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R. Creasy

Teaching ability and sexuality

When I first made the decision to go into teaching I hadn't yet realized that I was gay, never mind listing it as a pro or con in my career decision. Since it was not until my junior year that I really started "coming out" and started realizing that I was truly gay, it no longer mattered whether being gay was a pro or con. I had my heart set on teaching. Besides, what did one's sexuality have to do with one's teaching ability?

The answer to that question, I found, was rather complex. I frequently read material that inferred or said that all homosexual teachers molested their students. Yet I had never had any desire to have sex with any children.

I soon found out that I had merely been the victim of slanted journalism. The papers never printed stories dealing with male teachers molesting their female students, but through research I found out that the overwhelming majority of child molestations occur within the family and that 99 percent of all child molestations are heterosexual in nature.

In fact, Wainwright Churchill in "Homosexual Behavior Among Males" states, "Pedophilia is no more regularly associated with homosexuality than with heterosexuality, and the vast majority of homosexuals, like the vast majority of heterosexuals, are emotionally repelled by pedophilia."

Although I had convinced myself that being gay was not a "con", how could I likewise convince others, especially parents, school committees, and principals? I was beginning to realize that if these people knew that I was gay I would never find a job as a teacher, especially with a tight job market.

The next semester brought me EDC 484 (Supervised Stu-

dent Teaching) and my first experience as a gay teacher. As far as the teaching was concerned I did well. I felt very at home in the classroom.

One day, however, I overheard a few remarks from a few students about me being gay. I had no idea how they could have found out, and although I was very concerned that the parents, school committee, or principal would also find out, I decided not to pursue the issue. After all, I rationalized, the students know that I'm new to teaching and were just trying to find ways to test me, or maybe, to get back at me for the detention I had assigned for talking in class.

The rumors persisted. Being gay was currently being listed as a "con", but for personal reasons, not societal reasons. One of my best students told me about the rumors and once again I was faced with what I call the "rejection versus lying syndrome" (if I tell her the truth I'll be rejected - if I lie I'll be accepted). Deciding that "discretion is the better part of valor", I planned to lie to her. She told me that she didn't think that I was gay and that she had told her friends that she felt that one's sexuality had nothing to do with one's teaching ability,

and that, indeed, she felt that I was an excellent teacher. Fortunately, I never had to say whether or not I was gay.

As time passed the rumors persisted still, and my friend, in doing some "detective" work, found out that the other students felt that I was gay because I wore wedge-heeled shoes to school. I was relieved. I could deal with the problem in its present form by simply ignoring it. The rumors began to die.

That problem taken care of, I could now concentrate on listing being gay as a "pro" or "con". I decided to think positively. Slowly, the pros of being gay appeared to me. I realized exactly how being gay had helped my teaching. I felt that being gay had opened my eyes to the world around me and to the world within me. My gayness had taught me to be sensitive towards others as well as introspective towards myself.

It had helped me to learn to love my students and to love their love for learning. It helped my classes to be fun and innovative rather than boring. In fact, I had begun to realize that my gayness was responsible for me being a good teacher. Being gay was and is definitely a "pro" on my list.