspectives upon which a research plan to promote LGBT student inclusion in academic literacies will be built in Chapter 8.

“Lesbian” as Outsider

Contemporary definitions of “lesbian” in our culture stress the role of a lesbian as a social outsider. I suggest in this dissertation that, as a consequence of her status as a minority within a minority group, the lesbian may seek out ways to form communities with others. For her, communities provide a sense of voice, a sense of individuality which she is otherwise denied. Before exploring the ways in which lesbians form communities, however, and their reasons for doing so, let us examine some current definitions of “lesbian” which stress the lesbian’s role outside the norms of society.

Monique Wittig claims that “‘a lesbian is not a woman. A woman . . . only exists as a term that stabilizes and consolidates a binary and oppositional relation to a man; that relation . . . is heterosexuality’” (Butler, *Gender Trouble*, 143). A lesbian, on the other hand, is outside that binary. She cannot be a part of it because “a lesbian has no sex; she is beyond the categories of sex” (144). Teresa de Lauretis similarly asserts that the lesbian exists outside of traditional sexual boundaries. In *The Practice of Love: Lesbian Sexuality*, de Lauretis claims that our culture defines “lesbian” as a dualism. She states:

I have asserted that it takes two women, not one, to make a lesbian . . . Whatever other affective or social ties may be involved in a lesbian relationship—ties that may also exist in other relations between and among women, from friendship to rivalry, political sisterhood to class or racial antagonism, ambivalence to love, and so on—the term *lesbian* [sic] refers to a sexual relation, for better or for worse. (283-84)

de Lauretis makes a good point here: the term “lesbian” connotes only a sexual practice, and fails to acknowledge the love that two women may have for each other. In doing so, the term ignores other, less sexual aspects of the individual woman. Just as the

heterosexual female is often defined in terms of her husband (for example, by her husband's last name), the lesbian woman is defined in terms of her partner simply by being called a "lesbian": she becomes, for the purpose of her culture, "one who has sex with women." And in her article "Ourself behind Ourself: A Theory for Lesbian Readers," Jean E. Kennard suggests that the lesbian's frequent absence from literature exists because people habitually question the origins of her identity, and therefore its very social existence. Much of the discussion on lesbian identity, she notes, is framed within a discussion "between choice and no choice" (64). And since some feel that the lesbian can "choose" who she is (Reid, Soloman, Faderman), this makes her identity as a whole individual less valid. Furthermore, historically, J. Davidson Porter suggests that the lesbian has endured a historical and cultural invisibility due to a lack of opportunities to live a life "independently of traditional society due to economic implications" (313; D'Emilio). And Kate Clinton points out that, because the contemporary gay liberation movement is so male-dominated, lesbians really do not have a place within it (63).

All these definitions paint a picture of a "lesbian" as the consummate cultural outsider existing outside traditional cultural and linguistic categories. Unlike "gay" and "bisexual," her self-definition is rarely associated with either "man" or "woman"; as a culture, we tend to believe that she refrains from identifying herself with patriarchy and hetero-normativity on all levels. In fact, due to our patriarchal language structure, the lesbian in our society often gets described as "gay," a common blanket term for all LGBT people. And while those who define themselves as "gay," "bisexual," and even "transgendered" individuals do so in relation to or against patriarchal system of categorization (specifically, the category of "man"), the lesbian, by the very nature of her

identity, is often perceived as a political and social entity which exists outside this system, either naturally or by “choice.”

By looking at the lives of three lesbian interviewees in some detail, we can see how these lesbian students may be using campus literacy communities outside classroom environments to provide them with a much-needed sense of agency in negotiating academic literacies as a whole, thus enabling them to feel much less like outsiders within their culture. For these lesbians, these communities may also provide a viable solution towards achieving LGBT inclusion in academic literacy spaces, therefore allowing them to establish what de Lauretis calls “ties that may exist in other relations” (283).

The Language Communities of Gabrielle, Marie, and Lechele

Gabrielle

The majority (five out of nine) of the lesbian interviewees in this study were social science majors, and Gabrielle was no exception. A graduate student in community psychology, Gabrielle’s research interests include the “social construction of gender” and “power and gender.” However, she finds that women’s studies, her major concentration, is largely “heterosexual,” and ignores LGBT concerns. To compensate for this, Gabrielle forms communities with other LGBT individuals outside her classroom discourses. Her preference is to surround herself with LGBT-friendly people; for example, her recent ad for a roommate, which she posted on her community’s TRIANG-L listserv, specifically asks for an LGBT-friendly person. In addition, Gabrielle makes efforts to attend talks on LGBT issues, and she sometimes does research on same-sex couples. When I asked her about her writing life, she seemed surprised when I asked her about her personal writing. “For me,” she declared, “writing is the same thing as public writing.” She clearly

envisioning herself as writing for a public audience; she senses that an act of literacy is an act of community-building.

Unlike many LGBT undergraduate students, Gabrielle does not keep a blog, nor does she belong to any on-campus student organizations. However, it is clear that she does make concerted efforts to involve herself in campus literacy communities with other lesbians outside classroom environments. It is possible that, because of society's perception that "a lesbian is not a woman," as Wittig asserts, Gabrielle may be making concerted efforts to include herself in the category of "women" (through her work in women's studies) and in the category of "lesbians" (through TRIANG-L listserv membership and attendance at queer campus events). The social definition of a lesbian as "not a woman" may also account for Gabrielle's view of "writing" as "public writing"; as a lesbian, she may have a particular need for her words to be validated by others in society. Hence, for Gabrielle, an act of writing is an act of desire for recognition by others; she seems exceptionally aware that, as a minority, she must make concerted, public efforts for her words to be noticed.

Not only do Gabrielle's memberships in campus literacy communities enable her to negotiate academic literacies, she also feels that these communities provide important means of making LGBT students feel more included in academe. She strongly feels that students, faculty, and the administration all need to be involved in creating this atmosphere of inclusion. Students, for example, need to "enhance the level of visible activism" on campus. "We need more chalk writing," she asserted, claiming that students need to write more chalk messages to each other on campus sidewalks which advertise meetings; in this sense, the LGBT community can enhance its visibility. If this were to

occur, another form of the “textual corridors” described in Chapter Four would be created. But instead of using walking space to trade antagonistic messages, students could instead use it to exchange information and thereby heighten campus awareness of minority concerns. Once again, we see that Gabrielle has a particular interest in forming a sense of campus community, not just with other lesbians, but with other students, both queer and straight. If students were to communicate with each other more, even in the informal spaces of campus sidewalks, they could develop a greater sense of awareness of the lesbian community, thus bridging the gap between a community existing “beyond the categories of sex,” as Wittig claims, and the hetero-normative communities, which exist within those categories.

Gabrielle feels that faculty may play an important role in this process as well. For example, she suggested that faculty make announcements of LGBT activities in their classes. In her view, teachers need to remind their students of the relationship between the classroom and the campus community at large:

It shows students that not only are faculty aware of what’s going on, it’s something that students need to be aware of, too. And awareness is where you start: before you get involved, you have to know that it’s happening. I think that’s how the classroom and campus community can come together. Cause they’re related, it’s not separate. I think education, especially on a college campus, is so much related to in-between class time.

As educators, faculty need to remind students that literacy communities do exist outside classroom environments; primary discourses for LGBT students occur outside of classroom space. If students miss out on these extra-curricular conversations, they may miss out on opportunities to engage their peers in primary discourse settings. In particular, these communities can serve to help us understand the nature of the lesbian identity in our culture. As Kennard suggests, lesbian invisibility in popular culture and

literature has given most people the impression that lesbians do not exist, so faculty can help to educate their students on the existence of the contributions of the lesbian community (or other queer communities as well).

Mostly, Gabrielle emphasized the need for administrators to initiate institutional change. Unlike many students, Gabrielle feels that administrators should require writings and readings on LGBT-oriented topics, in order to bridge the gap between administrative values and the concerns of LGBT students. “Almost every class should be using applied examples [of the LGBT community],” Gabrielle claimed. This can only happen if minority issues are seen as institutionally legitimate. Therefore, Gabrielle advocates training for both teachers and administrators on LGBT concerns. In her view, it is important to “start where people are” and then “find out their values, [and] work from there. Help them to be more inclusive.” She stated that teachers and administrators need to be shown how to use examples of the LGBT community in classroom discourse; employ inclusive language in their daily speech (the word “gay” as a pejorative term, in particular, needs to be rectified); and revise classroom textbooks to include more examples of LGBT individuals. Such gargantuan tasks, she feels, can only be accomplished by community-building outside the classroom. Students can work with teachers and administrators to educate them, and heighten their awareness of these issues.

As a lesbian who habitually confronts social issues on a daily basis in her research work, Gabrielle clearly sees the relationship between academic institutions and campus literacy communities. To enhance its visibility within academic discourse, the LGBT community must start building discourse communities outside the classroom, with other members of academe, who have the power to change language and literacy policies.

Furthermore, theories on lesbianism (Wittig, Kennard) suggest that Gabrielle's self-identification as a lesbian may be enabling her to be more sensitive to issues of power and inclusiveness in our culture. By stressing the importance of LGBT students forming campus communities with administrators in her response, we can see that she wishes to thwart the cultural "invisibility" of the lesbian community to which J. Davidson Porter refers.

Marie

A community college student, Marie, like Gabrielle, strongly believes in the effectiveness of campus literacy communities outside the classroom as a means of negotiating the barriers of academic literacies and as a means of enhancing LGBT presence in academe. To begin with, Marie belongs to several communities which enable her to engage in issues that her classes have largely failed to address. She attends every possible meeting of the Gay-Straight Alliance at her college; in fact, she holds the office of Vice-President. She also belongs to several online communities: a lesbian community, a gay marriage one, and several dealing with women's rights issues. These communities compensate her for the political agency she feels she lacks in classroom language spaces. As deLauretis suggests, the very nature of the term "lesbian" suggests a relationship, but only a sexual one. Marie reveals through her various community activities, both in person and online, that her lesbian self may actually take on multiple roles within our culture: Marie's roles as queer activist and as advocate of women's rights attempt to transcend the limited role ascribed to lesbians. As Marie forms communities with these other groups, she may help herself to feel less limited within her socially defined role. No longer must she feel defined solely in terms of her sexuality;

instead, she can view herself as a contributor to the social and political objectives of multiple cultural groups.

Her online blog also provides this agency. One of Marie's recent blog entries reads:

A (not so) quick side bar: why do people get so hung up over the word 'marriage'? I know a *lot* of people who are in favour of civil unions that give homosexual couples all the same rights as their heterosexual counterparts... as long as they don't call it a 'marriage' that is. What is the big deal? I even had someone tell me that the *only* reason homosexuals want to call their relationships marriages is because they want to try to convince the straight population that their partnerships are equal to traditional ones. What a bunch of shit...

From this entry, we can see that Marie does indeed use her blog to vent her opinions on political issues. It is a "safe space" in which she can express her minority viewpoints; she does not feel the need to conform her writing to the formal dictates of the classroom in this electronic space, and can openly express herself, transcending the societal ideology of lesbian as cultural outsider. Marie's blog serves additional community-building purposes as well. She uses it to keep in touch with others, and for writing what she describes as "informal essays." Overall, she perceives her blog not just as a conduit for political musings, but also as a way for her to have "fun." She claims that she "makes friends" with those who read her posts and then e-mail her, even though she has never seen most of these people. Her primary audience consists both of these virtual "friends" and her real-life "cousins," but it may also include anyone on her campus to whom she chooses to make her blog available. By building a sense of community with friends, relatives, and the campus community at large online through her blog, Marie may be attempting here to claim discursive space in what Kate Clinton terms "the gay liberation movement," which, Clinton argues, is largely a patriarchal construction. The friendships

which she forms on her blog allow Marie a sense of historical and political agency to which lesbians have traditionally been denied.

Marie's blog also challenges traditional notions of literacy through its visual appeal, but simultaneously employs these visual literacies to heighten her sense of identity, thus thwarting the negative cultural associations of a "lesbian" identity to participate in an online community. In this environment, Marie appears to embrace the "otherness" of her identity. The prominently displayed title of Marie's blog, "An Altered State of Consciousness," suggests to the readers that, within the context of her blog, something ethereal, or other-worldly, is taking place (see Figure 5).

Figure 5: Marie's Blog



In addition, dark purple and black colors dominate the blog, reinforcing the notion that the readers, upon reading the blog, are entering into a numinous realm of dark spirits. And instead of showing a picture of herself, we can see from Figure 5 that Marie displays a picture of a character who appears gender-ambiguous, again suggesting that the blog

crosses both linguistic and gender boundaries. Marie thus positions herself, as Wittig claims, as not a traditional woman, and thus a cultural outsider. In this online environment, however, Marie can more easily negotiate her lesbian identity and create a campus literacy community with other queer individuals. The little cartoon characters which define her “mood” and “music” for each day help her to establish a communicative online persona. By including this information, Marie attempts to convey verbally what online writing spaces typically make difficult: the communication of feelings, background, and emotions. She wisely attempts to give her readers additional context for the unique rhetorical situation in which they now find themselves, thus enhancing the blog as a sense of communal space. In fact, all of the blog’s visual literacies, such as the title, the gothic/spiritual themes, the colors, and the animated cartoons, all help to reveal Marie’s personality and identity. This, in turn, enables Marie to become a member of the blog community and thwart her cultural outsider status to at least some extent.

Like Gabrielle, Marie sees the need for students and administrators to all get involved in creating a more welcoming climate for LGBT students on college campuses. To begin with, LGBT students and their allies can support the community by providing symbolic clues of this support to those with whom they interact on campus. Marie, for example, sometimes sports a red ribbon on her shirt to show support of AIDS awareness, and has rainbow buttons on her backpack. Using these clues to her identity, she hopes can initiate dialogue between individuals who might otherwise shy away from each other. She explains:

People might even say, “Oh, does [the button or pin] mean you’re gay?,” or something . . . My first response is usually “Well, it just basically means that I’m a gay rights supporter.” And I usually try not to say that I’m gay, not usually because I’m afraid, [but] a lot of times there’s this

stereotype that only gay people can be gay rights activists, and I'm trying to break that stereotype.

Thus we see another example here in which Marie employs non-verbal language, such as the elaborate visuals in her blog, to perform a queer identity. For Marie, her face-to-face performance of “queer” lasts up to a point: she will only self-identify as “gay” or (more accurately) “lesbian” if someone asks her directly if she self-identifies that way. Her performance as “gay/lesbian”—the identity which comes into being through her own verbal affirmation—is deliberately ambiguous in the hopes that those who support LGBT rights can willingly view her as an ally, and those who do not can initiate a conversation. Julia Brosnan suggests that “the lesbian body in performance presents itself as an arena of great tension . . . for she is viewed both as a woman and as a ‘homosexual’” (80). The ambiguity of Marie’s socially constructed lesbian self—both in the blog and her interactions with her peers through the ribbons and buttons—reflects this tension to which Brosnan refers. As a lesbian, Marie may also be an outsider in queer culture. She attempts to establish communities of discourse on queer issues through symbolic language, but she simultaneously refrains from presenting herself as “lesbian” to those with whom she wishes to establish contact, either online or face to face.

Marie also suggested that the identification of “Safe Zones” on campus could help LGBT students feel more included in academic discourse. She stressed the need for teachers and administrators, in particular, to establish such zones by posting white cards with triangles with a line that read “LGBT Safe Zone”. She further elucidated the function of these “Safe Zones”: “LGBT people in the dorms could see that . . . ‘I could go to this person if I need a safe place . . . sometimes you just don’t know who you can bring [LGBT issues] up to.’” She emphasized the need for this in part because students at her

former university had had insulting letters posted to their dorm doors, and roommate complications resulting from their sexuality. Again, we see that non-verbal communication—a “Safe Zone” sticker—can enable LGBT students to feel more comfortable addressing their concerns in faculty and administrative offices, thus creating a sense of stronger sense of community between students, faculty, and administrators. The stickers facilitate dialogue, thus increasing the possibility that the campus literacy communities between students and teachers or students and administrators might very well evolve into primary discourse communities for LGBT students. This may assuage the “arena of tension” created by the performance of the lesbian body, to which Brosnan refers.

Lechele

While she does not keep a blog like Marie, Lechele often uses technology in her writings. She e-mails “friends all over the country,” and she often discusses LGBT issues with her friends during her conversations. Overall, she agreed that e-mail was her main mode of communication. Much of Lechele’s e-mail communication also manifests itself via her listserv involvement. She belongs both to the TRIANG-L listserv (which discusses and announces LGBT topics) and one for her sorority, which consists of lesbian students of color. From her perspective, the sorority is “a community service organization.” Lechele may see a need for the establishment of strong campus literacy communities because, as William F. Pinar points out, lesbians like herself “are perceived as sharing gender identity with heterosexual women, and are oppressed both as women and as lesbians” (33). For Lechele, the oppression to which Pinar refers also takes a third form: she is African-American. The establishment of communities, both online and in

person, helps Lechele feel more included within academic events and less victimized by social and cultural stereotypes.

Lechele's most impressive use of listserv communication to date came with her ability to use listserv to promote an online petition which she created. She was originally inspired to design the petition when she read the story of 15-year-old Sakia Gunn in *Between the Lines*, a local LGBT newspaper. Lechele was outraged to learn that even though Sakia was murdered for being a lesbian, Sakia's school principal refused to honor her with a moment of silence, saying that people who lived Sakia's "lifestyle" must "pay a price." After reading about Sakia, Lechele did research on online petitions on Yahoo, and then promoted the petitions on local listservs. She seemed giddy when asked about the results that she achieved:

It was frustrating at times, because I felt like I would never reach 500 [signatures]. I thought that, that was just not going to happen. And now it's like 719 or something. And it's crazy (*laughs*) . . . I'm shocked . . . the Internet is really, really crazy . . . I didn't know they had the Internet in Germany (*laughs*). I mean, I don't know how that got to Germany . . . It's just really, really cool that I've gotten such a great response from people all over the world.

She plans to mail the petition to the principal of Sakia's school and the Board of Directors of the Newark School District. The petition has also encouraged her to do a letter-writing campaign: she was upset that the mayor of Newark said that he'd start a LGBT community center in Sakia's honor, but he has not yet followed through.

For Lechele, creating and distributing the online petition throughout her campus community was an empowering experience. It helped her understand the power of the Internet as a conduit of communication and it enabled her to see how her writing could make a difference to accomplish goals that matter to her. She learned how campus

literacy communities can form online to work towards a common goal, and she also begin to see that her other goal involving community—the establishment of a community center in Sakia’s name—is shared by many people. In this case, Lechele is helping to establish a community (the center) through her online community involvement. Consequently, she is starting another petition on gay marriage, and, as with the Sakia Gunn petition, she is advertising this position on listservs. In her 1980 study entitled *The Lesbian Community*, Deborah Wolf habitually refers to lesbians as “lesbian-feminists” and describes lesbian communities as “lesbian-feminist communities” (18, 71-105). Through her actions to honor Sakia, Lechele has not only established a “lesbian-feminist” community by supporting both lesbians’ and women’s rights, she reveals the many different levels upon which lesbians may self-identify through the creation of communities. Lechele is not just a lesbian supporting a lesbian, she is a woman supporting a woman, an African-American supporting an African-American, and a college student supporting the rights of children. Therefore, Lechele’s creation of an online petition of support for Sakia reveals the many different ways in which a lesbian may achieve inclusion within communities by acknowledging her own multiple roles within academic discourse.

I also noticed Lechele acknowledging her multiple social identities when she talked at length about her involvement in on-campus groups. She belongs to several LGBT groups on her university campus, and, at the time of the interview, was running for an officer position in her university’s Alliance group. She explained that she wants her involvement to inspire other LGBT students to feel safe, particularly LGBT students of color:

LECHELE: [My involvement] will bridge the gap between LGBT students and also ethnic and other cultural groups on campus, and that's what needs to be done.

BRIAN: What kind of gaps do you perceive between LGBT students and students of color?

LECHELE: Well, I honestly feel . . . people [of color] are scared to come out . . . if their friends found out they are gay or lesbian, they probably wouldn't talk to them . . . I want to show people that you shouldn't be scared of who you are. You shouldn't be scared to go to the meetings, because no one's going to beat you up, no one's going to say, "Ooh, she's gay, don't talk to her." I mean, but I feel that's why we don't see a lot of people at [SGL] Social.

Through her interest in promoting the involvement of LGBT students of color on her university's campus, Lechele acknowledges the complex intersections of her peers' dual identities. Since these students are not only LGBT students but also LGBT students *of color*, she is able to perceive that these students deal with special problems as minorities. In their communities, being "queer" is often perceived as being "white" (Kumashiro 1-25). Students of color who perform queer identities in public are often seen by their family and friends as not only sexual deviants, but also race traitors. Consequently, "queers of color have engaged in a number of efforts to redefine themselves and to create communities and cultures that embrace them" (Kumashiro 7). Lechele desires to establish the type of campus literacy community of which Kumashiro speaks by welcoming students of color into the community of "SGL Social," which concerns itself with helping queer students of color in particular. She herself knows the difficulties of enduring conflicting minority identities, so she hopes to help others transcend this difficulty. To "bridge the gap," Lechele feels that LGBT students of color need to come together at SGL Social and talk. Like Audre Lorde, she hopes to celebrate diversity between communities as "'this raw and powerful connection from which our personal power forged'" ("Tribute to Audre," p. 2).

Like Gabrielle and Marie, Lechele talked at length about the importance of establishing more LGBT-oriented academic literacy communities on campus. In spite of her involvement in her on campus groups and with the Sakia Gunn petition, Lechele largely perceives the academic world as a place in which minority voices are stifled. She explained:

They have two gay and lesbian classes on this campus, and I think that's the only place they talk about LGBT topics . . . This school talks about diversity a lot, but I really don't see it, I don't see it at all . . . People need to stop being scared of who they are, and faculty need to be more open to all of their students . . . There are all kinds of people at this school . . . so I think professors and faculty need to cater to that.

Clearly, Lechele is frustrated that most LGBT students desire to remain closeted and avoid building communities with other LGBT students. In addition, she strongly feels that faculty and administrators need to encourage open dialogue on these topics, both in and out of the classroom. Over the course of her interview, Lechele habitually mentioned the importance of "being open" to dialogue. "It's 2003!," she often said during the interview, expressing her frustration that many individuals have not dropped their prejudices of the past, which she still feels both as an African-American and as a lesbian. To get themselves "up to date," she sees a strong need for administrators to establish more LGBT-oriented classes, for faculty to provide students the options to write on LGBT-oriented topics, and for students to gain support from each other in groups on campus in which minority issues are often discussed. In Lechele's view, only when students, faculty, and administrators engage in dialogue with each other will such desirable results be achieved.

Conclusion

This chapter argues that, since lesbians in our culture are often defined as social and cultural outsiders who often experience oppression on many different levels, they have an exceptionally strong desire to form lasting campus literacy communities with other individuals. The formation of these communities often helps them to negotiate academic discourse and to feel more included within it. By reading about the literacy lives of Gabrielle, Marie, and Lechele, we may more strongly see the possibility that all three of these lesbian students build campus literacy communities both online and in person, or aspire to do so, to transcend their status as “outsiders” in both society in general and in academe in particular.

These lesbians’ frequent mentions of the roles of teachers and administrators in the community-building process have particular significance for the final chapter of this dissertation. My last chapter identifies the various ways in which LGBT students may be included in academic discourse, and many of the methods discussed involve the actions of teachers and administrators outside classroom spaces. Thus we shall soon see why “academic literacies” need to be seen not just as “disciplinary literacies” in the classroom but also as “campus literacies.” If we overlook the campus literacy communities formed among students, teachers, and administrators outside the classroom, we ignore possible places to establish LGBT student inclusion within the academic community.

“More Community, More Literacy”: A Plan for Future Research

Overview

Early in my interview with Jason, he stressed the relationship between literacy and the building of communities in the academic world. He declared:

I think literacy and community move together . . . the quality of literacy that's going to be in scholarly material produced is going to be improved when there's the administrative resources or academic resources to encourage that. More support through . . . an office or through queer-friendly classes is going to encourage that . . . both of those feed together. More literacy, more community. More community, more literacy.

Jason's perspective typifies that of most LGBT interviewees in this study: most of them suggest that, in order for LGBT students to be included in academic literacy spaces, many communities, both inside and outside the classroom, must be built.

My two goals for this dissertation have been to discover how LGBT students negotiate academic literacies and to learn how make LGBT students feel more included in these literacy communities. Chapters 4 and 5 have shown that the interviewees in this study believe that writing situations which lack a strong sense of community, in and out of the classroom, do not provide them the agency that they need to deal with the literacy demands of academe. This is particularly true for writing involving electronic chat. However, in Chapters 6 and 7, we saw that these students do build lasting campus literacy communities outside the classroom, such as on-campus groups and asynchronous online conversations, to attain a sense of inclusion in academic literacies. We learned that lesbian students, in particular, value the building of literacy communities as a means of both negotiating academic literacies and of finding solutions to achieve LGBT student inclusion in academic literacy spaces.

In this final chapter, I will explore a plan for researching the inclusion of LGBT students in academic literacies. When interviewees were asked the questions “Which of the proposed solutions on the questionnaire do you feel would work best [towards achieving inclusion]?” and “What suggestions do you have for teachers who want to bring these topics into the classroom?,” they ended up talking about getting the entire academic community involved in achieving LGBT student inclusion. In their view, students, administrators, and teachers need to work together to achieve LGBT student inclusion in academic literacy communities. Since many of these students’ responses deal with changing institutional policies, I have learned that arguing for the inclusion of LGBT students in academic literacies involves much more than the examination of the disciplinary literacy communities of classroom spaces. On the contrary, to develop a plan for researching LGBT student inclusion in the academic world, we need to examine all spaces of academic literacies, both inside and outside the classroom: both classroom-specific disciplinary literacies and campus literacies should be included in this examination. Since an overwhelming number of the students in this study perceive most academic literacies as taking place outside classroom environments, it is imperative to examine the issue of LGBT student inclusion from an institutional perspective. We need to take a closer look at the variety of literacy communities on campus in which language and literacy policies are made, critically examining the language policies and practices both inside and outside classroom spaces.

As Porter et al. point out in the 2000 article “Institutional Critique: A Rhetorical Methodology for Change,” most discussions of institutional theory tend to be broad and lacking in empiricism (Giroux, Sosnoski, Foucault). However, Porter et al. claim, “We

are not interested in simply reporting how evil institutions are; we think that critique needs an action plan” (613). “An action plan” is what I offer through this theory of LGBT inclusion of academic literacies: on the basis of my interviewees’ comments, I will articulate here a specific process that future researchers may use to work towards this inclusion.

Most studies of LGBT student communities have lacked such specificity. I mentioned in Chapter 1 that Harriet Malinowitz suggests that the best solution for achieving the inclusion of lesbian and gay students is an the “umbrella suggestion . . . Learn about lesbian and gay people” (*Textual Orientations*, 258). While I concur with Malinowitz that learning about lesbians and gays is important, and learning helps bring about change, I also feel that administrators, teachers, and students could all benefit from “an action plan.” As we have seen, “Attacking institutional problems only at a global and disciplinary level doesn’t work” (Porter et al. 626). Porter et al. note that some rhetorical studies do exist which “attempt some form of institutional revision” (626). These include Grabill’s study reflecting on bureaucratic practices within literacies communities (*Situating Literacies*); Blythe’s “Institutional Critique,” which elucidates the relationship between physical structures and discursive practices; and Cushman’s *The Struggle and the Tools*, which articulates the importance of observing institutional practices first-hand (Porter et al. 626-628). But in spite of these important efforts, we need to look even more at the *specific strategies* we can enact to help bring about change in academic literacy communities. In articulating my research plan, I am interested in the notion of applying institutional critique to benefit LGBT students in particular. My interviewees have helped me identify places within academe where resistance and change

are possible, and I have therefore developed my research plan based on their feelings, thoughts, and observations. However, it is a plan within which students, teachers, and administrators may all participate on equal ground as members of the academic community. These suggestions for future research have two major components: (1) further evaluate how well the communities within academic literacy communities create LGBT student inclusion and (2) dialogue on some possible ways to create more inclusive academic literacies. While this plan is only a beginning in the process of creating change, it could provide us a viable means of working towards LGBT-inclusive discursive spaces.

Step One: Evaluation

The first step involved in creating LGBT student inclusion in academic literacies involves the evaluation of both disciplinary and campus literacies within academe. Researchers consisting of student groups or faculty/administrative committees can examine several different literacy communities within academe, and attempt to discover the extent to which LGBT concerns are being dealt with in those spaces. Ideally, this research would be done by teams of students, faculty, and administrators, but I think they can be effective for any group of individuals who desires to initiate change. Student-run Gay-Straight Alliances, for example, or faculty/administrative committees dedicated to incorporating diversity in academe (such as a Diversity in Action Committee) might wish to form groups that work toward LGBT student inclusion. On the basis of what I have found in this study, I would recommend that researchers examine a wide variety of academic environments, both inside and outside the classroom. Judging from my



findings in Chapters 4 and 5 of this study, discipline-specific classroom writing communities might be a good place to start.

Classroom Communities: Discipline-Specific Literacies

In Chapter 4, we saw that weak writing communities are often established between LGBT students and their teachers. From Chapter 4, we learned that LGBT students are rarely given specific assignments dealing with LGBT issues, that professors lack interest in addressing LGBT concerns, and that students often receive negative feedback from professors when they address LGBT issues. In that chapter, Kadijah suggested that disciplinary literacy communities between faculty and students are not built because teachers are “uncomfortable viewing other people’s empowerment.” However, we must wonder whether these communities lack strong ties only because of teacher discomfort. After all, we also saw in Chapter 4 that, in general, students have negative attitudes towards classroom writing situations for a variety of reasons. Thus I would suggest that researchers evaluate the classroom interaction between students and teachers. Such study could involve such actions as observing classrooms, evaluating teacher assignments and syllabi, and surveying LGBT students on their overall attitudes towards writing.

In studying teacher-student disciplinary literacy communities, the researchers could consider several different questions. First of all, they could ask, “In what ways do teachers use inclusive language in their classroom practices?” During her interview, Erica stressed the need for teachers to use inclusive language in their classroom speech. She asked teachers to recognize that “Language is an issue...instead of saying, ‘your husband’ or ‘wife,’ say, ‘your partner’ . . . instead of having a hetero-normative view, be

inclusive of all . . . instead of saying ‘men and women,’ say ‘all people.’ Pull away from a binary gender system and recognize that there’s more than biology [involved in determining] gender.” Therefore, researchers could examine the extent to which teachers do incorporate such expression into their classroom lexicon. I would even go one step beyond Erica’s suggestion to say that researchers need to investigate the extent to which inclusive language could also be used in classroom assignments and syllabi. In Chapter 4, Lechele complained that teachers “don’t give [students] choices” in the assignments that they create; researchers may want to test this assertion. Examining teacher use of inclusive language would enable researchers to better understand whether LGBT student experiences are truly being discussed in the disciplinary literacies of the classroom.

Secondly, researchers could ask: “What role do students play, if any, in contributing to the antagonistic relationship that often exists between LGBT students and their writing teachers?” When Donna complained about the excessive criticism on her paper on lesbian issues in Chapter 4, she assumed that it was because her teacher was not open to queer topics. However, as I pointed out, we must also wonder whether Donna earned those negative comments due to other reasons, such as poorly organized writing or writing with faculty mechanical structure. As I indicated in Chapter 4, students can have poor attitudes towards writing situations for several different reasons. Therefore, it would be helpful for researchers to survey LGBT students’ attitudes towards writing, perhaps once at the beginning of a writing-intensive course and once at the end, to better evaluate the extent to which the course affected the student writer. This survey would help researchers get a better sense of whether LGBT student resentment of writing activities is due to classroom exclusion of LGBT issues, or whether the students’ current

attitudes towards classroom writing is affected by past classroom exclusion of LGBT concerns.

Researchers also could examine the communities that students form with each other in classroom environments. As we saw in Chapters 4 and 5, a lack of trust exists in the writing communities that students form inside classrooms. The students expressed a discomfort in sharing their writing with other students, and they also admonished their peers for failing to take chat room activities “seriously.” Therefore, researchers could consider such student groups as peer review groups and synchronous chat rooms in their study of LGBT student inclusion. The researchers will need to consider the extent to which students include or exclude each other in building classroom language communities. Such study would enable researchers to better reconcile the seemingly contradictory statements of Kaleb in Chapter 4. Kaleb noted that, after reading his paper on a gay-oriented topic to his peer review group, one student told him he was going to hell and another student queried “‘which one’s the woman’” in a gay sex act. However, Kaleb also suggested that peer review can be effective. Therefore, researchers might wonder how this can be the case. Why would students like Kaleb view peer review as effective after having such negative experiences with it? Studying the role of LGBT students in the peer review process could assist researchers in understanding the particular problems that LGBT students confront by “outing” themselves to their classroom peers in discipline-specific literacy contexts.

Not only could researchers explore how peer review groups function for LGBT students, they may want to examine LGBT students’ roles in classroom chats. In Chapter 5, Sam suggested that someone needs to monitor student chats to make sure that they

serve their pedagogical purposes. While many may assume that a teacher could play this role, perhaps it would be one better served by a student. As worlds which disrupt conventional notions of power and authority, classroom chats are often regarded by students as “play time” during which they do not need to make important contributions to class discussions—particularly if their contributions are anonymous. Therefore, with chat used in the classroom, researchers could consider the ways in which traditional conceptions of classroom power may be subverted for the benefit of LGBT students. In the position of chat monitors, for example, LGBT students get a chance to respond to their peers’ negative perceptions of the LGBT community.

Non-Classroom Communities: Campus Literacies

After evaluating several different disciplinary literacies in classroom contexts, the researchers must move their work outside the classroom to examine three types of campus literacy communities outside of class: student communities, faculty/administrative communities, and “mixed” communities, consisting of students, faculty and/or administrators.

Let us begin by considering the role of student on-campus groups. From Chapter 6, we learned that LGBT student organizations, in particular, serve as important literacy communities to promote the inclusion of LGBT students; therefore, from this finding, we can safely assume that these organizations do serve as primary discourse space for most LGBT students on campus. This study suggests that LGBT on-campus groups can provide valuable resources to academic communities both inside and outside the classroom. Therefore, researchers could sit in on several student organizational meetings and then take notes on several different issues.

To begin with, researchers could take notes on the group's key literacy activities. The researchers need to listen carefully to how the student organization uses reading, writing, and speaking activities to support its purposes. Such findings might include the distribution of flyers, the use of a listserv to communicate, the development of a webpage, the drafting of letters to administrators, or the participation in demonstrations. By learning about the group's literacy activities, researchers could develop a sense of how students develop literacy lives outside the classroom, and thus acquire a more advanced understanding of how LGBT students communicate within academic literacies overall.

Once the researchers have a sense of the group's literacy activities, they need to consider how well these activities promote the inclusion of LGBT students in academic literacies. Do the literacy events, for example, seem to have a limited audience, addressing only the "popular," most involved LGBT students, or do they employ rhetorical strategies to reach out to a greater number of individuals within the LGBT community? By asking this question, researchers will learn the extent to which the group promotes the inclusion of all LGBT students—and perhaps even the heterosexual students as well.

After this, researchers could consider which activities within the group could be incorporated into the classroom or other discipline-specific literacy communities. From their study of on-campus groups, for example, they may be able to develop training materials for faculty and administrators. One interviewee, Hal, recommended that student groups may help build training manuals for faculty and administrators, and I feel his suggestion is worth examining further. When students, administrators, and teachers

work together to increase the presence of LGBT students in academic literacy communities, increased tolerance and understanding may result. This suggestion furthers the work of Peter Nardi, who points out in “Gay and Lesbian Issues in the Classroom” the prevalence of hetero-normative literacies in education, and asserts that this needs to be changed. Nardi asks his audience to “Imagine what it must be like when every image, every sentence, every book, every media event, every cultural ceremony or ritual . . . deny the existence of gay youth” and then claims that, because of this hetero-normative dominance, we must “change the sociocultural and institutional arrangements” that exclude gay people (129). Due to the brevity of his article, Nardi refrains from elaborating upon the form that this “change” should take. However, I am suggesting here that studying on-campus groups as a basis for training teachers and administrators on the treatment of LGBT students in academic literacy spaces is one specific way of bringing about this “change.”

Researchers could also examine online student communities outside of classroom spaces in their evaluation. Chapters 6 and 7 of this dissertation, in particular, have shown us the ways in which LGBT students feel more included within academic literacies by participating in online communities such as e-mail discussions, listservs, and blogs; thus, researchers need to give particular attention to online student communities in their work to build inclusiveness within academic literacies. In Chapter 6, Taylor referred to e-mail as her “main form of communication,” and, in Chapter 7, we learned how Lechele used a listserv available within her university community to circulate an online petition to support a memorial for Sakia Gunn. Due to students’ increasingly frequent establishment of online communities in campus literacies, it would make sense for

researchers to examine such communities in their study. This would involve reading e-mail, listserv, and blog postings, and considering the ways in which these literacy communities work.

The teams might begin their evaluation of online student campus communities by considering whether asynchronous communities provide a stronger sense of community than synchronous communities, such as chat rooms. The results of this dissertation indicate that LGBT students tend to view asynchronous online communities much more positively than chat room communities, which they perceive as ephemeral and fragmentary. In fact, in Chapter 6, we saw how two students, Moira and Herman, even feel free to use blogs not just for the exchange of information, but also for the performance of their sexual identities. Even when Lechele used the listserv to circulate her Sakia Gunn petition, as we learned in Chapter 7, she told me that she did so for very personal reasons: she could identify strongly with Sakia's identity as a young African-American lesbian. On some level, these students feel free to write about very personal concerns in very public environments on campus, and they had no qualms about sharing this information with me. This could make researchers consider: What is it about online space—particularly asynchronous online conversations—that makes LGBT students more likely to publish their personal experiences or concerns online? And how or why does this asynchronous literacy differ from synchronous online chat? By answering these questions, researchers can better understand the extent to which LGBT students are comfortable writing in various online spaces, both in and out of the classroom.

In addition, researchers could learn the different ways in which these online campus literacy communities include or exclude their members. In discussing the nature

of blogs in Chapter 6, I mentioned that while blogs may technically include a wide range of viewers online, they usually act as a means of communication between a blogger and his or her online “friends.” The bloggers in this study told me that they will only release the URLs of their blogs to their “friends” whom they “know” online (or in person), and sometimes they will censor their entries so that only their “friends” can read them. But in spite of the bloggers’ efforts to maintain a sense of “privacy” online, many of them acted as if they had nothing to hide: except for one, all of the students in this study gave me unrestricted permission to read their blogs, even though they often wrote on such weighty topics as fetishism, queer romance, and sexual abuse. Therefore, due to the ambiguous nature of the blog audience, researchers might wish to consider the ways in which blog audiences (and other asynchronous online audiences) include and exclude LGBT individuals on and off campus. My study suggests that students do form strong communities in asynchronous online groups, but further exploration of this issue is needed.

It is important that researchers also examine faculty/administrative groups in their work, since many students interviewed viewed faculty and administrative involvement as vital to the success of LGBT student inclusion in academic literacies. Kate, for instance, feels that because teachers and administrators are in “leadership” positions, “people will listen to authorities.” Unquestionably, a “top-down” hierarchy does exist in academe: administrators dictate policy to teachers, and both administrators and teachers do the same to students. While the interviewees do feel that they have some agency in shaping academic language policies, they did not try to deny that administrators and teachers have the most power to determine the nature of academic literacies. David

Bartholomae elucidates how faculty and administrators hold university students responsible for conforming to the dictates of discipline-specific literacy communities in “Inventing the University”:

Every time a student sits down to write for us, he has to invent the university for the occasion--invent the university, that is, or a branch of it, like history or anthropology or economics or English. The student has to learn to speak our language, to speak as we do, to try on the peculiar ways of knowing, selecting, evaluating, reporting, concluding, and arguing that define the literacies of our community. Or perhaps I could say the *various* literacies of our community, since it is in the nature of a liberal arts education that a student, after the first year or two, must learn to try on a variety of voices and interpretive schemes . . . (589-90)

To succeed in college, the university student must conform to the policies of disciplinary literacies. For LGBT students, this can be exceptionally troubling, for often the disciplinary literacy policies that they encounter as they negotiate academic literacies neglect the validation of queer experiences.

Therefore, it makes sense to examine the literacy communities of faculty and administrators in the evaluation process. Most assuredly, the extent to which faculty and administrators involve themselves in the inclusion of LGBT issues depends on their own personal commitment to the issues. To consider the extent to which LGBT concerns are being addressed in faculty/administrative communities, researchers could explore this issue through several different methods. To begin with, they could speak informally with individual faculty and administrators about what happens at specific meetings or events. Additionally, researchers may obtain permission to attend faculty/administrative events, or read transcripts from asynchronous online faculty discussions. And, finally, researchers can examine materials produced from these events, such as notes from

meetings, or conference agenda programs, to discover the extent to which LGBT concerns are being discussed.

The interviewees in this study believed that faculty training sessions, in particular, could work exceptionally well in promoting the inclusion of the LGBT population on campus. Raya suggested that students can help in ensuring that such training works. She feels that, not only could teachers receive sensitivity training on rhetorical choices in the classroom, she recommended that “students listen to [faculty classes] to see if they’re applying training.” For example, students could “surprise [instructors] twice randomly” during the year to see whether they are applying the principles they’ve learned. In this sense, students and faculty could work together to secure inclusion for LGBT individuals. However, Raya’s comments assume that such sensitivity training can easily take place on college and university campuses. While Raya’s ideas might very well work in some ways, we also need to examine the ways in which such training needs to be established or modified in the first place. And even though Raya’s point that students could play an important role in this training is one worth considering, it is even more important to evaluate the current status of sensitivity training at colleges or universities before thinking about students’ role in the faculty/administrative training process.

While it is important to examine the extent to which faculty/administrative communities include the concerns of LGBT students in their conversations, perhaps the most important communities to examine are those which allow teachers, administrators, and students to attempt to accomplish shared goals. Most research on the inclusion of LGBT issues in academic literacies tends to focus on teachers alone rather than on how teachers, students, and administrators can work together to achieve inclusion. For

example, James Sears berates prospective teachers and counselors for expressing “a benign neglect . . . [which] reinforces the heterosexual curriculum,” allowing them to “become silent conspirators in sexual oppression” (74). And Harbeck, Griffin and Sanlo all interview gay teachers to learn more about their identities in academic literacy communities. Harbeck concludes that advances for gay and lesbian educators will come through “education, not litigation” (134), and Pat Griffin describes “the experiences of thirteen lesbian and gay educators” and attempts to “empower the participants [in her study] through collective reflection and action” (167). When resources for students are suggested, they tend to focus less on individual students and more on books or classroom activities that teachers can assign. Jody Norton talks about the importance of doing “transreadings” of assigned texts (CITE); Reese advocates the “queer reading” of classroom texts (134). And many of the authors in McConnell-Celi’s *Twenty-First Century Challenge: Lesbians and Gays in Education* reveal narrative accounts from teachers about their difficulties in teaching gay and lesbian issues in the classroom (Robertson, Boutilier, Uribe, Greenman).

The results of my study indicate, on the other hand, that we as educators need to stop focusing so much on teachers’ views and the activities that teachers assign, and more closely examine the role of community-building in the educational process; more “mixed” communities of teachers, students, and administrators need to be formed in academic literacy spaces. Most of these studies discuss LGBT concerns as though they affect only teachers, and that learning happens only in classroom spaces. However, if we consider the feedback from the interviewees, who argue that panel discussions, speakers, online blogs, and on-campus groups must be an integral part of solutions to including

students in academic literacies, we realize that “academic literacies” need to involve the building of literacy communities both inside and outside classroom spaces. As I shall reveal in the dialogue section of this chapter, when teachers and administrators form such communities with LGBT panels, speakers, and student groups, more inclusion of LGBT concerns in all academic literacy spaces could result. Therefore, future studies on LGBT students in education need to regard the issue of inclusive pedagogy not from just a classroom perspective, or from the perspective of teachers. Instead, they could keep in mind the words of Ted, who recently said at his university’s vigil for Sakia Gunn, “Much of my education has taken place outside the classroom.” Once we begin to explore more closely how community-building with students, faculty, administrators, and community organizations can occur in a variety of academic literacies, we will then gain some insights as to how inclusion of LGBT students in academe can be achieved.

During his interview, Kevin, a gay university student, explained that one “mixed” community may be formed when administrators and student RAs (Resident Assistants) go through a “Safe Place” training together. At his university, in the past, this involved “having residence hall directors and [student] resident assistants” come together to learn how to establish safe residences for on-campus students. If administrators were to go through this training, LGBT students would learn that they “can go to [their] resident assistant, [or] someone with administrative power” for help with their LGBT concerns. Administrators, he argued, “structure the residential life experience,” so it is important for them to learn how to provide safe literacy communities for students on campus. When asked what “Safe Place” training could involve, Kevin replied: “letting [administrators and RAs] know that there are LGBT students that will be living within

their dorms, and they need to be sensitive to that.” Kevin feels that both administrators and student RAs have an obligation to make LGBT students feel safe on campus. Therefore, they need to come together to fully understand that the diverse nature of the residential population includes LGBT individuals, and they must learn not to force individuals to self-identify as LGBT to get assistance with LGBT concerns.

To this end, in examining these mixed communities, researchers need to think about the ways in which these communities succeed or fail. This would involve an examination of a community’s membership, an assessment of who contributes what to the community, and an evaluation of the ways in which seemingly disparate groups—such as students and administrators—manage to work together. Such an evaluation would involve noting the failures as well as the triumphs. For example, in Chapter 4, Erica recalled, that, as a member of her university’s Women’s Council, she helped write a list of fourteen issues concerning LGBT students to bring to the administration, but she explained that she felt that her words were not having any effect on the campus’s administration, because the Board of Trustees admitted to not having even read the gender identity pamphlets which the Women’s Council gave them to consider. However, we must also note Ken’s excitement over the successful “Safe Place” training with administrators and students. And teachers and students may often build communities as well. Kaleb spoke of being involved on panels both inside and outside classroom spaces, and Gary mentioned that he would like to get involved in the LGBT panel program that his community college had just initiated. Such panel programs involve LGBT students coming into classroom space, or speaking on campus, about their experiences in coming to terms with their queer identities, both in and out of academe. The events which Kaleb

and Gary described can help to build understanding between teachers and students, both queer and straight, enabling everyone involved to see the importance of creating tolerance in different academic literacy contexts. Overall, researchers may wish to learn the ways in which these mixed communities work well and the ways in which they fall apart, in both face-to-face and online environments.

Step Two: Dialogue

Once researchers have constructed their evaluations, the dialogue on LGBT student inclusion is nearly ready to take place. But prior to participating within the dialogue, researchers should spend some time considering where the dialogue would take place and who would participate. Then, they can move on to consider the content of the actual dialogue itself; I will make some recommendations for dialogue content in detail at the end of this section.

Where would the dialogue take place?

I envision several different possible forums for the discussion of LGBT student inclusion. Considering the positive opinions that students expressed on asynchronous online forums in Chapters 6 and 7, online discussion spaces such as listservs and blogs might to be a good place to start. These environments might be a good place to hold some preliminary discussion on some key issues prior to an actual face-to-face meeting, and also serve as a conversational space for ongoing discussion on the topic. So, setting up a listserv or blog for the dialogue participants prior to an actual face-to-face meeting could work well.

However, researchers could eventually insist upon having face-to-face dialogue with the individuals to whom their argument is addressed. This insistence should result

in recognition of the complexity of the topics involved. Initial dialogues may be informal, and take place in small groups, such as two or three students visiting a professor during her office hours. Such dialogue may also take place informally in small groups during classroom sessions. The primary purpose of these informal sessions would be to generate ideas: to discuss some pertinent issues or perhaps brainstorm some key questions. These informal meetings, therefore, could be used as a springboard for more formal discussions.

These more formal discussions could occur in several different ways. To begin with, researchers might want to suggest the formation of ad-hoc committees on LGBT student inclusion to their university provosts. These committees would then be able to meet on a regular basis, and thus reshape and revise their ideas over time. However, even formal presentations, such as those at conferences, may also provide effective exposure to issues of LGBT student inclusion. To this end, the NCTE Queer Caucus (formerly the Gay-Lesbian Caucus) will be developing a workshop on LGBT student inclusion at the 2005 CCCC Convention in San Francisco, and several panels will present papers on this topic as well (my panel, for example, is focusing on LGBT student negotiations of electronic literacies). Thus the format for formal discussions may vary, as long as it is comfortable for everyone involved, and promotes dialogue.

Who would participate?

The participants within each dialogue would depend on the goals of individual researchers: some teams may wish to address administrators, whereas others may wish to include only students. Judging from the comments of the students in my study, the best sort of dialogue would involve a variety of participants. The interviewees firmly believe

that when students, teachers, and administrators work together to build language communities, we can achieve more inclusion of LGBT students in academic literacies. Randal L. Donelson suggested in his article "Creating a Safe Space for Gay and Lesbian Students in the English/Language Arts Classroom" that "It is not only possible but imperative that we as educators develop environments which are places for a non-threatening exchange of ideas and learning which will contribute to the positive identity of all students" (2). To illustrate the importance of creating a safe space in the classroom, Donelson recounts an example from his own teaching experience where a student labels one classroom activity as "gay." Donelson reveals his frustration at himself for failing to diffuse the situation properly and for not promoting a more positive example for his ninth-graders of what "gay" means. He explains that he was worried about rumors circulating about his own sexual orientation, so he merely told the boy that his remark was "inappropriate" (1). While Donelson's point that teachers need to do more to create "safe spaces" for LGBT students than briefly admonish those who insult them is well-taken, he leaves room in his scholarship for others to suggest how such spaces may be created. I am suggesting here, contrary to Donelson's suggestion, participation in education dialogues could not be the task of teachers and administrators alone. My results indicate that students want to play a role in the education of faculty and administrators on LGBT concerns; their responses during my interview suggested that they are very willing to form communities with teachers and administrators to assist them in creating inclusion. Students want to help faculty and administrators understand the importance of making appropriate rhetorical choices, creating "safe spaces," and

developing courses which include references to LGBT issues; therefore, mixed communities of students, faculty, and administrators could give voices to all three groups.

What would be discussed?

The conversation would need to address both the weaknesses and strengths of academic literacies in addressing LGBT concerns. The dialogue could focus on these two questions: (1) What changes need to be made to promote inclusion in academic literacies? (2) And how can these changes best be accomplished? Before getting into the specific actions that may be taken, it might be helpful to have a brief discussion on the importance of LGBT student inclusion, to remind everyone of the purpose of the conversation. Once that has finished, those engaging in the dialogue can talk more specifically about specific ways in which inclusion may be promoted. Over the course of my student interviews, I was able to identify five major resources that the students viewed as important tools for increasing LGBT presence in the spaces of academic literacies: panels, speakers, on-campus groups, Internet literacies, and films. All of these literacy events work towards building stronger language communities in academic literacies spaces. I recommend that researchers engaging in dialogue, therefore, be willing to address each of these topics. But I shall begin here by addressing the issue of LGBT inclusion in general.

- Why Inclusion?

The inclusion of LGBT issues into traditional curriculum would fulfill, at least in part, James Sears's ideal of a "queer education" for students. In defining "queer education," Sears stresses that students learn about the world through binary oppositions, and a "queer education" would challenge such overbearing structures. He claims:

“ . . . when it comes to sexuality and gender, many educators mold children into curriculum cookie-cutter identities. Students are socialized into this make-believe world of self and the other: male/female (biological sex), heterosexual/homosexual (sexual orientation), man/woman (gender identity) . . . ” (5). However, concepts of sex, gender, and orientation are much more complex than the strict dichotomies that people often learn. In his work, like many other educators who write about LGBT issues in the classroom (Bickmore, Cahill and Theilheimer, Harris), Sears focuses on K-12 learning. However, more socialization of individuals to view sex, gender, and orientation beyond binary dichotomies is also needed at the college level, as we can see from the students’ responses in this study. If more academic literacy communities took time to include LGBT topics, or even to define LGBT students may begin to conceive their worlds in increasingly complex ways: ways that reach beyond the boundaries of traditional hetero-normative perspectives. Classroom or campus panels may help to achieve this goal.

- Panels on Campus and in Class

Bringing in panels to campus or classroom literacy spaces involves introducing a group of individuals, either to the classroom or to on-campus meetings, to discuss LGBT concerns. In Taylor’s view, these panels can be used to introduce important questions to students, such as “Do you know someone who is LGBT?” Such questions initiate conversation on such topics, and get students thinking in different ways about peoples’ life experiences. Having a group of outsiders ask such questions in classroom space, in particular, makes it seem less that the instructor alone is forcing the issue on the students; instead, a panel reveals to students a group of individuals who are willing to bring a new educational dimension to the classroom. And students can play a key role in the shaping

of these panels. When Dan argued for the importance of panels of individuals on LGBT issues in the classroom, he suggested that these panels be composed of students, and further recommended that the panels “talk with the professors outside of class” about their topics for discussion. This would allow students and faculty to establish a dialogue outside the classroom before bringing LGBT concerns into the classroom space: by engaging in this dialogue, the students on the panel could learn what unique perspectives they could offer individual classes, and the faculty could decide what kinds of contributions would benefit their classes the most. Many of the students I spoke with strongly desire to serve on panels, to impart information on LGBT issues in classroom spaces. Overall, then, researchers could consider the possibility of setting up panels to create a greater atmosphere of LGBT student inclusion in academic literacies.

- Speakers on Campus and in Class

Just as panel discussions can serve as effective resources, several students noted that individual speakers on LGBT issues could also play important roles in classroom literacies as well, so teams engaging in dialogue need to also consider this suggestion. Donna remarked, “I find that bringing in speakers is usually pretty good . . . Students like having a break from their professors.” She then recalled one specific incident in which a speaker was used effectively in one of her classes: she mentioned that this woman came to her class “to talk about women’s health issues and she mentioned something about lesbian health issues.” It pleased Donna that the speaker accounted for the sexual diversity of the female population; instead of assuming that all women are heterosexual, the speaker wisely pointed out that lesbians may have their own particular health concerns. Similarly, Rena mentioned that individuals who affiliate themselves with

particular LGBT-supportive national organizations, such as PFLAG (Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays) or GLAAD (Gay and Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation) could come into classes or to on-campus groups. This introduction of LGBT-supportive community organizations into academic literacies either inside or outside the classroom could help to bridge the gap between the discourse which occurs in LGBT communities outside the classroom and the predominately hetero-normative discourse which occurs in classroom spaces.

Lauren wisely noted that the speakers could be present in the classroom not just to impart knowledge, but also to take questions from the students. In fact, like Dan, Kaleb, and Gary, who want to participate in student panels, Lauren feels strongly that she herself can speak to classrooms about her experiences as a transsexual lesbian. She thus described her experiences in speaking to high school classrooms:

I've gone to high school classrooms to talk about transgender issues, and the students typically are very receptive. You know, you're going to have a couple of teenage boys snickering in the background, in the back of the room, passing notes to their friends, but a lot of people are going to be really educated by seeing a real person and by being able to ask them questions and really flesh out what it's like to be LGBT and realize that it's not just some . . . caricature out of a newspaper article or a movie.

Lauren's experience in the high school classroom could prove valuable at the college level as well. While some students might tune her out, most would welcome the opportunity to ask questions of a transgendered individual, particularly if they have lacked opportunities to interact with the LGBT community previously. With the appearance of a transsexual speaker in the classroom who welcomes questions, thus creating a conversational, informal space, the disparity between discipline-specific classroom literacies and on-campus queer literacies is at least partially assuaged. So, part

of the dialogue that researchers engage in on LGBT inclusion could consider the importance of introducing more speakers within academic literacies.

- On-Campus Groups

Students and administrators, queer and straight, can use these on-campus groups as resources as part of their educational process; the groups do not exist solely for teachers. After all, while they may help teachers to engage in a more inclusive pedagogy, the organizations' primary purpose is to make students feel more included in academic literacies. During her interview, Kadijah expressed frustration at trying to create communities of LGBT students on campus. She mentioned that, when she arrived on campus, she was immediately recruited for the Black Caucus and women's groups on her campus, since people could see that she was a black woman. However, she noted that the invisible minority status of LGBT students presents a problem: "The thing about [being] LGBT . . . people don't look at you at say, 'Oh, you're queer, go to this.' If [LGBT students] don't come out and tell you who they are, you don't know who they are . . . People have to come to you . . . So you have to be more visible." Therefore, to create communities of LGBT students on campus, more LGBT-oriented resources must be disseminated in campus literacies outside the classroom, such as the dorms, the hallways, and e-mail announcements. When such resources become more readily available, LGBT students become more likely to seek out their LGBT peers, and thus form communities with them on campus. Therefore, while engaging in dialogue on the importance of on-campus groups, researchers need to consider how the promotion of these groups could occur in academic literacies, so they can make such resources known to all.

- Internet Literacies

Many of the interviewees who discussed the Internet as an important resource in academic literacies stressed how it provides many important readings for both teachers and students, so individuals engaging in dialogue on LGBT student inclusion need to consider what the Internet has to offer. Jim stressed how the Internet can be a valuable resource for teachers: he feels that “teachers could check out Internet resources” which “highlight sexuality” and then integrate these resources into classroom conversation. Gary, on the other hand, talked about how readings online enabled him to become comfortable enough with himself to come out at his college:

GARY: I read coming out stories, I read a lot of prose . . . I read information about why it’s healthy to come out. I knew I was going to have to come out sometime . . .

BRIAN: Where did you get this info?

GARY: A website . . . I remember there is the one that talks about National Coming Out Day . . . I just stumbled upon that by doing Google and Yahoo searches . . . [these stories] gave me an idea of what to expect.

The Internet thus gave Gary an understanding of how he might integrate himself into both academic and community literacy spaces. The stories that he read—particularly the narrative coming-out accounts—helped him feel that he could express his bisexual identity openly at his college; consequently, he now regularly attends his college’s Gay-Straight Alliance meetings and plans to participate in a panel discussion on LGBT issues for classrooms.

Unlike Jim and Gary, Jason stressed how the Internet not only serves as a resource of readings, it also may serve as a place for written expression for both teachers and students. During his interview, he discussed the possibility of creating two different types of online communities in academic literacies: an online e-zine which could serve as

a “place for queer expression” and a blog for his LGBT student caucus. The e-zine could get everyone in the community involved “at the local level” in expressing their viewpoints on LGBT concerns. The blog for the student caucus group, on the other hand, would work as a means of solidifying a sense of community between students on campus, enabling them to address issues that perhaps their group could build on in face-to-face conversations. Since the e-zine could allow contributors inside and outside of academic spaces to engage each other in written literacies, bridges could be built between academe and communities in the outside world. And the blog for students in the LGBT caucus enables them to understand that it is indeed possible for LGBT individuals to have a voice in academic literacies. Clearly, due to the experiences of students such as Jim, Gary, and Jason, researchers need to talk about how both teachers and students can use the Internet as a literacy resource to make LGBT students feel more included.

- Films

In addition to discussing the Internet, several students suggested that films dealing with LGBT life be integrated into classrooms as educational tools, thereby further bridging the gap between popular culture and academic space. So, researchers could address the integration of film into both disciplinary literacy communities and campus literacy communities as a means of establishing LGBT student inclusion. Lauren recommended that teachers use “audio-visual [materials] . . . things that stand out on their own regardless of their LGBT content.” She then went on to discuss several films that provide “a fair and balanced vision” of LGBT people. She mentioned that *Ma Vie en Rose (My Life in Pink)* reveals a “sensitive, beautiful” portrayal of a young boy who desires to dress up in a wedding gown and marry his best friend. Furthermore, she also

suggested the film *Boys Don't Cry* as a film that managed to transcend the stereotypes that transgendered characters often endure. She explained that most transgendered characters are normally "marginalized" and "not very sensitively treated." *Boys Don't Cry*, on the other hand, uses Brandon Teena's life to show that transgendered individuals are indeed human beings, who may blend into society, fall in love, yet are often victimized by heinous crimes of hate. Similarly, the film *But I'm a Cheerleader*, about a pretty lesbian named Megan whose parents send her to a special "camp" to make her straight, helps to expose stereotypes against LGB individuals. Lauren declared: "It's funny . . . it's campy . . . It very effectively exposes how stupid the anti-gay movement is . . . and the artificiality of a lot of [gender roles]. It really kind of brings right across, in more simple terms, that a lot of us really are born with [their sexuality], which I think is true of a lot of people." Since these three films, in particular, manage to subvert common stereotypes about the LGBT community, they distinguish themselves as tools worthy for education in the classroom or other on-campus spaces. Offering such films in classroom and campus spaces would allow hetero-normative discursive spaces in academe to become more inclusive of queer experiences.

Gabrielle went so far as to suggest specific activities that could be done with films in the classroom. Like Lauren, she values the use of film in the classroom because films "capture people's attention" in ways that non-visual media cannot. But she also mentioned a specific plan for using the films in class:

It depends on the class . . . sometimes there is a time for shock value. You don't introduce it, you just show it. And then get people's reaction. I definitely think there could be a reaction period afterwards . . . and people could feel safe to write their reactions if they don't get expressed in class. So . . . a discussion period . . . as well as a writing assignment would be good.

Regardless of whether students support the viewpoints expressed in an LGBT-oriented film, a film on an LGBT-oriented subject could be worked into an instructor's critical pedagogy, particularly if the content of the class concerns diversity issues. As Gabrielle points out, it can be used as an opportunity to engage in dialogue and/or written expression on LGBT concerns, thus heightening the visibility of the LGBT community in the classroom. In terms of specific films, Gabrielle felt that documentaries, in particular, would effectively portray the realities of LGBT existence. She cited *The Celluloid Closet*, the film version of Vito Russo's seminal text on the treatment of the LGBT community in 20th century film, and *Southern Comfort*, about two transgendered individuals who fall in love with each other, as two examples of documentaries that would help to initiate necessary classroom dialogue. Through such films, students and teachers "[become more] aware of the presence of ideology in their lives . . . enable their reading and writing of powerful cultural texts, and . . . flag these texts as constructed, as not a part of the natural world, and therefore as susceptible to being reconstructed" (Fitts and France ix). Visual media, therefore, heighten both student and faculty awareness of the possibility of social change.

In contrast to Lauren and Gabrielle, Gary was able to speak from experience: his instructor had incorporated a film dealing with gay sexual repression (*American Beauty*) in his Popular Literature course, and, as a result, he felt more open to contribute to class discussion. Gary was able to use the male-male kiss shown near the end of the film to address issues of homophobia in American society:

Some students were having trouble with the gay kiss between an angry, confused man and a parent . . . and [from] the people in the classroom, there was this big gasp when it happened. And I laughed. And it took me

a second to realize why they gasped. After the movie, people raised some questions [about] whether [the confused man] was really gay or not, or whether it was just a weird thing that happened in the movie . . . I brought up the issue of the kiss and how it's still o.k. in America today to bash homosexuals . . . and it's still o.k. to describe gay people on negative terms . . . and I kind of related that to the movie a little bit.

The introduction of the film into the classroom enabled Gary to feel safe enough to bring up an issue related to queer sexuality. He did not have to out himself, yet he was still able to mention important points to others in the class. If more teachers were to bring in representations of LGBT culture in film, this would allow more LGBT students to feel that their concerns are addressed in classroom literacies. Since this activity would be a strong sense of teacher-student community, it is one which must be addressed in work by researchers in the future.

Conclusion: Summary and Beyond

Chapter Summary

This chapter has attempted to suggest a viable plan for researching ways to create more LGBT-inclusive spaces in academic literacies. The “evaluation” stage of the plan asks researchers to ask a wide variety of questions about the inclusion of LGBT concerns in academic discursive spaces both in and out of classroom environments. Then, in the “dialogue” stage, researchers could talk with others within the academic community about possible solutions to achieve inclusion in both disciplinary and campus literacy communities. Judging from the results of my interviews, I recommend that researchers discuss literacy events which promote a strong sense of community, such as panel discussions, campus/classroom speakers, Internet literacies, on-campus groups, and the viewing of films as possible means of achieving LGBT student inclusion in academe.

In this dissertation, I have attempted to follow the suggestion of Porter et al. that “an action plan” is needed to solve problems of LGBT student inclusion. As a result of this study, I have learned that academic literacies must be examined from an institutional perspective, as Porter et al. suggest. We have seen from Chapters 4 and 5 of this study the weaknesses that often exist in classroom writing communities. But Chapters 6 and 7 reveal how important academic literacies exist in the world outside the classroom, both in person and online. In fact, in the world of academe, much education occurs in spaces outside the classroom: strong campus literacy communities are formed in student organizations, faculty meetings, or administrative committees. This study suggests that strong cross-community interaction may be a key to solving the problem of LGBT student inclusion: students, faculty, and administrators need to communicate with each other in a variety of academic literacy spaces for more inclusion to be achieved.

Beyond Dialogue: What's Next?

In outlining my plan for inclusion, I did not presume to suggest that the research plan ends with dialogue. I stopped at dialogue mainly because I understand that the process of getting others to agree to dialogue may take months, even years, to accomplish, and I wanted to articulate a workable goal here. Clearly, getting groups with disparate values and interests to have a dialogue on LGBT student inclusion is a good start, but where do we go from here? How can we ensure that such change becomes permanent within academe? Due to constraints of time and space here, I will leave these questions for other scholars to examine. My work is a springboard for more “institutional critique,” and much work needs to be done to ensure that the inclusion can continue.

What can we do to keep the dialogue going?

Part of the answer to this question could result in the further examination of online literacy spaces in academe. As I noted in Chapter 1 of this dissertation, several studies have begun to examine how LGBT students build online literacy communities (Woodland, Comstock and Addison, Alexander, DeWitt). However, these studies tend to stress how students build online communities outside academic spaces (Woodland, Comstock and Addison, DeWitt) or how students build online communities in the classroom with each other (Alexander). This study, on the other hand, suggests that online campus communities may exist in many different types of academic literacy environments, including blogs, college listservs, and e-mail discussions; hence, with the proliferation of online communities, we need to ask, "How can we facilitate the creation of online literacy communities in academic literacies, both in and out of classroom spaces?" Examining the issue of inclusion from an institutional perspective rather than only a discipline-specific classroom one will enable us to understand better how to create more campus literacy communities within academic settings for LGBT students.

It occurs to me that my work here could also provide a tenable plan for those with other interests in diversity in education as well. Not only could my process of evaluation, argumentation, and dialogue work for LGBT students, it could also work for students of color, physically challenged students, or other under-represented groups who desire to have their interests acknowledged more often in academic contexts. Such studies of other groups would further our understanding of identity politics at the college and university level, enhance our knowledge of the performative nature of literacies, and assist us in understanding how minority groups on college and university campuses form literacy communities. By applying my findings here to other minority groups, we might come

closer to understanding Herbert Brun's claim that "'Strong relationships are generated by turning the tensions of diversity into mutually complementing differences'" (par. 2).

Appendix A: The Questionnaire

Part I: Strategies for Dealing with Academic Literacies

These questions deal with how Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgendered (henceforth LGBT) people deal with academic literacy. Circle the number which indicates the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements. (1=strongly disagree, 2=disagree, 3=not sure, 4=agree, and 5=strongly agree)

- | | | | | | | |
|-----|--|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | When asked to do a research paper, I read as much LGBT-oriented material as I can. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 2. | I do a lot of reading on LGBT issues outside the classroom. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 3. | For my college classes, I write on LGBT-oriented topics as often as possible. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 4. | I share my writing on LGBT-oriented topics with my classmates and teachers as often as possible. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 5. | I do a lot of writing on LGBT issues outside the classroom. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 6. | I bring up LGBT issues during class discussion as often as possible. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 7. | I do a lot of talking about LGBT issues outside the classroom. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 8. | I participate in classroom group projects which cover LGBT issues whenever possible. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 9. | I deliberately try to take courses which cover LGBT issues. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 10. | I would describe myself as an LGBT activist in my college community. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

Part II: Literacy Forums for LGBT Students

Approximately how often do you discuss LGBT issues in the following forums?
Circle the number which best indicates the frequency with which you discuss these issues. (0=never, 1=once a month, 2=once every two weeks, 3=once a week, 4=three times a week, and 5=every day)

- | | | | | | | | |
|----|-----------------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | Electronic Chat Rooms | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 2. | E-Mail/Listservs | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

3.	Classrooms	0	1	2	3	4	5
4.	Campus Groups	0	1	2	3	4	5
5.	Faculty Offices	0	1	2	3	4	5
6.	Community Groups	0	1	2	3	4	5
7.	Friends' Houses	0	1	2	3	4	5
8.	Coffee Houses/Restaurants	0	1	2	3	4	5

Part III: Possible Solutions

How effective would each of the following activities be for making LGBT students feel more included in academic discourse? Circle the number which best indicates the effectiveness of each proposed solution. (1=not effective, 2=somewhat effective, 3=not sure, 4=effective, 5=very effective).

1.	Require students to write on LGBT-oriented topics.	1	2	3	4	5
2.	Require students to read LGBT-oriented topics.	1	2	3	4	5
3.	Introduce more queer theory and pedagogy into classrooms.	1	2	3	4	5
4.	Introduce more feminist theory and pedagogy into classrooms.	1	2	3	4	5
5.	Encourage performance as a mode of classroom expression.	1	2	3	4	5
6.	Encourage the classroom use of anonymous electronic chat to discuss LGBT issues.	1	2	3	4	5
7.	Develop creative collaborative projects for students which center on sexuality issues.	1	2	3	4	5
8.	Encourage more sharing in class of informal writing (such as journals).	1	2	3	4	5
9.	Encourage students to lead class discussion in groups.	1	2	3	4	5
10.	Require students to take a course on the LGBT community.	1	2	3	4	5
11.	Develop more courses on LGBT-oriented topics.	1	2	3	4	5

- | | | | | | | |
|-----|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 12. | Require teachers to receive more training on LGBT issues. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 13. | Require administrators to receive more training on LGBT issues. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 14. | Increase the number of on-campus LGBT student resources. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 15. | Hold more open, on-campus meetings on LGBT concerns. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

Part IV: Demographic Questions:

Please write in an answer to each of these questions:

1. What is your age?
2. What is your ethnicity?
3. What is your gender?
4. What is your sexual orientation?
5. What is your major?
6. What are your career goals?
7. What educational level have you attained?
8. Are you willing to participate on a one hour follow-up interview? Yes No
9. If you are willing to participate in an interview, could you please provide a phone number or e-mail address at which you may be contacted?



Appendix B: Questionnaire Participant Demographics

(The numbers represent the # of students who fit in each category.)

Age

under 18	5
18-19	30
20-21	33
22-25	19
26-30	12
31 or over	6
Average Age	22.79

Ethnicity

White/European	84
Black/African-American	11
Hispanic	8
Native Am	3
Arab Am	2
Asian	1

Gender

Male/Man	46
Female/Woman	53
Trans	3
Other	2
Intersex	1

Sexual Orientation

gay/homosexual	38
lesbian/dyke	27
bi	24
queer	10
other	6
straight/ally	6

Major

Soc Sci	30
Humanities	28
Medicine	13
Business	9
Nat Sci	9
Engineer	6
Education	5
Undecided	5
Communication	3
Other	3
Advertising	2
Agriculture/Nat. Resources	1

Career Goals

Teaching	19
Undecided	14
Medicine	13
Graduate Degree/Grad School	11
Community Development	8
Business	8
Other	8
Social Science	7
Communication	6
Psychologist/Counseling	6
Law/Social Justice	5
Arts	5
Research	4

Education Level

Fr-Soph	42
Jun-Sen	33
Some College	10
Bachelor's	9
Master's	7
HS/College Dual Enrollment	1

Appendix C: Interviewee Demographics

(The numbers represent the # of students who fit in each category.)

Age		Ethnicity	
under 18	0	White/European	26
18-19	7	Black/African-American	4
20-21	9	Hispanic	1
22-25	7	Arab Am	1
26-30	7	Native Am	1
31 or over	2		
Average Age	22.81		
Gender		Sexual Orientation	
Female/Woman	15	gay/homosexual	10
Male/Man	14	lesbian/dyke	9
Trans	2	bi	8
Intersex	1	queer	5
		straight/ally	1
Major		Career Goals	
Soc. Sci	17	Teaching	6
Humanities	10	Undecided	4
Business	3	Law/Social Justice	4
Communications	2	Graduate School/Degree	4
Medicine	2	Community	3
		Development	
Undecided	2	Other	3
Other	2	Social Science	3
Agric/Natural	1	Medicine/Health Care	3
Resources			
Nat. Sci.	1	Psychologist/Counseling	1
Education	1	Business	1
		Research	1
Education Level			
Fr-Soph	10		
Jun-Sen	9		
Some College	5		
Bachelor's	5		
Master's	3		

WORKS CITED

- Alexander, Jonathon. "Out of the Closet and into the Network: Sexual Orientation and the Computerized Classroom." *Computers and Composition* 14.2 (Aug. 1997): 207-16.
- Archibald, George. "'How to Be Gay Course' Draws Fire at Michigan." *The Washington Times* 18 August 2003. 12 March 2004
<<http://washingtontimes.com/national/20030818-122317-3268r.htm>>.
- Aronowitz, S. and Henry Giroux. "Schooling, Culture, and Literacy in the Age of Broken Dreams: A Review of Bloom and Hirsch." *Harvard Educational Review* 58 (1998): 172-94.
- Austin, J. L. *How to Do Things with Words*. Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1975.
- Baab, LuJean. "Coming and Going in All Directions: Preparing Students for Online Learning." Paper contributed to the 4th Teaching in the Community Colleges Online Conference, "Best Practices in Delivering, Supporting, and Managing Online Learning." Kapiolani Community College. 7-9 April 1999. 27 April 2004
<<http://leahi.kcc.hawaii.edu/org/tcon99/papers/baab.html>>.
- Barthes, Roland. *Mythologies*. Trans. Annette Lavers. New York, Hill and Wang, 1972.
- Bartholomae, David. "Inventing the University." *Cross-Talk in Comp Theory: A Reader*. Ed. Victor Villanueva, Jr. Urbana, IL: NCTE, 1997. 589-620.
- Barton, David. *Literacy: An Introduction to the Ecology of Written Language*. Oxford: Blackwell, 1994.
- Barton, Ellen. "Interpreting the Discourses of Technology." *Literacy and Computers: The Complications of Teaching and Learning with Technology*. Ed. Cynthia L. Selfe and Susan Hilligoss. New York: MLA, 1994. 56-75.
- Bentley, Michael. "Teaching Science On-Line: A Reflection on a Year's Experience." 2003. Paper presented at the 8th Annual Meeting of the Southeastern Association of Educational Studies. Chapel Hill, NC. 1 March 2003. 27 April 2004
<<http://www.edrs.com/members/sp.cfm?AN=ED474947>>.
- Berzsenyi, Christyne. "Teaching Interlocutor Relationships in Electronic Classrooms." *Computers and Composition* 16.2 (1999): 229-246.
- Bickmore, Kathy. "Why Discuss Sexuality in Elementary School?" *Queering*

- Elementary Education: Advancing the Dialogue about Sexualities and Schooling.* Ed. William J. Letts and James T. Sears. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 1999. 15-26.
- Bizzell, Patricia. "'Contact Zones' and English Studies." *College English* 56.2 (Feb. 1994): 163-69.
- Blackburn, Mollie V. "Disrupting the (Hetero)Normative: Exploring Literacy Performances and Identity Work with Queer Youth." *Journal of Adolescent and Adult Literacy* 46.4 (Dec. 2002/Jan. 2003): 312-324.
- , "Exploring Literacy Performances and Power Dynamics at The Loft." *Research in the Teaching of English* 37 (May 2003): 467-490.
- Blood, Rebecca. "weblogs: a history and perspective." 7 September 2000. 27 April 2004 <http://www.rebeccablood.net/essays/weblog_history.html>.
- Blythe, Stuart. "Institutional Critique, Postmodern Mapping, and the Department of English." Conference on College Composition and Communication, March 1998, Chicago, IL.
- Bornstein, Kate. *Gender Outlaw: On Men, Women, and The Rest of Us*. New York: Vintage, 1994.
- Boutilier, Nancy. "Gay/Straight: An Alliance for High School Activism." *Twenty-First Century Challenge: Gays and Lesbians in Education*. Ed. Sue Mc-Connell Celi. Red Bank, NJ: Lavender Crystal P, 1993. 39-50.
- Brandt, Deborah. *Literacy in American Lives*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2001.
- Brosnan, Julia. "Performing the Lesbian Body—The New Wave." *Acts of Passion: Sexuality, Gender and Performance*. Ed. Nina Rapi and Maya Chowdhry. New York: Harrington Park P, 1998. 79-94.
- Brown, Stephen G. "Unwrapping Rap: A Literacy of Lived Experience." 1995. Paper presented at the 46th Annual Meeting of the Conference on College Composition and Communication. Washington, DC. 23-25 March 1995. 27 April 2004 <<http://www.edrs.com/members/sp.cfm?AN=ED384907>>.
- Brun, Herbert. 12 March 2004 <<http://www.music.neu.edu/Faculty/Herrema/assign1.html>>.
- Brunner, Diane DuBose. "Challenging Representations of Sexuality Through Story and Performance." *Overcoming Heterosexism: Strategies That Work*. Ed. James T. Sears and Walter Williams. New York: Columbia UP, 1997. 169-181.

Butler, Judith. *Bodies That Matter: On the Discursive Limits of "Sex."* New York: Routledge, 1993.

----- . *Excitable Speech: A Politics of the Performative.* New York: Routledge, 1997.

----- . *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity.* New York: Routledge, 1999.

Cady, Joseph. "Teaching Homosexual Literature as a 'Subversive' Act." *Gay and Lesbian Studies.* Ed. Henry L. Minton. New York: Haworth P, 1992. 89-108.

Cahill, Betsy J. and Rachel Theilheimer. "Stonewall in the Housekeeping Area: Gay and Lesbian Issues in the Early Childhood Classroom." *Queering Elementary Education: Advancing the Dialogue about Sexualities and Schooling.* Ed. William J. Letts and James T. Sears. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 1999. 39-48.

Capps, Reilly. "Family Week Gives P-Town New Slant on the 'Gay Lifestyle.'" *Boston Globe* 15 August 2002: H1.

Carroll, Lyn and Thomas S. Serwatka. "No Safe Places: Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Adolescents at Risk." *Empowering Youth At Risk with Skills for School and Life.* Eds. Dan Rea and Robert Warkentin. ERIC ED 474767.

Catalano, Tim. "Locating Hate Speech in the Networked Writing Classroom." March 1996. Paper presented at the 47th Annual Meeting of the Conference on College Composition and Communication. Milwaukee, WI. 27-30 March 1996. ERIC ED 401 557.

Chiseri-Strater, Elizabeth. *Academic Literacies: The Public and Private Discourse of University Students.* Portsmouth, NH: Boynton/Cook, 1991.

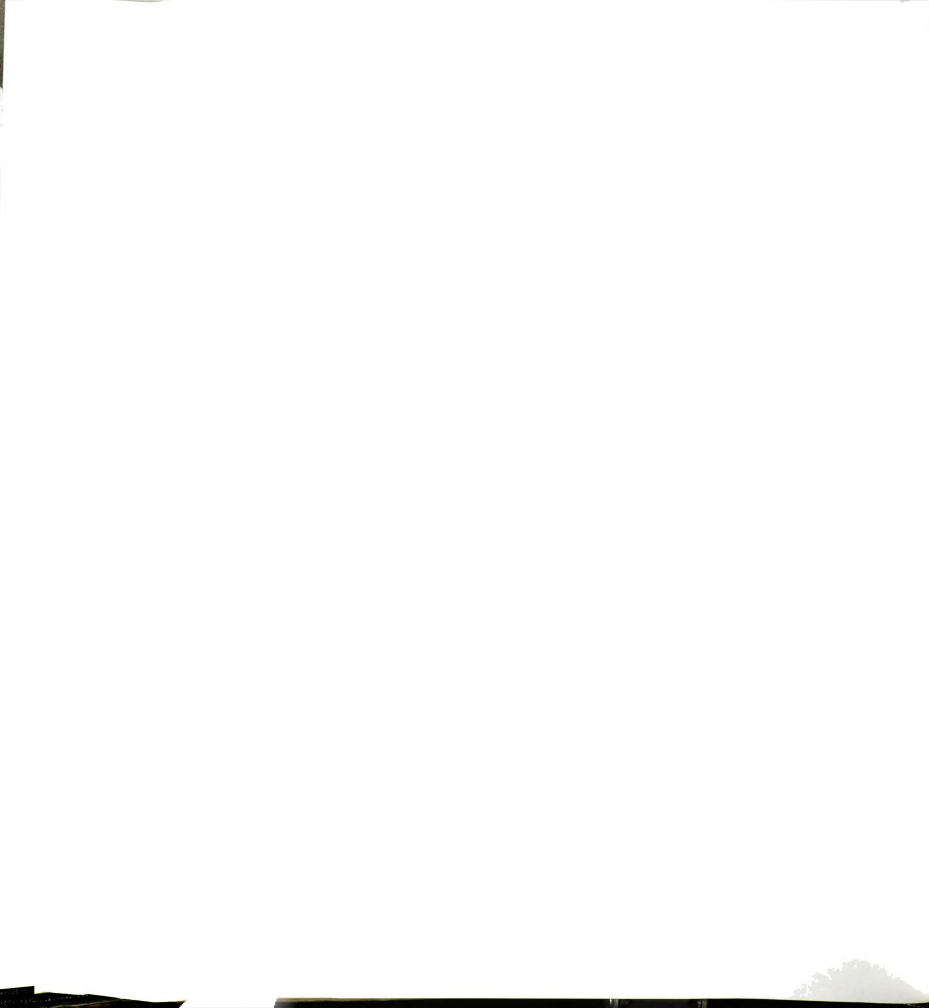
Clinton, Kate. "Kate Clinton: The Gay '90s." *San Francisco Examiner* 25 June 1989: 63.

Comstock, Michelle and Joanne Addison. "Virtual Complexities: Exploring Literacy at the Intersections of Computer-Mediated Social Formations." *Computers and Composition* 14.2 (Aug. 1997): 245-56.

Conway, Glenda. "Making Composition Matter to Students." Paper presented at the 54th Annual Conference on College Composition and Communication. San Antonio, TX. 25 March 2004.

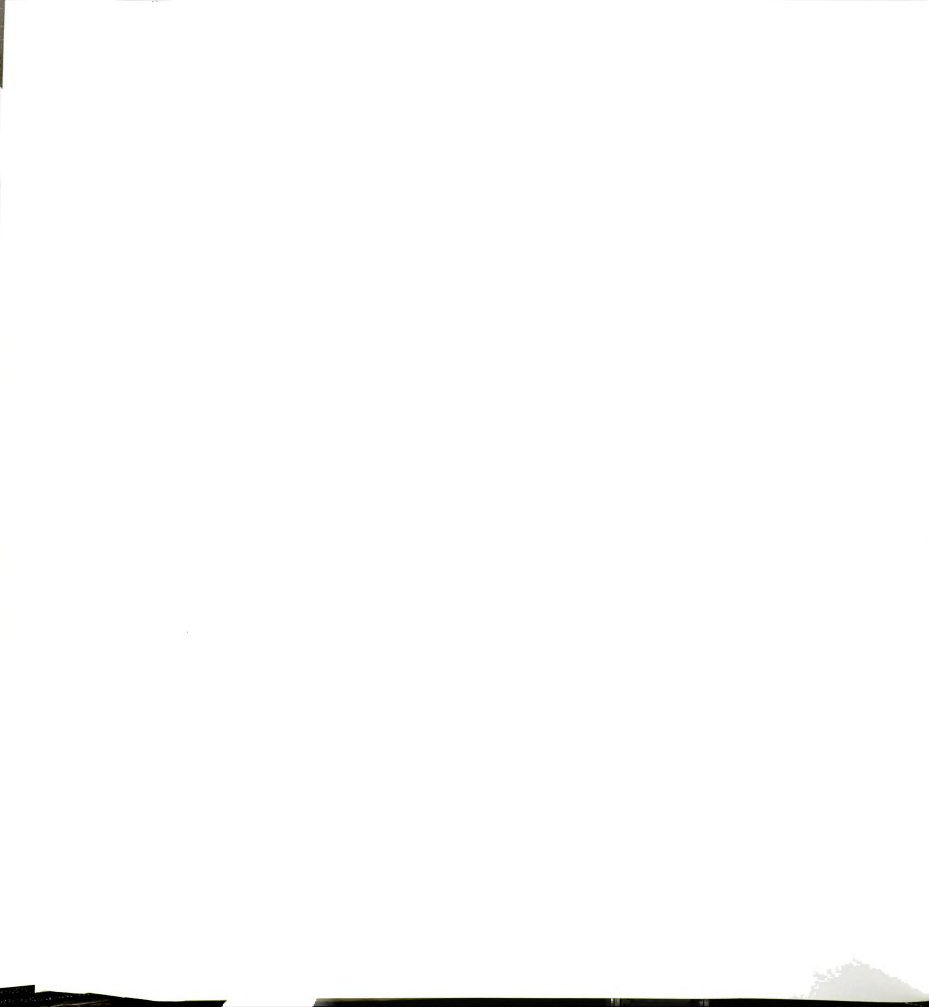
Crane, Cori et al. "Genre: Where Art Thou? Tracing the Role of Genre in the Foreign

- Language Curriculum.” Paper presented at the UC Consortium Conference on Language Learning and Teaching, 9 March 2002. 12 March 2004
<<http://uccllt.ucdavis.edu/Events/papers/Crane,etal.Irvine2002Paper.htm>>.
- Croteau, James et al. “Race, Gender, and Sexual Orientation in the HIV/AIDS Epidemic: Evaluating an Intervention for Leaders of Diverse Communities.” *Journal of Multicultural Counseling and Development* 20.4 (Oct. 1992): 168-80.
- Cushman, Ellen. “The Rhetorician as an Agent of Social Change.” *College Composition and Communication* 47.1 (February 1996): 7-28.
- , *The Struggle and the Tools: Oral and Literate Strategies in an Inner City Community*. Albany: SUNY P, 1998.
- Davis, James Earl. “Forbidden Fruit: Black Males’ Constructions of Transgressive Sexualities in Middle School.” *Queering Elementary Education: Advancing the Dialogue about Sexualities and Schooling*. Ed. William J. Letts and James T. Sears. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 1999. 49-60.
- D’Emilio, John. *Making Trouble: Essays on Gay History, Politics, and the University*. New York: Routledge, 1992.
- de Lauertis, Theresa. *The Practice of Love: Lesbian Sexuality and Perverse Desire*. Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1994.
- DeWitt, Scott Lloyd. “Out There on the Web: Pedagogy and Identity in the Face of Opposition.” *Computers and Composition* 14.2 (Aug. 1997): 229-44.
- Donelson, Randal L. *Creating a Safe Space for Gay and Lesbian Students in the English/Language Arts Classroom*. Columbus, OH: Martha L. King Language and Literacy Center, 1997.
- Duber, Jim. “Mad Blogs and Englishmen.” *TESL-EJ* 6.2 (Sep. 2002): 1-4. 3 April 2004
<<http://www-writing.berkeley.edu/tesl-ej/ej22/int.html>>.
- Faderman, Lillian. *Surpassing the Love of Men: Romantic Friendship and Love between Women from the Renaissance to the Present*. New York: William Morrow, 1981.
- Faigley, Lester. “Beyond Imagination: The Internet and Global Digital Literacy.” *Passions, Pedagogies, and 21st Century Technologies*. Ed. Gail E. Hawisher and Cynthia L. Selfe. Urbana, IL: NCTE, 1999. 129-139.
- Foucault, Michel. *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*. Trans. Alan Sheridan. New York: Vintage, 1979.



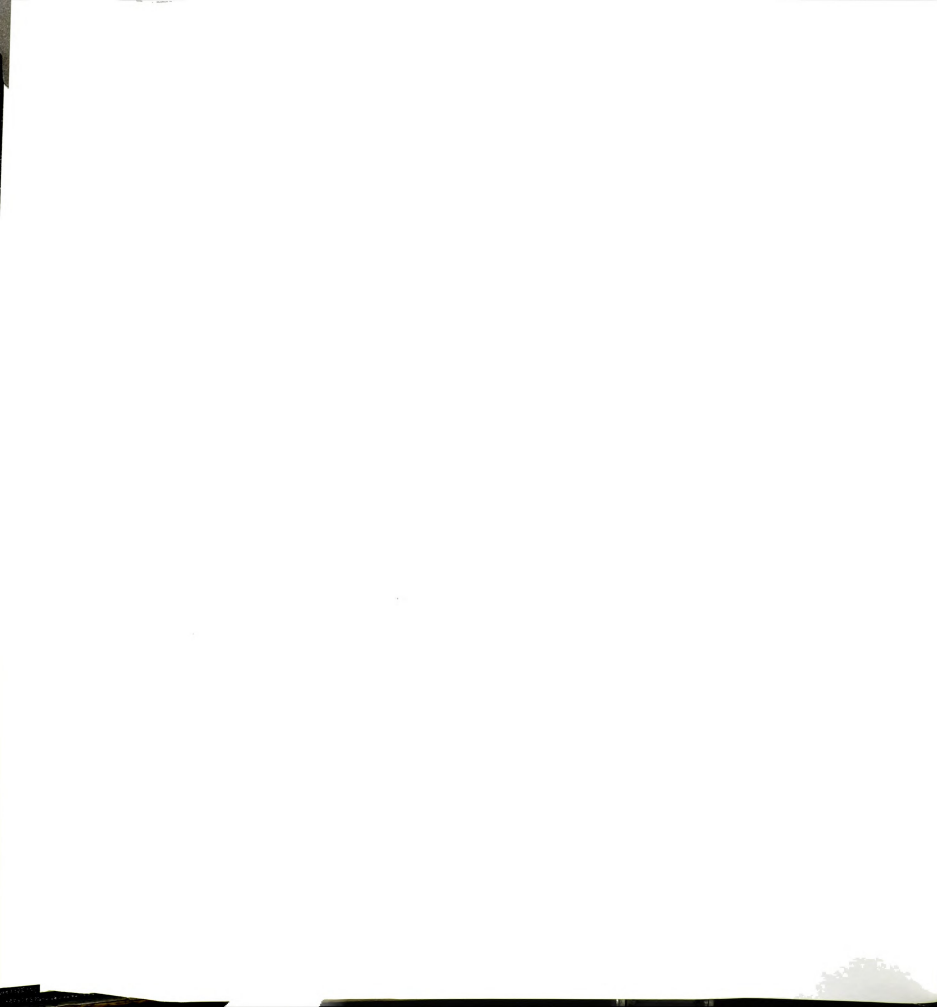
- Friere, Paulo. *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. Trans. Myra Bergman Ramos. New York: Seabury Press, 1970.
- Fuchs, Cynthia. "Michael Jackson's Penis." *Cruising the Performative: Interventions into the Representations of Ethnicity, Nationality, and Sexuality*. Ed. Sue-Ellen Case et al. Bloomington, IN: Indiana UP, 1995. 13-33.
- Gauntlett, David. "Judith Butler." 12 March 2004 <<http://www.theory.org.uk/ctr-butl.htm>>.
- Gee, James Paul. "Literacy, Discourse, Linguistics: Introduction *and* What Is Literacy?" *Literacy: A Critical Sourcebook*. Ed. Ellen Cushman et al. Boston: Bedford, 2001. 525-544.
- , "Reading as Situated Language: A Sociocognitive Perspective." *Journal of Adolescent and Adult Literacy* 44.8 (May 2001): 714-25.
- , *Social Linguistics and Literacies: Ideology in Discourses*. London: Taylor & Francis, 1996.
- Gere, Anne Ruggles. *Writing Groups: History, Theory and Implications*. Foreword by Jerri Cobb Scott. Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois UP, 1987.
- Giroux, Henry. *Pedagogy and the Politics of Hope: Theory, Culture, and Schooling*. Boulder, Colo.: Westview P, 1997.
- , *Theory and Resistance in Education: A Pedagogy for the Opposition*. South Hadley, MA: Bergin and Garvey, 1983.
- Goodwin-Jones, Bob. "Blogs and Wikis: Environments for On-Line Collaboration." *Language Learning and Technology* 7.2 (May 2003): 12-16.
- Grabill, Jeffrey T. *Situating Literacies and Community Literacy Programs: A Critical Rhetoric for Institutional Change*. Diss. Purdue U, 1997.
- Grace, Andre P. "'Transformational Ministry' and 'Reparative Therapy': Transformative Learning Gone Awry." 2002. Paper presented at the 43rd Annual Meeting of the Adult Education Research Conference. Raleigh, NC. 24-26 May 2002. 27 April 2004 <<http://www.edrs.com/members/sp.cfm?AN=ED472063>>.
- Greenman, Jessea. "Textbooks: Providing for Information." *Twenty-First Century Challenge: Gays and Lesbians in Education*. Ed. Sue Mc-Connell Celi. Red Bank, NJ: Lavender Crystal P, 1993. 153.
- Griffin, Pat. "From Hiding Out to Coming Out: Empowering Lesbian and Gay

- Educators." *Coming Out of the Classroom Closet*. Ed. Karen Harbeck. New York: Haworth P, 1992. 167-196.
- Hall, Geoff. "Literacy in the Modern World." *Journal of Sociolinguistics* 3.3 (Aug. 1999): 381-99.
- Hanson, Ellis. "The Telephone and Its Queerness." *Cruising the Performative: Interventions into the Representations of Ethnicity, Nationality, and Sexuality*. Ed. Sue-Ellen Case et al. Bloomington, IN: Indiana UP, 1995. 34-58.
- Harbeck, Karen M., ed. *Coming Out of the Classroom Closet: Gay and Lesbian Students, Teachers, and Curricula*. New York: Haworth, P, 1992.
- Harris, Simon. *Lesbian and Gay Issues in the English Classroom: The Importance of Being Honest*. Philadelphia: Open UP, 1990.
- Hart, Ellen Louise. "Literacy and the Empowerment of Lesbian and Gay Students." 1989. Paper presented at the 40th Annual Meeting of the Conference on College Composition and Communication. Seattle, WA. 16-18 March 1989. ERIC ED 304 662.
- Hawisher, Gail and Charles Moran. "Electronic Mail and the Writing Instructor." *College English* 55 (1993): 627-643.
- Hoadley-Maidment, Elizabeth. "From Personal Experience to Reflective Practitioner: Academic Literacies and Professional Education." *Student Writing in Higher Education: New Contexts*. Ed. Mary R. Lea and Barry Stierer. Buckingham: Open UP, 2000. 165-178.
- Holmes, David A. "Fighting Back by *Writing Black*: Beyond Racially Reductive Composition Theory." *Race, Rhetoric, and Composition*. Ed. Keith Gilyard. Portsmouth, NH: Boynton/Cook, 1999. 53-66.
- Holquist, Michael. *Dialogism: Bakhtin and His World*. London: Routledge, 2002.
- Horsman, Jenny. *Too Scared to Learn: Women, Violence, and Education*. Mahwah, N.J.: L. Erlbaum Associates, Publishers, 2000.
- Hum, Sue. "Collaboration Matters, Matters of Collaboration: Southern and Hispanic Cyber-Communal Identities in a Material Classroom." Paper presented at the 54th Annual Conference on College Composition and Communication. San Antonio, TX. 25 March 2004.
- Jansak, Kathryn. "Building a Supportive Online Instructional Environment for Reluctant, Apprehensive, and/or Under-Prepared Learners." 3 April 2004
<<http://mtsu.edu/~itconf/proceed00/jansak.htm>>.

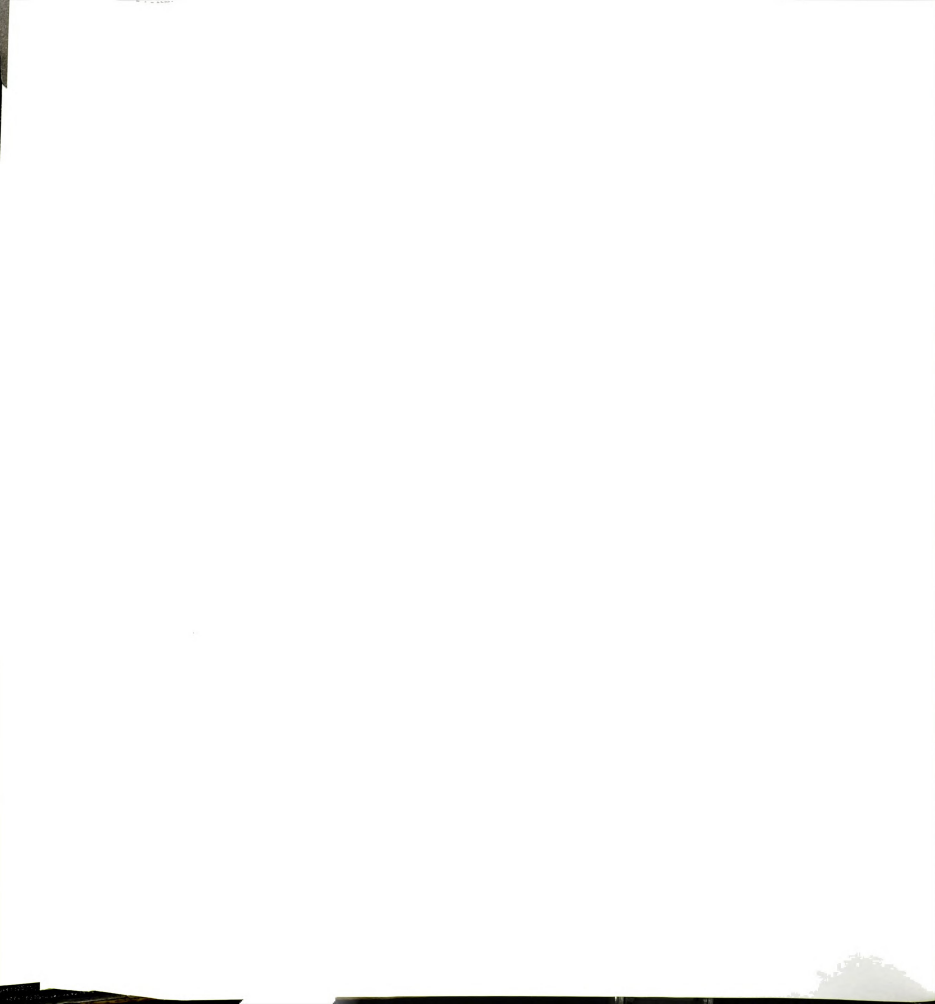


- Johanyak, Michael F. "Analyzing the Amalgamated Electronic Text: Bringing Cognitive, Social, and Contextual Factors of Individual Language Users." *Computers and Composition* 14.1 (Apr. 1997): 91-110.
- Johns, Ann. *Text, Role, and Context: Developing Academic Literacies*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1997.
- Kennard, Jean. E. "Ourself behind Ourself: A Theory for Lesbian Readers." *Gender and Reading: Essays on Readers, Texts, and Contexts*. Ed. Elizabeth A. Flynn and Patrocínio P. Schweickart. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1986. 63-82.
- Klages, Mary. "Mikhail Bakhtin." 13 November 2001. 11 March 2004
< <http://www.colorado.edu/English/ENGL2012Klages/bakhtin.html>>.
- Kumashiro, Kevin. "Queer Students of Color and Antiracist, Antiheterosexist Education: Paradoxes of Identity and Activism." *Troubling Intersections of Race and Sexuality: Queer Students of Color and Anti-Oppressive Education*. Ed. Kevin K. Kumashiro. Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield, 2001. 1-26.
- LaGrandeur, Kevin. "Splicing Ourselves into the Machine: Electronic Communities, Systems Theory, and Composition Studies." 1997. Revised version of a paper presented at the 48th Annual Meeting of the Conference on College Composition and Communication. Phoenix, AZ. 12-15 March 12-15 1997. 27 April 2004
<<http://www.edrs.com/members/sp.cfm?AN=ED410563>> ERIC ED 410 563.
- Lamme and Lamme, Linda Leonard and Laurel A. Lamme. *Welcoming Children from Sexual Minority Families into Our Schools*. Bloomington, IN: Phi Delta Kappa Educational Foundation, 2003. ERIC ED 475 627.
- Lea, Mary R. and Brian V. Street. "Student Writing and Staff Feedback in Higher Education: An Academic Literacies Approach." *Student Writing in Higher Education: New Contexts*. Ed. Mary R. Lea and Barry Stierer. Buckingham: Open UP, 2000. 32-46.
- Liepe-Levinson, Katherine. *Strip Show: Performances of Gender and Desire*. London: Routledge, 2002.
- Litvak, Joseph. "Pedagogy and Sexuality." *Professions of Desire: Lesbian and Gay Studies in Literature*. Ed. George E. Haggerty and Bonnie Zimmerman. New York: MLA, 1995. 19-30.
- Loutzenheiser, Lisa W. "'If I Teach about These Issues They Will Burn Down My House': The Possibilities and Tensions of Queered, Antiracist Pedagogy." *Troubling Intersections of Race and Sexuality: Queer Students of Color and Anti-Oppressive Education*. Ed. Kevin K. Kumashiro. Boulder, CO: Rowman &

- Littlefield, 2001. 195-214.
- Mahaffey, Cynthia. "Breaking Down the Playground Gates: A Cultural Studies Composition Course on the World of Work." 2000.
Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Michigan College Education Association. October 20, 2000. 27 April 2004
<<http://www.edrs.com/members/sp.cfm?AN=ED465193>>.
- Malinowitz, Harriet. "Construing and Constructing Knowledge as a Gay or Lesbian Student Writer." *Pre-Text: A Journal of Rhetorical Theory* 13.3-4 (Fall-Winter 1992): 37-52.
- , *Textual Orientations : Lesbian and Gay Students and the Making of Discourse Communities*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 1995.
- Mallory, Sherry L. "Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Student Organizations: An Overview." *Working with Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender College Students: A Handbook for Faculty and Administrators*. Ed. Ronni Sanlo. Westport, CT: Greenwood P, 1998. 321-328.
- McConnell-Celi, Sue. "Using Lesbian and Gay Reading Selections with the Whole Language Approach—Grades 7+." *Twenty-First Century Challenge: Lesbians and Gays in Education—Bridging the Gap*. Ed. Sue Mc-Connell-Celi. Red Bank, NJ: Lavender Crystal P, 1993. 137-141.
- McEwan, Hunter. "Multiple Literacies and the Reading of Literature." *Academic Literacies in Multicultural Higher Education: Selected Essays*. Ed. Thomas Hilgers et al. Manoa, HI: University of Hawaii P, 1992. 54-62.
- McGinnis, J. Randy. "So You Want to Use a Class LISTSERV in Your Science Methods Class: Insights Shared on Nurturing Along a Virtual Community Outside the Graduate Science Methods Classroom." 1995. Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Association for the Education of Teachers of Science. Charleston, WV. 5-8 January 1995. ERIC ED 382 451.
- Miller, Richard E. "Fault Lines in the Contact Zone: Assessing Homophobic Student Writing." *Lesbian and Gay Studies and the Teaching of English: Positions, Pedagogies, and Cultural Politics*. Ed. William J. Spurlin. ERIC ED 445339. Urbana, IL: NCTE, 2000. 234-52.
- Misa, Cristina M. "Where Have All the Queer Students of Color Gone? Negotiated Identity of Queer Chicana/o Students." *Troubling Intersections of Race and Sexuality: Queer Students of Color and Anti-Oppressive Education*. Ed. Kevin K. Kumashiro. Boulder, CO: Rowman & Littlefield, 2001. 67-80.



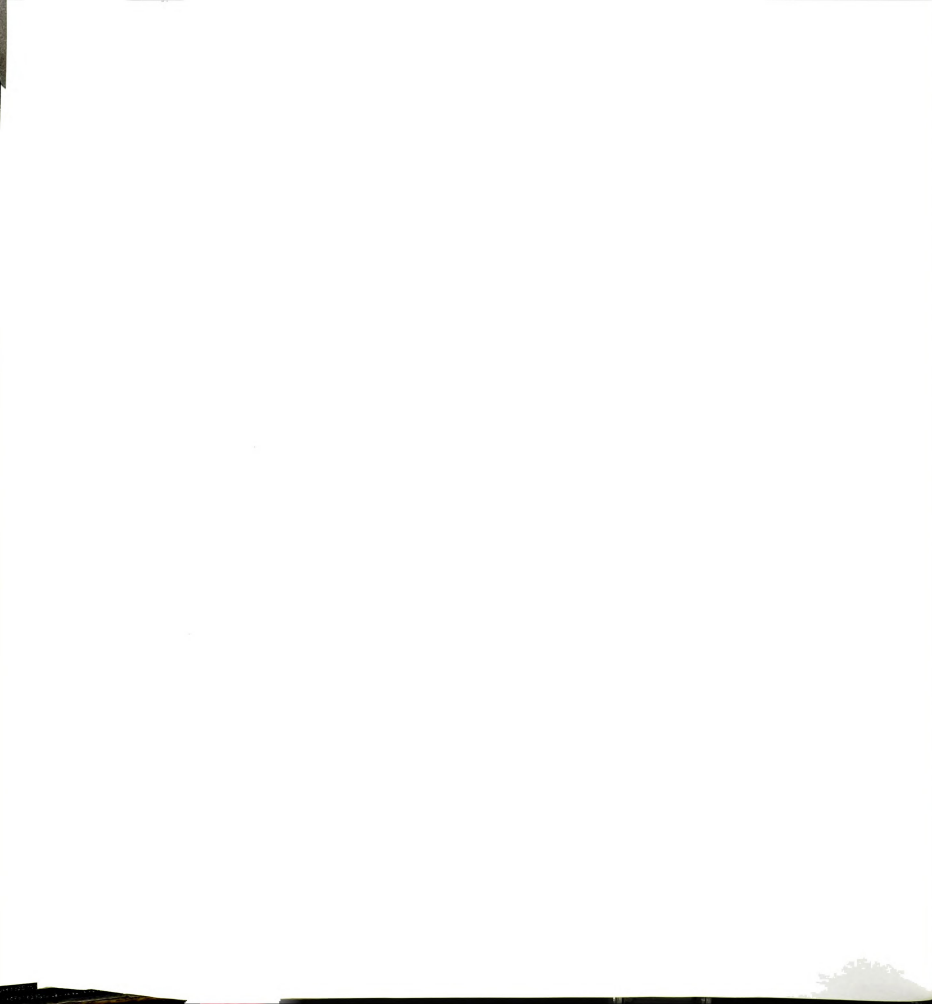
- Naidoo, Beverley. *Through Whose Eyes?: Exploring Racism--Reader, Text and Context*. Staffordshire, England: Trentham Books, 1992.
- Nardi, Peter M. "Changing Gay and Lesbian Images in the Media." *Overcoming Heterosexism: Strategies That Work*. Ed. James T. Sears and Walter Williams. New York: Columbia UP, 1997. 427-442
- , "Gay and Lesbian Issues in the Classroom." *Yearbook (Claremont Reading Conference)* 1994: 12-36.
- Navarre, Joan. "Literary Theory and Composition Practice." 1992.
Paper presented at the 43rd Annual Meeting of the Conference on College Composition and Communication. Cincinnati, OH. 19-21 March 1992. 27 April 2004 <<http://www.edrs.com/members/sp.cfm?AN=ED351695>>.
- Norton, Jody. "(Trans)gendering English Studies." *Lesbian and Gay Studies and the Teaching of English: Positions, Pedagogies, and Cultural Politics*. Ed. William J. Spurlin. Urbana, IL: NCTE, 2000. ERIC ED 445339. 79-106.
- O'Conner, Patricia T. and Stewart Kellerman. *You Send Me: Getting It Right When You Right Online*. New York: Harcourt, 2002.
- Olano, Pamela J. "The Unclaimed Self: Valuing Lesbian and Gay Diversity in the Writing Environment." *Situated Stories: Valuing Diversity in Composition Research*. Ed. Emily Decker and Kathleen Geissler. Portsmouth, NH: Boynton Cook, 1998.
- Olson, Paul C. "Who Computes?" *Critical Pedagogy and Cultural Power*. Ed. David W. Livingstone. South Hadley: Bergin, 1987. 179-204.
- Outcalt, Charles. "The Life Cycle of Campus LGBT Organizations: Finding Ways to Sustain Involvement and Effectiveness." *Working with Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender College Students: A Handbook for Faculty and Administrators*. Ed. Ronni Sanlo. Westport, CT: Greenwood P, 1998. 329-338.
- Peschke, Edith. "Literacy and Community Development." Prepublication draft, Jul. 94. Paper presented at the 13th Penn State Conference on Rhetoric and Composition. University Park, PA. 13-16 July 1994.
- Pinar, William F. Introduction. *Queer Theory in Education*. Ed. William F. Pinar. Mahwah, NJ: L. Erlbaum Associates, 1998. 1-48.
- Porter, J. Davidson. "Leadership Development for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender College Students." *Working with Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender College Students: A Handbook for Faculty and Administrators*. Ed. Ronni Sanlo. Westport, CT: Greenwood P, 1998. 307-319.



- Porter, James E., et. al. "Institutional Critique: A Rhetorical Methodology for Change." *College Composition and Communication* 51.4 (June 2000): 610-42.
- Pratt, Mary Louise. "Arts of the Contact Zone." *Ways of Reading: An Anthology for Writers*. 5th ed. Ed. David Bartholomae and Anthony Petrosky. Boston: Bedford, 1996. 12 March 2004 <<http://web.nwe.ufl.edu/~stripp/2504/pratt.html>>.
- Radway, Janice. *Reading the Romance: Women, Patriarchy, and Popular Literature*. Chapel Hill : University of North Carolina Press, 1984.
- Rambuss, Richard. "Homodevotion." *Cruising the Performative: Interventions into the Representations of Ethnicity, Nationality, and Sexuality*. Ed. Sue-Ellen Case et al. Bloomington, IN: Indiana UP, 1995. 71-92.
- Regan, Alison. "'Type Normal Like the Rest of Us: Writing, Power, and Homophobia in the Networked Composition Classroom.'" *Computers and Composition* 9.4 (November 1993): 11-23. 27 April 2004 <http://www.hu.mtu.edu/~candc/archives/v10/10_4_html/10_4_2_Regan.html>.
- Reese, Jim. "Creating a Place for Lesbian and Gay Readings in Secondary English Classrooms." *Lesbian and Gay Studies and the Teaching of English*. Ed. William J. Spurlin. Urbana, IL: NCTE, 2000. 131-146.
- Reid, Coletta. "Coming Out in the Women's Movement." *Lesbianism and the Women's Movement*. Ed. Nancy Myron and Charlotte Bunch. Baltimore: Diana P, 1975. 91-103.
- Riley, Michael. "Student Attitudes towards Using the Internet in Class as a Function of Class Time Spent On-Line." *Studies in Teaching 1999 Research Digest*. Ed. Leah P. McCoy. Research Projects Presented at Annual Research Forum. Winston-Salem, NC. December 1999.
- Robertson, Henry D. "Coming Out—as a Teacher." *Twenty-First Century Challenge: Gays and Lesbians in Education*. Ed. Sue Mc-Connell Celi. Red Bank, NJ: Lavender Crystal P, 1993. 34-38.
- Rouzie, Albert. "Conversation and Carrying-On: Play, Conflict, and Serio-Ludic Discourse in Synchronous Computer Conferencing." *College Composition and Communication* 53.2 (Dec. 2001): 251-99.
- Royer, Daniel J. and Roger Gilles. "Directed Self-Placement: An Attitude of Orientation." *College Composition and Communication* 50.1 (Sep. 1998): 54-70.
- Sanlo, Ronni. *Unheard Voices: The Effects of Silence on Gay and Lesbian Educators*.



- Westport, CT: Bergin and Garvey, 1999.
- , ed. *Working with Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender College Students: A Handbook for Faculty and Administrators*. Westport, CT: Greenwood P, 1998.
- Scott, Dick. "Working with Gay and Lesbian Student Organizations." *Beyond Tolerance: Gays, Lesbians, and Bisexuals on Campus*. Ed. Nancy J. Evans and Vernon A. Wall. Alexandria, VA: American College Personnel Association, 1991. 117-130.
- Sears, James T. "Teaching Queerly: Some Elementary Propositions." *Queering Elementary Education: Advancing the Dialogue about Sexualities and Schooling*. Ed. William J. Letts and James T. Sears. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 3-14.
- Sedgwick, Eve. *Touching Feeling: Affect, Pedagogy, Performativity*. Durham: Duke UP, 2003.
- Selfe, Cynthia. *Technology and Literacy in the Twenty-First Century: The Importance of Paying Attention*. Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois P, 1999.
- Shepard, Curtis et al. *Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgendered Campus Organizing*. Washington, D.C.: National Gay and Lesbian Task Force, 1995.
- Sidey, Mark. "Writing in the Workplace and Freshman Writing Classes: An Imperative for Relevancy." 1999. 27 April 2004
<<http://www.edrs.com/members/sp.cfm?AN=ED429315>>. ERIC ED 429 315.
- Smith, Laura K. "'Deviance' and Discourse: How Readers Respond to One Man's Editorial. A Framing Analysis of E-Mails Following the September 11th Attacks." Proceedings of the 85th Annual Meeting of the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication. Miami, Florida. 5-8 August 2002.
- Smitherman, Geneva. *Talkin and Testifyin: The Language of Black America*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1977.
- Solá, Michele and Adrian T. Bennett. "The Struggle for Voice: Narrative, Literacy and Consciousness in an East Harlem High School." *Rewriting Literacy: Culture and the Discourse of the Other*. Ed. Candace Mitchell and Kathleen Weiler. New York: Bergin and Garvey, 1991. 35-56.
- Solomon, Barbara. "Taking the Bullshit by the Horns." *Lesbianism and the Women's Movement*. Ed. Nancy Myron and Charlotte Bunch. Baltimore: Diana P, 1975. 39-48.



- Sosnoski, James J. *Token Professionals and Master Critics: A Critique of Orthodoxy in Literary Studies*. Albany: Suny P, 1994.
- Stuckey, J. Elspeth. *The Violence of Literacy*. Portsmouth, New Hampshire: Boynton/Cook, 1991.
- Tarvers, Josephine Koster and Eric Buswell. "The Tutor's Computer Ate My Paper' and Other Notes from a Pilot Study of E-mail Tutoring." Paper presented at the 5th Annual Meeting of the National Writing Centers Association. Baltimore. 2-4 November 2000. 27 April 2004
<<http://www.edrs.com/members/sp.cfm?AN=ED451514>>.
- "A Tribute to Audre Lorde." 27 April 2004
<http://www.cityofwomen-a.si/2001/audre_lorde.html>.
- Uribe, Virginia et al. "Interview with Lester Wong and Lillian Gee." Excerpts from Project 10. *Twenty-First Century Challenge: Gays and Lesbians in Education*. Ed. Sue Mc-Connell Celi. Red Bank, NJ: Lavender Crystal P, 1993. 111-17.
- van Manen, Max. "Phenomenological Inquiry." Phenomenology Online. 12 March 2004 <<http://www.phenomenologyonline.com/inquiry/1.html>>.
- , "Phenomenological Inquiry: Methods and Procedures." Phenomenology Online. 12 March 2004
<<http://www.phenomenologyonline.com/inquiry/24.html>>.
- vanOort, Richard. "Performative-Constative Revisited: The Genetics of Austin's Theory of Speech Acts." *Anthropoetics* 2 (January 1997). 12 March 2004
<<http://www.humnet.ucla.edu/humnet/anthropoetics/Ap0202/Vano.htm>>.
- Wahlstrom, Billie J. "Communication and Technology: Defining a Feminist Presence in Research and Practice." *Literacy and Computers: The Complications of Teaching and Learning with Technology*. Ed. Cynthia L. Selfe and Susan Hilligoss. New York: MLA, 1994. 171-185.
- Wallace, David L. "Out in the Academy: Heterosexism, Invisibility, and Double Consciousness." *College English* 65.1 (Sep. 2002): 53-66.
- Wolf, Deborah. *The Lesbian Community*. Berkeley: U of California P, 1980.
- Woodland, Randal. "I Plan to Be a 10: Online Literacy for Lesbian, Gay, Bi, and Transgender Students." *Computers and Composition* 16.1 (2002). 2 September 2002 <http://corax.cwrl.utexas.edu/cac/archives/v16/16_1_html/16_1_feature.html>.

MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES



3 1293 02498 5917