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Private, Professional, Public: An Investigation of Teacher Identity Development

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PRIVATE, PROFESSIONAL, PUBLIC: AN INVESTIGATION OF TEACHER IDENTITY DEVELOPMENT

For the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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Date

PRIVATE, PROFESSIONAL, PUBLIC:
AN INVESTIGATION OF TEACHER IDENTITY DEVELOPMENT

A Dissertation
Submitted to the Faculty
of
Purdue University
by
James R. Gilligan

In Partial Fulfillment of the
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of
Doctor of Philosophy

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For the thousands of students with whom I've had the privilege of working,
you've taught me so much

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ABSTRACT

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This dissertation utilizes qualitative research methodology within a queer theoretical framework to investigate the process by which five in-service teachers integrate their private and professional identities to create public identities. Data collection methods included individual interviews, field observations, and artifact analysis. Data analysis focused on the school gender regimes that prescribe the teachers' professional lives; the impact of those gender regimes on the teachers' private identity development, professional identity development, curriculum, pedagogy, and professional relationships; and the identity management strategies each participant utilized in order to integrate his/her respective identities. In addition, data analysis revealed the relative extent to which each teacher had managed to integrate his/her identities to a degree that he/she deemed satisfactory. Various factors that contributed to identity integration resulted in three degrees of integration: each participant utilized hermetic boundaries between his/her private and professional identities, semi-permeable boundaries, or permeable boundaries. Each participant's position along this spectrum of integration is fluid and mutable.

Based on these analyses, the findings included the following: (1) School gender regimes affect all participants but present greater challenges for teachers who identify as LGBTQ; (2) All participants, regardless of sexual orientation, utilize identity management strategies to separate or integrate aspects of their private and professional lives; (3) A participant's accumulated years of professional experience and sense of self-confidence exert a greater influence than his/her sexual orientation on his/her degree of identity integration; (4) LGBTQ participants are more likely to develop and cultivate subcultures or communities within the school environment in order to provide themselves and their students with a sense of support and inclusion.

The findings of this study suggest the following implications for practice: (1) Queer literacy and queer issues should be integrated into all post-secondary teacher education programs; (2) Teacher educators should be trained in the best practices for educating preservice teachers in queer literacy and queer inclusion; (3) Educators at all levels need to create supportive, compassionate, and inclusive school environments where all teachers and students can express their sexual orientations in professionally appropriate ways without fear of repercussions.

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Personal Challenges Precipitate Professional Research

Challenges and questions that confronted me—and that sometimes threatened to prematurely terminate my career in education—eventually became the basis for this dissertation, which focuses on the identity development process among both lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or queer (LGBTQ) and non-LGBTQ teachers. How may LGBTQ teachers successfully integrate their personal identities with their professional identities—within the heteronormative gender regimes of contemporary US schools—in order to become more “complete” human beings and more effective teachers? Is such integration desirable or even the most effective way for an LGBTQ educator to manage the various elements of his/her identity? Based upon the results of my research (and barring a universal cultural and social revolution overthrowing the gender regimes in education), I am proposing a small-scale “revolution”—one that requires the cooperation of all teachers and administrators, for “heterosexual allies—colleagues, parents, administrators, sometimes even students—have tremendous power to help” (Kissen, 1996, p. 84).

This dissertation utilizes qualitative research methodology within a queer theoretical framework to investigate various aspects of teacher identity

development by focusing on the ways in which teachers integrate their personal identities and their professional identities into public identities. I also intend to examine the impact that such identity integration—or, in some cases, the lack of it—has on a teacher’s pedagogy; his/her relationship with students, peers, administrators, and communities; and on a teacher’s overall effectiveness. Although all teachers experience this identity development process within the prescriptive context of heteronormative school gender regimes, which exert a powerful social and cultural force on the process, gender and sexual orientation mediate and differentiate the process among teachers.

In this introductory chapter, I tell the story of my early career as an educator; my progression from closeted high school English teacher to out graduate student Teaching Assistant informed my research interest in the fundamental role that sexuality plays in the development of teachers’ private, professional, and public identities. I reflect upon my own endeavor to integrate my professional and private identities into a unified public identity, and I discuss my own experience as one possible way to apply the identity management strategies that many LGBTQ educators utilize throughout their careers. In addition, I launch my investigation into the pedagogical ramifications of teachers’ struggles with the tensions that spring from the sometimes incompatible demands of their multiple selves.

The following chapter reviews the research literature on school gender regimes— which Connell (2000) defines as “The totality of gender arrangements within a school” (p. 152) and which I would like to expand to include sexual

orientation. Due to the strictures of these gender regimes, the identity integration/development process presents greater challenges to male teachers and to those teachers who identify as LGBTQ. For LGBTQ educators, heteronormativity and hegemonic masculinity complicate and impede the identity development process in ways that do not affect their straight colleagues. Although other factors such as age, physical ability, race, ethnicity, and socioeconomic status also affect the teacher identity development process, the “fear and denial of all sexuality... define the educational environment” (McNinch, 2007, p. 208). While all teachers possess a race and an ethnicity, these are not often aspects of identity that teachers choose to hide or obscure, and many teachers can and do seek employment in communities that reflect their own racial and ethnic identities. Similarly, all teachers possess a sexual orientation (even asexuality is a sexuality), and many who identify as queer feel compelled to “manage” that aspect of identity in a way that marks it as inferior to heteronormative expectations. Moreover, it’s nearly impossible for a queer educator to seek—let alone find—employment in a queer community. Therefore, male teachers—who operate in an environment populated primarily by women—and LGBTQ teachers—who operate in an environment dominated by heterosexual persons—must confront the additional challenge of incorporating these “minority” aspects of their personal identities into their professional and public identities.

The third chapter describes the queer theoretical framework I employed to conduct this research study. As Honeychurch (1996) asserts, “Approaching social knowledge from a queered position is a postmodern rejection of epistemological

certainty. A queered tenor calls the bluff of heterosexist epistemology and reveals the arbitrary and mediated nature of its otherwise apparently unquestionable logic” (p. 344). Its focus on the disruption of the heteronormative assumptions that inform our cultural and social practices—in this case, the gender regimes in public elementary and secondary schools—makes a queer theoretical framework especially well-suited for this study.

In the fourth chapter, I explain the design and methodology of the study and introduce the participants, five secondary school teachers of varying genders and sexual orientations. These introductions also include demographic and background information about the schools and communities where they teach. My data collection methods included interviews with each participant, observations of each of them in their professional settings, and analysis of their autobiographical narratives.

The fifth, sixth, and seventh chapters include the results of my research, and each chapter addresses an overarching theme identified through a detailed qualitative analysis of the data along with my interpretation of the results. In order to establish the context of my findings, the fifth chapter focuses on the gender regimes of each participant’s school and the impact of these gender regimes on each participant’s identity development and integration. Chapter six contains a rich analysis of the strategies that each participant uses to manage a variety of identity elements and aligns participants according to the degree of identity integration that they have managed to attain. In the seventh chapter, I identify a specific aspect of

identity management—the cultivation of subcultures or communities— that suggests a distinction between the LGBTQ participants’ identity management needs and those of the non-LGBTQ participants.

The concluding chapter addresses the limitations of this research study and considers its findings within the context of a queer theoretical framework and existing research on queer issues in education. Furthermore, in the conclusion, I reflect on my efforts to queer the research process—as well as the findings. Finally, I discuss this study’s potential application for facilitating teacher identity development at both the preservice and in-service stages of teachers’ careers and its implications for additional research.

Queering My Teacher Identity: The Fears of a Novice

Monday, February 1, 1988 transformed my identity. It’s the date printed on my bachelor’s degree, and it’s the very first day that I worked as a professional educator. As I celebrated my nascent transformation from college student/preservice teacher to college graduate/professional educator, I was actively managing numerous aspects of my identity, including my closeted homosexuality. I was, however, unaware that as my teaching career progressed, I would be faced with the dilemma of integrating my private and professional identities.

As an English teacher, I had many opportunities to discuss the relevance of sexuality to curriculum, whether it was Langston Hughes’ implied sexuality in his autobiographical novel *Not Without Laughter* (1930) or the almost overt

homoeroticism of Walt Whitman's Calamus poems in *Leaves of Grass* (1860). Since I was young, inexperienced, and untenured, however, the possibility of incorporating ideas of sexuality into my curriculum was not a feasible option. Having come out in my private life and gained a few years of teaching experience—and after having earned tenure at my second teaching position—I experienced a quietly devastating epiphany as I prepared a lesson on Willa Cather's short story "Paul's Case" for my sophomore English class. The story, subtitled "A Study in Temperament" and first published in 1905, focuses on a disillusioned and depressed teenager who might or might not be dealing with his (homo)sexual identity. The reasons for Paul's ennui and depression are never clearly explained in the story, but his fastidious appearance, his penchant for art and theater, his aspirations for wealth and luxury, and his passive-aggressive rebellion may be interpreted as veiled allusions to his homosexuality. This masterfully crafted work of literature presented me with an ideal opportunity to incorporate (homo)sexuality into the curriculum, thus weaving an important element of my private identity into my professional work. The mere realization that I could attempt this feat of identity integration paralyzed me with fear. I dismissed the thought almost as immediately as it had occurred to me.

After six years in the classroom, I was finally tackling the demon that had been surreptitiously terrorizing me since I became a bona fide teacher. Unbeknownst to me at the time, I was struggling with a variety of what are now well-documented challenges that confront all educators. The process of identity development, whether for teachers or other professionals, is complex and multi-

faceted. Educators, especially newly licensed teachers, experience perhaps a unique dilemma during their identity development process. Although, like many other professionals, they must address the task of incorporating their professional identities within their personal identities (both of which are in a constant state of transformation and development), teachers must also perform the masterful balancing act of determining the appropriate degree of each aspect to blend with the other—all while maintaining a healthy detachment from the traditionally taboo subject of sexuality, which is widely considered an inappropriate, irrelevant, or immoral topic for the classroom.

Alsop (2005) has argued that “professional identity development for the [secondary school teacher] is arguably more difficult than it is for professionals in other fields” (p. 191). Among the cultural forces that contribute to this challenge, heteronormative conceptions of gender and sexuality constrain and inhibit the healthy identity development of all teachers, regardless of gender or sexual orientation. In addition, the cultural power of hegemonic masculinity further compounds the pressure that teachers experience as they develop their personal and professional identities. For lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and/or queer (LGBTQ), educators, however, heteronormativity—the cultural presumption/expectation that everyone is and should be heterosexual—and hegemonic masculinity—the socioeconomic power structure that privileges and rewards men who exhibit masculine character traits—complicate and impede the identity development process in ways that do not affect their straight colleagues.

Throughout this study, I theorize the broad, mutable concept of public identity as a queered identity composed of two equally fluid and shifting parts—a private/personal identity and a professional identity. One’s public identity—i.e., the identity one chooses to share with the world—is a carefully moderated and ever-shifting combination of one’s private/personal and professional identities, with countless contextual factors (e.g., physical space, time, cultural mores, environment, other persons present, power relationships among those present, purpose of interaction—to name just a few) influencing the ways in which one moderates his/her public identity.

Identity Management Strategies

As Endo, Reece-Miller, and Santavicca (2010) have asserted, “The heteronormative pressure at school results in many queer teachers either avoiding any discussion of their personal lives, or perhaps worse, making up a heterosexual life that does not exist, in order to appease the school community’s expectations” (p. 1029). Approaches to resolving the conundrum of identity integration and development among LGBTQ educators are ubiquitous enough to have earned a descriptive label among scholars in the field of queer educational research (Griffin, 1992; Kissen, 1996; Woods & Harbeck, 1992): Identity Management Strategies. Each researcher may choose to distinguish and categorize these strategies in slightly different ways. Here I attempt to summarize their classifications:

1. *Passing*: If an LGBTQ educator engages in the strategy of passing, he or she intentionally attempts to mislead others into believing he or she is heterosexual.
2. *Covering*: If an LGBTQ educator engages in the strategy of covering, he or she carefully avoids any connection with queer issues or persons. Covering is an indirect way of dodging the question of sexual orientation. Someone who is covering (or *self-distancing*) might “avoid interactions with colleagues, superiors, and students that would call for an exchange of personal information or feelings” (Woods & Harbeck, 1992, p. 152); covering techniques could also include censoring one’s words and actions without explicitly lying (Kissen, 1996, p. 41).
3. *Implicitly Out*: If an LGBTQ educator engages in the strategy of being implicitly out, he or she assumes that others will determine his or her sexual orientation without any public declaration (Kissen, 1996, p. 41). Being implicitly out may also involve implied professional disclosure in the form of “a professional role that defie[s] traditional gender roles and that might be associated with a gay or lesbian stereotype” (Griffin, 1992, pp. 180-181). For example, for women, these roles can include a principal, a shop teacher, or a physical education teacher; for men, the roles may be school librarian or preschool or elementary teacher (Griffin, 1992, pp. 180-181).

4. *Explicitly Out*: If an LGBTQ educator engages in the strategy of being explicitly out, he or she publically identifies himself or herself as gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, or queer.

Throughout my 26-year career as an educator, I have utilized each of these strategies, more or less sequentially. I do not, however, intend to suggest that every queer educator proceeds through these stages in a linear fashion (from Passing→Covering→Implicitly Out→Explicitly Out). Indeed, some adopt one of these strategies and utilize it throughout their entire careers. Others may utilize numerous strategies for various constituencies (e.g., a teacher may attempt to “pass” with his/her students while being “implicitly out” to his/her colleagues), while still others may experience the sequential progression that I did. What I can assert with a high degree of certainty is that the less time and energy I devoted to maintaining any sort of façade about my sexual orientation and the less I worried about outing myself as gay or queer, the more I was able to focus on the work of teaching and the more effective I was at helping my students learn.

Passing

Hours Continuing Long – by Walt Whitman

*Hours continuing long, sore and heavy-hearted,
Hours of the dusk, when I withdraw to a lonesome and unfrequented spot, seating
myself, leaning my face in my hands;
Hours sleepless, deep in the night, when I go forth, speeding swiftly the country roads,
or through the city streets, or pacing miles and miles, stifling plaintive cries;
Hours discouraged, distracted—for the one I cannot content myself without, soon I
saw him content himself without me;
Hours when I am forgotten, (O weeks and months are passing, but I believe I am never*

to forget!)
Sullen and suffering hours! (I am ashamed—but it is useless—I am what I am;)
Hours of my torment—I wonder if other men ever have the like, out of the like feelings?
Is there even one other like me—distracted—his friend, his lover, lost to him?
Is he too as I am now? Does he still rise in the morning, dejected, thinking who is lost to
him? and at night, awaking, think who is lost?
Does he too harbor his friendship silent and endless? harbor his anguish and passion?
Does some stray reminder, or the casual mention of a name, bring the fit back upon
him, taciturn and deprest?
Does he see himself reflected in me? In these hours, does he see the face of his hours
reflected?

This Whitman poem, included in the original Calamus section of the 1860 edition of *Leaves of Grass*, poignantly expresses the agony of life in the closet. The speaker of the poem laments “the one [he] cannot content [him]self without,” but the poem may also be interpreted as a metaphor for a man (or woman) struggling with a closeted identity. Envisioned as the queer aspect of the speaker’s identity (“I am ashamed—but it is useless—I am what I am”), the cause of the speaker’s agony can be understood as not simply a lover or an object of affection from whom he is separated but as that part of his identity that he is unable to accept or acknowledge—his love for other men.

As a novice teacher and a newly out gay man (I came out to myself and began the process of coming out to family members and close friends a mere two months after I began my career as a high school teacher), I endured many “Hours of...torment” when “I wonder[ed] if other men ever have the like, out of the like feelings” of attraction to other men. And although I never pondered “who [was] lost to [me],” I often worried about what might be lost to me—that I would never be able to be true to my sexuality *and* succeed as a high school teacher. I feared that the

perceived incompatibility between my life and my career would doom me to “silent and endless” suffering—that “anguish” would always accompany my passion.

Without ever consciously choosing to do so, I seized upon the only identity management strategy that I believed was available to me—passing. I started my first teaching job in the middle of the 1987-1988 academic year. At the time, I was still living at home, about a 40-minute drive from the school where I was working. This physical distance between home and school afforded me a very welcome buffer between my personal life and my professional life. There was very little chance that my two worlds would intersect. That summer, however, I moved and got my very first apartment—a scant 10 minutes away from school. My new closer proximity necessitated a more proactive identity management strategy, and so I capitalized on my first opportunity to pass as straight.

As a young, single male English teacher, I was aware that the students—and a number of my new colleagues—would be curious about my personal life. I was teaching two sections of sophomores, one section of juniors, and two sections of seniors. The senior English class that I taught was a fairly challenging elective, and the students enrolled in the class were quite savvy. They were also a mere four or five years my junior, which mattered little to the more precocious students. Some of the female students were attracted to me—indeed, during my third year there, I started receiving notes and other tokens of affection from a “secret admirer,” whom I later learned was a female student—and some of the male students were curious

about my “situation,” often asking whether I had a girlfriend or if I “got any” over the weekend.

One morning early in the 1988-1989 school year, I arrived at school on a Friday morning after spending a rather late Thursday evening with a guy I was dating at the time. I had awoken later than usual that morning, and I had showered and dressed hastily. I arrived at school, went directly to my classroom, and began preparing for the day. When the sophomore students began arriving in my classroom, I noticed that a number of them gave me quizzical looks and more than a few of them smirked at each other knowingly. I presumed that they perceived my fatigued and rushed demeanor, dismissed it as not worth addressing, and proceeded to teach as I had planned. The class went on without incident.

Later that morning, as I was preparing to teach the earlier section of seniors, one of the more extroverted male members of the class stealthily walked up to me and said, “So, Mr. G., you decided to get an early start on the weekend?” I honestly had no idea what he meant, and I replied, “No, not really. Get in your seat, and let’s get started.” He snickered and said, “OK.” His comments gave me pause, especially in light of the odd behavior exhibited earlier that morning by the sophomores, but I pressed on and began the lesson. After a few minutes, it was clear to me that some major distraction was preventing me from engaging the students in the day’s work, as they were unusually restless and behaving very immaturely. I immediately interrupted myself, and asked, “Okay—what’s going on?” In response, they openly giggled and guffawed, apparently incapable of letting me in on the secret that

everyone in the room except me seemed to know about. The extroverted student who had approached me at the beginning of class took mercy on me and proudly asserted, “Mr. G., if you don’t know you got a hickey on your neck, we aren’t gonna be the ones to tell you.” This remark, of course, sparked a torrent of laughter from the students and a rush of mortification from me. After clumsily making my way to my classroom closet (pun intended) where I kept a mirror, I checked my neck and—lo and behold—staring back at me just above my collar on the right side on my neck was an incriminatingly bold, maroon-hued hickey.

My humiliation, however, quickly turned to salvation as I recognized this as an opportunity to play the role of the heterosexual lothario. I turned to the class, shrugged sheepishly, and mused, “Well, what can I say?” The class erupted in even more boisterous laughter, and I marveled at how easily I was able to pull off the charade. By simply playing along with the students’ assumption that the blotch on my neck was evidence of heterosexuality, I easily shielded my true sexual orientation.

While the hickey incident was more of an opportunistic effort to pass as straight, my next attempt was far more calculated and strategic. Word about my epithelial indiscretion spread rapidly among the student body, and many of them became curious about the “woman” in my life. I was purposely evasive about the issue for months, justifying my secrecy with the belief that my private life had no place in the classroom. It soon became clear to me, however, that I would not be able to dodge my students’ or my colleagues’ (yes, many of them had heard about the

hickey incident) curiosity forever. So I recruited a female friend to serve as my beard.

During the first few years of my teaching career, I pursued community theater work as a hobby. It was fun, challenging, rewarding, and it fit into my limited free time. I was out to all of my friends and colleagues in the theater company, among whom was a stunningly beautiful woman named Lynn. For some reason, Lynn was smitten with me and often joked about how unfortunate it was that I wasn't heterosexual. She made no secret of her attraction to me. Although I was extremely flattered by her attention, I made it clear to her that I did not reciprocate her interest. She feigned grave disappointment, but she understood.

Near the end of the school year, the senior class invited me to chaperone the prom. As a relatively new teacher, I was quite honored by the invitation—and I was also aware that each chaperone was expected to bring a—heterosexual—date as his/her “plus one.” I was single by then, but even if I had had a male partner, I would never have entertained the thought of having him accompany me to chaperone the prom. Lynn, however, was delighted to be my “date.” She knew the terms of the arrangement, and she played along masterfully—she looked magnificent, and she played the role of my girlfriend exquisitely. On the Monday following the prom, the senior class was abuzz with gossip about “Mr. G.’s hot girlfriend,” and I could not have secured a more solid heterosexual identity if I had fathered a dozen children.

I was passing quite convincingly as a heterosexual man. I was also, however, failing quite distinctly as an English teacher. Of course, I experienced all of the

challenges and fluctuating bouts of success and failure so typical of early-career teachers—but my failures were near-epic. My teaching was largely uninspired, decidedly teacher-centered, and dull. Fortunately, I was blessed with an extraordinarily helpful and supportive department chair who guided me expertly to improve my teaching and ultimately earn tenure. I truly believe that I would not have made it through my first few years of teaching without her assistance. Although I was working as a teacher, I was devoting the bulk of my time and energy toward acting as a straight man. There's little wonder that I succeeded at the latter but struggled with the former.

Covering and Implicitly Out

I learned to balance my time and energy between teaching and upholding my fake heterosexual identity, and I spent the remainder of my five and a half years at the school passing as a straight man and becoming a much better teacher, a juggling act fraught with severe tension. I eventually landed a job at another school about 35 miles away—a school with a much more rigorous academic reputation and located in a very affluent community. The move afforded me the opportunity to adjust my strategy, and—again subconsciously (this is all clear to me only in retrospect)—I chose to simply avoid any discussion of my private life within my professional environment. I suspected it would be rather easy to hide my personal identity in this school, since it focused intensely on academics. My own keen interest in my

professional endeavors would blend in seamlessly with this scholarly environment. Or so I thought.

Before I began the 1993-1994 school year at my new place of employment, I was assigned a peer mentor, a veteran colleague in the English department. He invited me to his home to spend a late summer morning discussing the department's curriculum, the school environment, and the general culture of the community. Upon meeting him and looking around his home, I began to detect undeniable signs of gay domesticity: he was middle-aged, single, and shared his home with a male roommate—who happened to appear with him in numerous photos displayed around his home.

He was an excellent mentor during my first year at the new school, and through him I came to know a couple of other middle-aged, single male teachers at the school. I became certain that an unacknowledged gay "brotherhood" existed among certain members of the faculty and that I was being initiated as its newest member. While this sense of tacit camaraderie pleased me and certainly made me feel welcome, it completely undermined my plan to "cover." Although none of my colleagues in the gay "brotherhood" ever openly discussed his sexual orientation with me or asked about mine, the silent understanding was clear—we were all implicitly out. We often met for lunch, sometimes gathered together for dinner and attended Broadway shows—every one of us single and not one of us ever mentioning a girlfriend or female partner.

Despite my plan to “cover,” I had no real choice but to be implicitly out. One of the benefits of this new identity management strategy was the ability to devote the majority of time and energy to my teaching. My pedagogy thrived in this new environment of academic rigor and diminished vigilance about my private life. To be more exact, I still did my best to keep my private life private, but I did not feel compelled to cover. My association with the other faculty members in the gay “brotherhood” implicitly outed me—and there seemed to be no negative consequences, at least for a year or so.

Being implicitly out at work generated acute tension for me—I suspect because of my proximity to being explicitly out, which I knew I would never be as a high school teacher; no matter how close I came to proclaiming this vital aspect of my private identity within my professional environment, I would never actually be able to do it. I simply could not integrate these two aspects of my identity. This tension—along with the nagging, haunting notion that if I continued my career as a high school teacher I was fated to lead a life partitioned into private and professional spheres—motivated me to make a drastic change in my life. I chose to leave secondary teaching and pursue a career in higher education.

Explicitly Out

Long I Thought that Knowledge – by Walt Whitman

*Long I thought that knowledge alone would suffice me—O if I could but obtain
knowledge!*

*Then my lands engrossed me—Lands of the prairies, Ohio’s land, the southern
savannas, engrossed me—For them I would live—I would be their orator;*

*Then I met the examples of old and new heroes—I heard of warriors, sailors, and all
 dauntless persons—And it seemed to me that I too had it in me to be as
 dauntless as any—and would be so;
 And then, to enclose all, it came to me to strike up the songs of the New World—And
 then I believed my life must be spent in singing;
 But now take notice, land of the prairies, land of the south savannas, Ohio’s land,
 Take notice, you Kanuck woods—and you Lake Huron—and all that with you roll
 toward Niagara—and you Niagara also,
 And you, Californian mountains—That you each and all find somebody else to be your
 singer of songs,
 For I can be your singer of songs no longer—One who loves me is jealous of me, and
 withdraws me from all but love,
 With the rest I dispense—I sever from what I thought would suffice me, for it does
 not—it is now empty and tasteless to me,
 I heed knowledge, and the grandeur of The States, and the example of heroes, no more,
 I am indifferent to my own songs—I will go with him I love,
 It is to be enough for us that we are together—We never separate again.*

This Whitman poem, like the one cited earlier, appeared in the original Calamus section of the 1860 edition of *Leaves of Grass*; in it, the speaker describes his reasons for forsaking his practice of singing of “the New World.” He imagined “that knowledge alone would suffice” in fueling his talent, but ultimately finds that he “can be [the New World’s] singer of songs no longer” because his practice has caused “One who loves [him]” to withdraw him “from all but love.” The speaker leaves behind all that he “thought would suffice” (i.e., the aforementioned “knowledge”), for it “it is now empty and tasteless” to him, and he will be content with the one he loves. This poem (which I had numerous opportunities to include in my curriculum but chose not to due to its homoerotic content), metaphorically depicts the tension that drove me to abandon high school teaching. Like the speaker in Whitman’s poem, I naïvely believed that knowledge alone—knowledge of literature, of writing, of art, of pedagogy—would suffice and sustain me in my

profession. I discovered, however, that knowledge of my profession came at a cost I was unwilling to pay—I would not sacrifice the love of myself, the love I struggled to accept as I came out and embraced my sexual orientation. And so, faced with this dilemma, I abandoned the knowledge that I “thought would suffice” and chose to pursue a different sort of knowledge in a setting where I would be more at liberty to integrate my private and professional identities—graduate school.

I entered a PhD program in English with the intention of being explicitly out. Since the university where I enrolled was 4 states and nearly 800 miles from my home, I would need to come out (or, more precisely, be out) to an entirely new population of peers, colleagues, faculty members, staff members, and students. I imagined that integrating my personal and professional identities would be easier in a university setting, and it was. In fact, within a couple of months of arriving, I was rather publically dating another male PhD student in the English department. I was completely out to my friends, peers, and colleagues in the program. How wonderful to live my personal and professional lives without worrying that my sexual orientation would limit me, prevent me from thriving in my career, or unfairly prejudice my professors’ or my students’ opinion of my professional skills and expertise.

My personal identity—more specifically, my sexual orientation—became a non-issue. I wondered how or when the matter of my sexual orientation would arise in the classroom. When would my attraction to men be an issue of pedagogical importance as I taught first-year composition to undergraduate students? As I

discovered, not any time soon. It seemed that successfully integrating my personal and professional lives did not automatically qualify me as an expert in queer pedagogy. I was no more qualified, at that point, to incorporate queer issues into my teaching in a pedagogically sound fashion than a woman who has given birth is automatically qualified to teach a course in motherhood. I came to realize that the dilemma of identity integration was not directly related to my teaching abilities. Being more fully self-actualized as an explicitly out gay male teacher did not necessarily make me a *better* teacher. It simply made me more confident, more comfortable, and less anxious—and thus better able to focus on my teaching practice. My nine years of experience as a high school teacher had certainly made me a better teacher, but relief from the burden of policing myself and suppressing my sexual orientation made me a calmer, more reflective teacher. Since I was no longer devising strategies I could use to hide my sexuality and I was no longer preoccupied with the omnipresent anxiety of being outed, I now had more time, energy, and focus to devote to teaching.

I found, however, that the challenge of successfully incorporating queer issues into my teaching required far more than merely being explicitly out. I knew myself better than I had in the past, and I felt much more at ease with my new, undivided identity—but I was still unsure of how or why I would even need to be explicitly out to my students. What would be the point of announcing on the first day of class, “Hi, I’m Jim. I’ll be your instructor this semester, and I’m queer”? Would it be better to mention it at a pedagogically strategic moment? (I suppose I’d have to

first figure out what that pedagogically strategic moment might look like.) Or would it be best to develop an instructional unit around sexual orientation—and if so, what kind of sound pedagogical rationale could I use to justify such a unit in my composition class? Indeed, being explicitly out had precipitated an entirely new set of challenges. But unlike the challenges and questions I struggled with when I was passing, covering, and implicitly out, these new challenges were not necessarily about *me*—they were clearly focused on the material I would teach, the strategies I would use to teach it, the rationale for teaching it, the learning outcomes I hoped to achieve, and the ways in which learning this material and developing critical skills regarding sexual orientation would benefit my students.

My quest to understand the complex interrelations among my own development as a teacher and as a gay man, my students' development as young adults and as learners, the culture of the educational institutions where I practiced my craft, and the broader cultural context of the late 20th- and early 21st-century United States gave rise to this dissertation.

CHAPTER TWO:
SCHOOL GENDER REGIMES, QUEER THEORY, AND THE SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION OF
TEACHER IDENTITY:
A REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Introduction

Twenty-first century American culture has witnessed a considerable blurring of the boundary between an individual's private life and his/her public persona. Historically, celebrities, professional athletes, politicians, prominent business people, and other public figures were the only ones concerned with managing their public personae, which often entailed suppressing (or keeping private) numerous details of their private lives. They were, in fact, the few members of American society who genuinely needed to be concerned about keeping these aspects of their lives separate, since they were well known to a vast portion of the American public. Their professional lives were lived in public, whether on movie screens, on playing fields, or in the halls of government; therefore, they carefully cultivated a public persona that was often distinct from—if not necessarily at odds with—their private identity.

Celebrities and other publicly known figures, regardless of sexual orientation, scrupulously hid certain details of their lives from the general public. The “scandalous” private lives of both closeted gay men—such as actors Montgomery Clift and Rock Hudson—and philandering heterosexual men—such as

Presidents Franklin Delano Roosevelt and John Fitzgerald Kennedy—were “open secrets” to those who knew them well. And for the most part, those who knew these “secrets” respected the implied boundary between private life and public persona. These men’s private lives became public knowledge only after their deaths, when those “in the know” could reveal their secrets without fear of consequence or when enough time had passed to negate any possible recriminations.

The development of new technologies, however, from television to the Internet to smartphones, has altered the lives of not only public figures but of just about everyone who uses these technologies. Although these technologies offer significant advantages and have proven to be immensely useful in a variety of ways, their usefulness often comes at the cost of some degree of privacy. Perhaps one of the first and most far-reaching examples of the way in which technology forever altered the life of a public figure is the Watergate scandal that led to President Richard Nixon’s resignation. For the first time in US history, a sitting President chose to resign his office, doomed by the use of technology (in this case, tape recordings) that revealed to the world his private insecurities, vendettas, and insatiable lust for power.

As Daniel Mendelsohn (2012) explains, the rapid proliferation of new technologies has created a “reality problem” that has severely changed “the way we think about and conduct our lives”:

Certainly one side effect of the ongoing erosion of the boundary between the inner and the outer self, itself made possible by new technologies and media

that allow us to be private in public (smartphones, iPods, blogs, Facebook, etc.), is a profound alteration in our sense of what is truth and what is fiction; readers of a good deal of contemporary writing must ponder the difference between (as one memoirist has put it) “real reality” and “my reality.” ...The reality problem is, I think, the preeminent cultural event of our day... (p. xii)

Being “private in public” no longer applies only to celebrities and politicians like film director Woody Allen (alleged child sexual abuse), former US Senator and presidential hopeful Gary Hart (alleged marital infidelity), professional football player Ray Rice (videotaped assaulting his fiancée in a public elevator), professional football player Adrian Peterson (corporal punishment of his children), or comedian/actor Bill Cosby (alleged serial rape). If one of the definitions of “celebrity” is a person who is known to more people than he/she knows personally, and since teachers are already subject to a heightened degree of scrutiny by virtue of their daily interactions with—and presumed moral influence over—other people’s children, then teachers qualify as small scale celebrities whose private lives a local community may very well feel justified surveilling. And since many of us—including teachers—now use technology to live our private lives in public, we are all confronted with the challenge of developing, integrating, and managing our private, professional, and public identities, an enterprise that is perhaps more fraught with consequence for teachers than it is for the rest of the technology-using public.

In this chapter, I address the paradox of teachers’ identity management and whether (and when) it might be advantageous, prudent, or effective to integrate

various aspects of one's identity or to maintain relatively pronounced boundaries between the different elements of one's identity. I examine scholarship in a number of fields—namely, the social construction of gender, sexual identity, and masculinity; queer theory; and teacher identity development—in order to synthesize a theory that describes and differentiates the process of identity development for teachers who identify as LGBTQ. I then review the ways in which the complex and often agonizing process of identity development for LGBTQ educators exerts an impact on both tangible and intangible aspects of their effectiveness.

Some Historical Perspective and a Working Definition

As Foucault (1990) explains, the ambivalent relationship between schools and sexuality has affected teachers and students since as far back as the eighteenth century. The topic of sex was diligently avoided, but it was simultaneously an obsession:

On the whole, one can have the impression that sex was hardly spoken of at all in these institutions. But one only has to glance over the architectural layout, the rules of discipline, and their whole internal organization: the question of sex was a constant preoccupation. The builders considered it explicitly. The organizers took it permanently into account. All who held a measure of authority were placed in a state of perpetual alert, which the

fixtures, the precautions taken, the interplay of punishments and responsibilities, never ceased to reiterate. (pp. 27-28)

The gendering of education has an equally lengthy history. As Martino (2008) points out, “The gender politics surrounding elementary teaching as women’s work—with its emasculating associations for male teachers and boys—has a history that can be traced back to the mid-1800s” (p. 195). Hegemonic masculinity combines both of these forces—the regulation of teacher and student sexuality along with the gendering of teaching and learning—to control privilege and power in education; Vavrus (2009) argues that, in the contexts of the social dynamics of education, privilege has been historically (and currently) “acquired by displays of masculinity” (p. 386).

These delicate issues of sexual surveillance, gender regulation, power, and privilege exacerbate—or perhaps lead to—the difficulty of articulating the complex process of teacher identity development. Alsup (2005) suggests that “identity concerns are rarely addressed in teacher education courses [because] they are difficult to tackle, and are often uncomfortable for the instructor or mentor to talk about” (p. 4). Furthermore, defining “teacher identity” or identifying the dimensions of “teacher identity” can become distinctly subjective endeavors. Gender alone, which Butler (1990) claims often precipitates “a certain crisis in ontology experienced at the level of both sexuality and language” (pp. xi-xii), is enough to problematize identity. Vavrus (2009) suggests that capitalism and both personal and institutional economics (which are related to power and privilege) are

additional complicating factors; he concludes that “each teacher’s identity [is] fluid, situation specific, and historically contingent on power relations that constitute a society’s cultural, political, and economic practices” (p. 385). Therefore, I am focusing here on a few distinct but interrelated dimensions—gender, sexuality, and power—that affect the identity development process for all teachers, irrespective of experience level.

Akkerman and Meijer (2011) propose a broad, multifarious, and process-oriented definition of “teacher identity,” which will be useful for my examination of the strategies LGBTQ teachers employ as they endeavor to merge their personal and professional identities:

we suggest defining “teacher identity”, and being “someone who teaches” as *an ongoing process of negotiating and interrelating multiple I-positions in such a way that a more or less coherent and consistent sense of self is maintained throughout various participations and self-investments in one’s (working) life.*

[italics in original] (p. 315)

As implied by both Vavrus’ characterization of teacher identity as “fluid” and Akkerman and Meijer’s suggestion that teacher identity as “an ongoing process,” teacher identity itself is quite queer indeed.

Gender, Heteronormativity, Hegemonic Masculinity and Teacher Identity

As Alsup (2005) has discussed, certain “aspects of identity development... involve the integration of the personal self with the professional self, and the ‘taking

on' of a culturally scripted, often narrowly defined, professional role while maintaining individuality" (p. 4). I consider gender and sexuality as two of those aspects within the context of the heteronormative strictures of early twenty-first century American culture (broadly writ) and the more specific institution of public education. Indeed, many teachers do conform to gender role expectations as well as our culture's heteronormative boundaries with respect to sexuality. Other teachers, however, attempt to negotiate their individual gender identities and sexual orientations while resisting culturally prescribed heteronormative expectations regarding what it means to "be" a teacher; this latter group participates in a kind of "gender revolution," which Seidman (1993) characterizes as an important facet of "gay liberation": "The struggle against the homo/hetero dichotomy is intertwined with the struggle against a sex-role system that views masculinity and femininity as mutually exclusive categories of gender identity" (pp. 113-114). As teachers engage in the process of identity development, they also engage in the process of culturally constructing gender—in other words, teacher identity is performative in nature, and the performance of "teacher" encompasses a performance of gender, which—as Butler (1990) has explained, "is not a singular act, but a repetition and a ritual" (p. xv). And just as gender is "a changeable and revisable reality" (p. xxiv), so too is teacher identity.

Heteronormativity and hegemonic masculinity are chief among the "ever-present social, cultural, and historical forces" (p. 302) that Philaretou and Allen (2001) identify as instrumental in the social construction of gender identities and

roles. Philaretou and Allen acknowledge that factors such as gender, sexual orientation, age, physical ability, race, and social stratification (pp. 303-307) consequently affect the social construction of masculinities. Ultimately, they claim, “sexual reality is socially constructed and privately experienced” (p. 308). This is especially true for teachers, because the social and cultural pressures of heteronormativity and hegemonic masculinity compel them to perform their public, professional identity as an educator in compliance with a privately experienced—albeit tacit and unacknowledged—sexuality that, in the case of LGBTQ teachers, does not necessarily correspond to the prescribed gender norms of their professional identity. As Endo, Reece-Miller, and Santavicca (2010) assert, “Coupled with the heteronormative expectations of all teachers are gender stereotypes, namely the belief that men should act like men and women should act like women” (p. 1029). Adhering to these expectations is challenging for any man who teaches, since teaching is widely regarded as (heterosexual) “women’s work”; it is especially troubling for anyone who identifies as LGBTQ.

Queer theory provides a lens through which the impact of heteronormativity, gender, and masculinity on teacher identity development may be viewed. As Gamson (2000) explains:

The critique of identity runs throughout queer theoretical writings: Identities are multiple, contradictory, fragmented, incoherent, disciplinary, disunified, unstable, fluid—hardly the stuff that allows a researcher to confidently run

out and study sexual subjects as if they are coherent and available social types. (p. 356)

Also acknowledging the numerous elements that contribute to the development and construction of an identity, Letts (2002) describes identity categories as “fluid and shifting”; they “allow people to construct, deconstruct, reconstruct, and move more or less freely among them” (p. 125). Queering identity connotes “the refusal of *any* normalization, based on sex, ethnicity, social class and so forth” (p. 124). The challenge, however, for LGBTQ teachers experiencing the identity development process is that their efforts to integrate their private identity with the stringently prescribed professional identity expectations of a teacher require them to unsettle “the hegemony of heterosexuality and the sociocultural system that installs it as a form of dominance” (Rodriguez, 2007, p. 280).

Any effort to queer the concept of teacher identity must involve queering gender, which in turn would undermine heteronormativity, hegemonic masculinity, and the power and privilege associated with these cultural forces. Rasmussen (2004) supports Philaretou and Allen’s (2001) assertion that numerous factors affect socially constructed identities and cites “age, family background, economic position, and race” (p. 147) among them; Rasmussen also believes that identity is continuously negotiated (i.e., always under construction, unstable, queer). As Butler (1990) suggests, masculinity may be deconstructed through the radical uncoupling of gender and sex (p. 9). Halberstam (1998) also argues that “masculinity must not and cannot and should not reduce down to the male body and its effects” (p. 1).

Connell (2000) suggests that masculinities themselves are performative; he explains: “Masculinities are neither programmed in our genes, nor fixed by social structure, prior to social interaction. They come into existence as people act. They are actively produced, using the resources and strategies available in a given social setting” (p. 12). He subsequently implies that masculinities are rather queer: “There is abundant evidence that masculinities do change. Masculinities are created in specific historical circumstances and, as those circumstances change, the gender practices can be contested and reconstructed” (pp. 13-14). According to Kimmel (2004), masculinity is “a constantly changing collection of meanings that we construct through our relationships with ourselves, with each other, and with our world...Manhood means different things at different times to different people” (p. 182). Haywood and Mac an Ghail (2003) offer a detailed analysis of performative gender and “uncoupling *what men do* from *what men are*” (p. 15; emphasis in original). They identify its potential for reforming conceptualizations of masculinity and cultural connections between sex and gender, and they argue that:

we need to develop this idea and in particular disconnect masculinity from male bodies. Masculinity and femininity in this way should be understood as something that cannot simply be equated with biological sex. The implication of this is that, at particular historical junctures, female bodies are able to take on and live out particular masculinities. (p. 15)

Clearly, it is possible to deconstruct and reconstruct masculinity, which in turn will have an impact on prevailing heteronormative cultural beliefs and practices,

including those that affect the development of teacher identities. As the following section will illustrate, masculinity—as it’s currently constructed—may indeed be the “social problem” (Tolson, 2004, p. 78) at the root of heteronormativity.

Schools as Gendered Sites of Heteronormative Power and Privilege

Sexism and hegemonic masculinity conspire to propagate and enforce heteronormative values in a given culture. Seidman (1993) claims, “In American society, sexism is responsible for the creation of a homosexual and heterosexual identity and a masculine and feminine identity that privilege heterosexual men” (p. 114). Consequently, heteronormativity establishes a power differential in favor of heterosexual men. As Carrigan, Connell, and Lee (2004) explain, “One of the central facts about masculinity...is that men in general are advantaged through the subordination of women” (p. 152). They add, “hegemonic masculinity is hegemonic so far as it embodies a successful strategy in relation to women” (p. 155). Connell (2005) tentatively defines masculinity as “simultaneously a place in gender relations, the practices through which men and women engage that place in gender, and the effects of these practices in bodily experience, personality and culture” (p. 71). Traditionally masculine values include independence, aggression, emotional restraint, physical strength, the glorification of violence, and the acquisition and exercise of power, legitimacy, and privilege (Philaretou & Allen, 2001, p. 310; Halberstam, 1998, p. 2). Kimmel (2004) notes that “The hegemonic definition of manhood is a man in power, a man *with* power, and a man of power” (p. 184) and

that “manhood is only possible for a distinct minority, and the definition has been constructed to prevent the others from achieving it” (p. 192).

Within the context of schools and other educational institutions, hegemonic masculinity supersedes all other kinds of masculinities and confers power and privilege upon those who control it. Haywood and Mac an Ghail (1996) explain the ways in which masculinities are constructed with respect to various other factors—such as race, ethnicity, and socioeconomic status, as mentioned earlier by Philaretou and Allen (2001) and Rasmussen (2004)—within schools to create power differentials:

Masculinities do not have a one-dimensional identity, rather they embody multiple dimensions... An important development in the theorization of masculinities and schooling is to see that...social locations create the conditions for relations of power. There are different masculinities with differential access to power, practices of power and differential effects of power. (p. 51)

Although some progress has been made in recent years, heterosexual men who have demonstrated the culturally sanctioned traits of hegemonic masculinity seem to enjoy the greatest positions of power and privilege within educational institutions. Connell (2000) describes the “familiar...pattern” of power relations in school systems: “the association of masculinity with authority, and the concentration of men in supervisory positions” (p. 153). Heterosexual male teachers often capitalize on the cultural advantages of hegemonic masculinity by catapulting themselves into

power as administrators. Gay male teachers, however, who may not exhibit heteronormative forms of masculinity, do not enjoy the same advantages. As Mac an Ghaill (1994) explains, schools are “deeply gendered and heterosexual regimes” (p. 4) that do not afford LGBTQ teachers feasible opportunities to successfully integrate their personal identities with their public, professional identities. The primary components of these heteronormative gender regimes—symbolism, patterns of emotion, and a division of labor (Connell, 2000, pp. 153-154)—codify and dictate behavioral expectations, which conflict with many elements of most LGBTQ teachers’ private identities, including their performance of masculinity.

Much of the power within schools remains firmly in the hands of men—usually heterosexual men. Quantitative data support these observations regarding the gendering of power in schools. For example, Blount (2005) reports that “women account for the overwhelming majority of teachers. A recent NEA report indicates that in 2001, women held 79 percent of all teaching positions and men only 21 percent” (p. 180). A more recent report, conducted in 2006, indicates that women now hold 70 percent of all teaching positions (NEA, 2010, p. 112). But, as Blount (2005) points out, “the school superintendency has remained male-associated throughout the twentieth century. In 1910, men held 91 percent of all superintendencies. A recent study indicates that in 2000, men accounted for a notably similar proportion: 87 percent” (p. 180). She goes on to describe the gender inequity among school leaders:

Although women have begun attaining school administrative positions in growing numbers, their presence in the positions of greatest responsibility and remuneration is still quite limited, especially in light of women's dominating presence in teaching, the field from which superintendents are eventually drawn. (pp. 180-181)

Leadership at the school level reproduces this gendered power imbalance.

According to the National Center for Education Statistics (2012), in 2007-2008, men accounted for only 41 percent of all American public elementary school principals, but at the secondary level, 71 percent of American public school principals were men. Being married (usually to a member of the opposite sex) also appears to be the norm for the majority of teachers. According to the 2010 NEA report cited earlier, only 13 percent of all teachers identified themselves as "Single, never married" (p. 115). And as Blount (2005) concludes, "the vast majority of high school principals and school superintendents are married men, many of whom also have coached high school male athletics. As such, they symbolically epitomize heterosexual masculinity" (p. 181).

Despite what Martino (2008) has characterized as "the perceived intensified feminization of elementary schooling and the anxieties it incites for men doing women's work," which he cites as an "example of defensive masculinity" (p. 192), the gender divide among the rank and file slowly appears to be eroding. Referring to a report published by the National Education Association [NEA] in 2005, Blount (2005) states, "few men teach in elementary school classrooms. Men accounted for

only 9 percent of such positions in 2000” (p. 182). The NEA’s 2010 report, however, indicates that the percentage of male elementary teachers nearly doubled between the years of 2000 and 2005, jumping from 9 percent to 17 percent (p. 112).

This increase is merely a first step toward reversing the institutionalized heteronormativity that leads to gendered behavior and knowledge in schools. Hegemony is often negotiated and enforced at the state level; it “closely involves the division of labor, the social definitions of tasks as either ‘men’s work’ or ‘women’s work,’ and the definition of some kinds of work as more masculine than others” (Carrigan, Connell, & Lee, 2004, p. 156). Philaretou and Allen (2001) explain that “The essentializing of the social construction of masculinity and femininity, as culturally based ideologies necessary for the scripting of gender relations, attitudes, and beliefs, constitutes a powerful force entrenched in the pillars of social institutions” (p. 311). Schools are, of course, among the most common of these social institutions that serve as sites for the propagation and perpetuation of heteronormativity and hegemonic masculinity, which constitute part of the hidden curriculum taught “unintentionally, through values promoted by teachers, administration, boards and parents, [including] a taken-for-granted normative sexuality and concomitant expectations of gender behaviour” (Khayatt, 2006, p. 135).

The behavioral dynamics of institutions—government entities, schools, businesses, unions, families, community organizations—and individuals’ personal behaviors demonstrate (one might even say “perform”) these values (Carrigan,

Connell, & Lee, 2004, p. 153). As Mac an Ghail (1994) notes, schools are especially “complex gendered and heterosexual arenas” (p. 4). Both Mac an Ghail (1994) and Connell (2000) discuss the impact of a school’s *gender regime* on relationships of power and privilege within the institutions; Connell (2000) defines the term as “The totality of gender arrangements within a school” (p. 152), and Mac an Ghail (1994) explains, “the school microcultures of management, teachers and students are key infrastructural mechanisms through which masculinities and femininities are mediated and lived out.” He considers schools “as deeply gendered and heterosexual regimes, [which] construct relations of domination and subordination within and across these microcultures” (p. 4).

The primary components of a school’s gender regime are power relations, symbolism, patterns of emotion, and a division of labor (Connell, 2000, pp. 153-154). As noted earlier, most of the power within schools resides with heterosexual men; in most schools, “masculinities tend to operate through mechanisms of official power and authority” (Haywood & Mac an Ghail, 2003, p. 64). As Connell (2000) explains, symbolism serves a school’s heteronormative gender regime by combining icons and signs from the broader culture with symbols indigenous to school culture:

Schools import much of the symbolization of gender from the wider culture, but they have their own symbol systems too: uniforms and dress codes, formal and informal language codes, etc. A particularly important symbolic structure in education is the gendering of knowledge, the defining of certain

areas of the curriculum as masculine and others feminine. Activities such as sports may also be of great importance in the symbolism of gender. (p. 154)

Here Connell (2000) identifies both the curriculum and extracurricular activities such as sports as significant symbolic structures in the gender regime. He continues:

Academic subjects may...have strong gender meanings. It has long been recognized that physical sciences are culturally defined as masculine and have a concentration of men teachers....English, by contrast, is feminized. In the eyes of many...boys, English classes are distanced by their focus on the expression of emotions, their apparent irrelevance to men's work, the lack of set rules and unique answers, and the contrast with activities defined as properly masculine, such as sport. (p. 158)

Gard (2002) describes school and university physical education programs as significant sites "for the construction of gendered identities"; the social interactions that occur in physical education programs—which blend the curricular and the extracurricular—contribute to "the construction of knowledge about gender, sexuality, race, and class" (p. 47) that transpires under a school's gender regime.

The patterns of emotion that are deemed acceptable according to the gender regimes of schools closely correspond to the structure of symbolism and the division of labor between men and women. As Mac an Ghail (1994) explains:

teaching, which is often seen as a "soft" job, is not...unambiguously masculine, because it involves emotional engagement and caring for children, which are traditionally defined as women's work. Classroom life is not

predisposed to accommodate such emotional ambiguity, which challenges the gender-ascribed “masculine function” of discipline and the “feminine function” of caring/nurturing, with their attendant juxtaposed connotations of physical strength and emotional vulnerability. (p. 37)

Connell (2000) describes the “feeling rules” that are often associated with specific occupations and roles in education, such as “the tough duty principal” or “the drama teacher”: “Among the most important feeling rules in schools are those concerned with sexuality, and the prohibition on homosexuality may be particularly important in definitions of masculinity” (p. 153). In addition, “certain nurturing behaviors, like being affectionate or touching, are unacceptable for men because they are associated with femininity” (Berrill & Martino, 2002, p. 62)

The division of labor in schools—apparent among the administration, the faculty, and the staff—parallels the gendering of academic knowledge and reproduces the gendered power relations that characterize the school’s gender regime. For example, female teachers tend to dominate family and consumer sciences, language and literature classes, whereas men predominate in science, mathematics, and industrial arts (Connell, 2000, p. 153). Haywood and Mac an Ghail (2003) identify the curriculum as a “strategic” area for the “veneration of particular masculine codes,” along with “disciplinary procedures, normalizing judgements and the examination” as powerful elements of a school’s gender regime: “Hierarchically organized knowledges legitimate particular spaces for masculinities to exist. It is important to stress that schools proscribe and prescribe specific kinds of

knowledges” (p. 65). Even much of the non-teaching staff abides by preconceived gender divisions—clerical and kitchen staff are traditionally female, while maintenance and custodial staff are usually male.

In addition to dictating the gendered division of labor among academic subjects and power relationships—as Blount (2005) bluntly puts it, “To generalize, women teach and men administer” (p. 181)—school gender regimes also enforce heteronormativity by regulating gender expression and sexual orientation. Blount (2005) theorizes that, “Because of the historically strong association of elementary teaching with women, men essentially cross the line of gender-propriety by working in this area. And...such gender transgression in the case of men is presumed to indicate gay or bisexual status” (p. 182). Khayatt (2006) argues, the “elision of gay male sexuality with ‘femininity’ ...renders schools sites where a hegemonic masculinity disavows any deviation from heteronormativity” (p. 137).

Although all teachers—male, female, gay, straight, queer—must cope with the “fear and denial of all sexuality” that, according to McNinch (2007), “define the educational environment” (p. 208), the plight of men, particularly men who identify as gay, is especially arduous. According to Martino (2008), “homophobia, compulsory heterosexuality and hegemonic masculinity play” a significant role “in determining both the limits of male teachers’ professional identities and their pedagogical practices in the classroom” (p. 191). Pinar (2007) describes the effects of school gender regimes on straight men:

In a profession gendered female, straight men are double punk'd. Like boys who play with girls during childhood, men who teach are not "real" men. Forced to submit to the political will of (mostly straight male) legislators, straight men suffer gendered positions of "gracious submission," the term Southern Baptists employed to depict the "biblical" relation of wives to their husbands. (pp. 155-156)

Perhaps this phenomenon of straight men subjugating other straight men through a school's gender regime exemplifies Kimmel's (2004) statement regarding "the great secret of American manhood: *We are afraid of other men*" (p. 188). Martino (2008) believes that "Within...a gender hierarchical context of labour relations within the education system, those men who remained in schools 'doing women's work' increasingly risked being stigmatized as *sissies* or effeminate men" (p. 202). The English classroom, for example, is often identified as a "feminized pedagogical site," which counters "dominant constructions of masculinity and leads men to regulate their behaviors in very specific ways" (Berrill & Martino, 2002, p. 61).

Ironically enough, most men who work in education are complicit in their own oppression. As Vavrus (2009) found in his study of preservice teachers, "With the exception of a memorable teacher or two, all of the teacher candidates reported that teachers in their schools participated in the enforcement of traditional gender roles and heteronormativity through overt actions or by their silences" (p. 387-388). Other recent research substantiates the idea that male teachers support—rather than challenge—hegemonic masculinity in schools. Many male teachers,

whether intentionally or not, tend to reinforce gender-stereotypical behavior amongst themselves and their male students (Martino, 2008, p. 214). Rofes (2000), himself an openly gay teacher, explains the self-defeating nature of such complicity:

we are wrong if we pretend that our mere presence in the classroom is counterhegemonic. Being transgressive because we are openly gay, yet compliant because we affirm traditional masculinities, may do little to alter the sex/gender system that wreaks havoc in our everyday lives. (p. 143)

It's Different for LGBTQs

Within the context of these prescriptive heteronormative gender regimes, teachers endeavor to integrate their personal identities with their professional identities. Almost all teachers, as Alsup (2005) explains, struggle with a “fundamental paradox in the cultural model of teacher in the United States”:

For a teacher to be a hero, our society says he or she must be selfless; however, only the teacher who has developed a rich, well-rounded identity, or sense of self, is truly successful in the classroom. Thus, the successful teacher must be selfless and selfish at the same time, a seemingly impossible seesaw to balance. (p. 25)

New teachers experience rather acutely this “struggle with assuming a professional identity that both respects their personal ideologies and functions in the professional arena” (pp. 191-192). Confoundingly, the boundaries that distinguish personal identities from professional identities blur even as teachers are

indoctrinated into a mode of professional behavior best characterized by emotional detachment. Akkerman and Meijer (2011) note that “boundaries between the personal and the professional context become indistinct. All that a teacher considers relevant to his profession, that he or she tries to achieve in work, is part of the whole ‘personal’ self” (p. 317). Haywood and Mac an Ghioll (2003), however, assert that the “remasculinization of teaching practice is characterized by emotional detachment... [and] less sociability between teacher and students as contemporary teaching appears more formalized, dissolving the intimacy and complexity of their interaction” (p. 64). Epstein and Johnson (1998) offer this assessment:

successful teachers have to put enough of themselves into their performances, allow enough glimpses into their own lives, to fire the imaginations of their students. For all teachers, this is a process which can be difficult since it demands a performance which is both revealing (enough to be seductive) and masking (because of the required desexualization of teachers). (p. 134)

Teacher identity development, it seems, is an exercise in double consciousness—a perpetual attempt to reconcile the seemingly irreconcilable.

The dilemma of identity development is especially difficult for LGBTQ teachers. Kissen (1996) explains that lesbians and gay men become teachers for much the same reasons that straight people do—their concern for children and the future, their love for ideas or a particular field of study. They develop skill and expertise just as straight educators do. Sexual orientation often plays no role in the

decision to become a teacher; Kissen asserts, however, “Only when they encounter the pressures of homophobia—the fear and hatred of gay people—does being a teacher become a problem” (p. 15). She proceeds to explicate the ways in which a gay sexual orientation—whether acknowledged before or after one becomes a teacher—complicates the identity development process in ways that simply do not affect straight teachers:

Teachers who know they are gay before they enter the profession must consider what that identity will mean for them as educators; those who come out after they have already begun teaching find this new identity a threat in an environment where they have always felt at home. Either way, acknowledging a gay identity means rethinking the whole notion of being a teacher. (p. 16)

Although straight teachers must also behave within the confines of their school’s heteronormative gender regimes, doing so is considerably easier for them since their sexual orientations and gender identities either conform to the established expectations or lie close enough to heteronormative boundaries even if they transgress slightly. Yes, they must incorporate their personal identities with their professional identities, but the process is relatively simple for them. But, as Kissen (1996) says, “For lesbians and gay men who come out after they are already teaching, the problem is not whether to be a teacher, but how to incorporate this new identity into the lives they have already constructed” (p. 20).

Many LGBTQ educators resolve this identity conflict by simply prioritizing one identity over another and refusing to integrate them. In their study of lesbian teachers, Woods and Harbeck (1992) found that:

A love of teaching coupled with the fear of professional repercussions often outweighed a participant's need to be open about her lesbian identity. The bottom line for many was that being a teacher was more important than being out as a lesbian. (p. 148)

Griffin (1992) ascertained that many "Gay and lesbian educators believe that a strict separation between their personal and professional lives is required and that to be publicly 'out' at school would cost them their jobs" (p. 168). The specter of perception as a sexual deviant often compels LGBTQ educators to deny an integral part of their identities. As Rofes (2000) says, "Gay male teacher identities rarely allow men room to construct personas that do not suppress the erotic, yet also do not become leering, harassing leeches who are inappropriate in a workplace" (p. 144). And in their study of male student teachers, Berrill and Martino (2002) made the following observation:

Given the association of gay men with deviancy and the capacity to threaten students' learning, [one gay teacher candidate] believes that he must disconnect himself from his private role in the public domain of teaching students in schools and avoid being designated as the deviant homosexual other. Thus he must fashion himself first and foremost as a *normal* male in

his role as teacher in a site where deviating from the heterosexual norm risks attributions of pedophilia. (pp. 66-67)

The pressure to escape suspicion as an alleged pervert or predator—no matter how outlandish or ill-conceived that accusation might be—often compels LGBTQ educators to deny their sexuality altogether, effecting a form of sacrificial neutering.

Identity Management Strategies: Consequences and Benefits

Numerous factors can affect an LGBTQ teacher's decision to adopt any of the aforementioned identity management strategies (passing; covering; implicitly out; explicitly out). An LGBTQ educator may choose to remain closeted (or pass) in order to avoid "personal danger and financial ruin" (Harbeck, 1992, p. 124); other negative consequences of coming out could include "limited advancement, ungranted tenure, mundane duty assignments, and undesirable teaching loads" (Harbeck, 1992, p. 131). In many states and municipalities, teachers may be fired outright for being openly LGBTQ, especially if they teach in subject areas that transgress traditional gender roles (Woods & Harbeck, 1992, p. 143). Kissen (1996) notes that "Concealing a gay identity can be especially stressful in job interviews, where truth telling has legal as well as moral implications" (p. 47). The historic case of Joseph Acanfora (Sedgwick, 1990; Blount, 2005) demonstrates this danger. Acanfora, an eighth grade science teacher from Maryland, was relieved of his teaching duties when the School Board learned that he was gay. He sued to get his job back: "after finding constitutional infringements upon Acanfora's fundamental

rights, the judge resolved the case in favor of the school board on the grounds that Ancanfora lied about his political activities as a homosexual on his job application” (p. 127). Therefore, as Kissen (1996) states:

Gay teachers know that in most places they can be fired outright because of their sexual orientation, or they can be harassed, humiliated, or pressured to resign by parents, students, or others in the community. For those who consider teaching to be their primary identity, the thought of never being able to teach again is devastating. (p. 73)

Many teachers must deal with a variety of personal and professional consequences for choosing to pass or remaining closeted:

- Self-hatred and non-acceptance (Woods & Harbeck, 1992, p. 160; Griffin, 1992, p. 168)
- Stress, frustration, fear, and isolation (Woods & Harbeck, 1992, p. 160; Griffin, 1992, p. 168)
- Energy devoted to constant vigilance about protecting one’s identity (Griffin, 1992, p. 168)
- Inability to function as an honest member of the school community (Woods & Harbeck, 1992, p. 160)
- Failure to serve as role models and intervene on behalf of LGBTQ students (Woods & Harbeck, 1992, p. 155; Kissen, 1996, p. 57)

As Patricia Nicolari, a Health and Physical Education teacher from Connecticut put it: “If I wasn’t feeling good about who I was because I was hiding a part of my

identity, how could I expect my students to feel good about who they were? I wasn't practicing what I was preaching" (Jennings, 2005, p. 19).

Multiple arguments can be made for the benefits of coming out in the classroom. McNinch (2007) asserts in order to "be authentic," teachers must "dispense with masks and suits of armour" (p. 207). He argues:

we diminish our potential for passionate desire (eros) if we dismiss our sexuality (the erotic)...as nobody else's business, or just a matter of biology or politics, or (worse), like some conservative colleagues, diminish or misrepresent it to be a mere or unfortunate "preference" or "life-style." (p. 207)

For some teachers, being out is simply "a better alternative to lying" (Woods & Harbeck, 1992, p. 159). Kissen (1996) observed some positive effects of coming out in the classroom: "As they struggle to integrate their new gay identities into their established teaching identities, most lesbian and gay teachers ultimately find [a] 'different energy' [as] a source of strength." One teacher who acknowledged her lesbian identity "changed her teaching along with the rest of her life. 'I saw myself starting...to become more issue concerned. Not just gay-lesbian issues but issues of life. I don't know—but somebody finally turned a light on that said, these things concern you'" (p. 22). Some teachers welcome the coming out process as yet another opportunity to teach. Alan Miller, a six-foot-two, 200-pound out gay teacher, understands that he must repeat the coming out process each year for new students and colleagues:

He does not announce on the first day of class that he is gay. “I don’t generally want to come out early in the semester,” he explained, “because I don’t want to be stereotyped. I don’t have a problem being known as a gay man, but I also don’t want it to be my only identity. I’m plenty of other things too, and I want people to know me for my writing, my political activism, and the other things I do. I’m a big, black, gay man, and I enjoy fucking with their minds by breaking down lots of different stereotypes.” (Woog, 1995, p. 110)

Whether and however an LGBTQ teacher may choose to come out, the act of doing so introduces an element of confession into the teacher identity development process—an aspect that most straight teachers never have to consider. As Foucault (1990) reminds us, confession:

unfolds within a power relationship, for one does not confess without the presence (or virtual presence) of a partner who is not simply the interlocutor but the authority who requires the confession, prescribes and appreciates it, and intervenes in order to judge, punish, forgive, console, and reconcile. (p. 27-28)

Within this context, the confessor (teacher) will be unburdened of his or her transgressions, liberated, and granted “salvation.” When this confession is coerced or expected only of LGBTQ teachers—when would a heterosexual teacher ever be expected to “confess” his/her sexuality?—it is accompanied by a significant degree of toxic shame and persecution, a debilitating and destructive element that undoubtedly diminishes a teacher’s sense of pride and effectiveness. Sedgwick

(1990) also characterizes the act of a teacher coming out as a type of confession: “the space for simply existing as a gay person who is a teacher is in fact bayoneted through and through, from both sides, by the vectors of a disclosure at once compulsory and forbidden” (p. 70).

Incorporating an LGBTQ sexual orientation into a professional teacher identity, in fact, queers the entire identity development process, for—as Elliott (1996) explains—whether to come out is a choice that is not really a choice. There is no clear-cut advantage of coming out over remaining closeted, nor vice versa. Both options result in positive and negative consequences, which vary according to a broad range of factors, some of which are related to other aspects of the teacher’s identity and some of which are contextual in nature (community values, setting, political ideology, legal statutes, policy, etc.). Elliott (1996) states:

Most recent work on coming out assumes a political position that privileges disclosure over non-disclosure and self-naming over a pretense to “neutrality,” seeing these as strategies that resist conservative institutional pressures to preserve the silence and invisibility enshrouding gay and lesbian identities. (p. 693)

As she explains, however, neutrality (or covering, as I described it earlier) is an option available only to those who can convincingly pass as straight: “Neutrality...is a universal cultural default setting which is almost always presumed to be heterosexual and white; it is not available to those who cannot ‘pass’ as either or

both” (p. 698). Neutrality and neutering, it seems, share more than an etymology (*neutral* derives from the Latin *neutralis*, meaning “of neuter gender”).

Elliott (1996) ultimately concludes that an LGBTQ sexual orientation—which creates the “problem” of whether to confess an integral aspect of one’s personal identity—inherently differentiates the identity development process for queer teachers from that of straight teachers and presents LGBTQ educators with an identity development quandary that is not a part of the process for their straight colleagues:

that public “identity,” because it is predicated upon private taboo sexual practices, can never achieve full status *as* an identity in the heterosexist mind. Coming out will almost always, therefore, feel more like the confession of a secret than we who live within the consciousness of a complex gay and lesbian culture would wish. (p. 704)

Elliott (1996) claims that “discourses of fear, shame, secrecy, lying, and self-disclosure” as well as “experiences of abject terror, self-doubt, and self-recrimination” (p. 696) characterize the coming out process. She also clearly details the confessional plea for acceptance that coming out often constitutes and shows how straight teachers are rarely burdened by this type of confession:

the coming-out gesture asks something of its putatively straight audience: “Accept me”—“Don’t accept me”—“See what we have in common”—“See what we don’t have in common” It opens up a fundamentally monologic, not dialogic, relationship because the direction of the act is always from the gay

or lesbian speaker to the straight listener. Straight people seldom come out as straight to gay people and even less often to other straight people, unless the presence of a gay interlocutor or the discussion of a gay issue seems to require that remarks be prefaced with a defensive disclaimer (“I’m not gay myself, but...”). (p. 705)

As Epstein and Johnson (1998) assert, sexuality is rarely “legitimately speakable in the school context,” but when it is, it is domesticated, oblique, and heteronormatively sanitized (p. 132). Furthermore, they argue, “while the sexualities of all teachers are policed, the disciplinary process is more likely to take a coercive turn in the case of those who depart from the norm of the (white) heterosexual male” (p. 149).

Berrill and Martino (2002) forcefully argue that gay people are *not* just like everybody else and that educators must reach “a pedagogical position in teacher education that draws attention to the historically specific practices of normalization in teacher candidates’ lives” (p. 59). Although Kissen and Phillips (2002) theorize that “heterosexism sexualizes the process of coming out, since heterosexual references to spouses, children, or living arrangements are not assumed to be ‘about’ sex” (pp. 172-173), Khayatt (2006) argues that “the fear and loathing often engendered by queers...is not so much the sex acts that people practice as how some sexual practices disrupt what is hegemonically expected of each gender” (p. 135). This heteronormative barrier of gender and hegemonic masculinity is largely impenetrable. Endo, Reece-Miller, and Santavicca (2010) state,

As queer teachers associate and transgress our prescriptive heteronormative society, the barriers that exist do not provide a means for the queer teacher to step out of this norm, which prevents one from finding acceptance in school and the classroom, a luxury that the heterosexual counterpart enjoys on a daily basis. (p. 1029)

McNinch (2007) boldly claims that “the role of a queer teacher is more conflicted and problematic than that of a heterosexual” (p. 198), primarily because LGBTQ teachers are “understood by [their] sexual difference” (p. 199). He concludes, “as a homosexual, making the personal public has had...greater implications than for a heterosexual” (p. 201). Although, as Alsup (2005) states, “reaching the in-between ground, the place of becoming, the space of ambiguity and reflection, *is* the goal” (p. 9) in the teacher identity development process, queer teachers are more acutely aware of inhabiting this space throughout their careers than their straight colleagues are.

The “sexual difference” that many people believe to be the differentiating factor between those teachers who identify as LGBTQ and those who do not is one manifestation of Mendelsohn’s (2012) “reality problem” regarding “the boundary between the inner and the outer self” (p. xii). While many LGBTQ teachers consider their inner selves to be comprised of more than just the sexual orientation that makes them different from the majority of their colleagues, their outer selves—i.e., their “outness,” if they have chosen to be implicitly or explicitly out—often influence and sometimes limit others’ perceptions of them; i.e., a teacher who chooses to be

out will inevitably be regarded as *the gay English teacher* or as *the lesbian Chemistry teacher*, for example, just as out celebrities are invariably labelled by their sexual orientation (e.g., Ricky Martin is *the openly gay Latino singer*, Jason Collins is *the first openly gay professional basketball player*, Ellen DeGeneres is *the lesbian talk show host*, etc.). Rarely are heterosexual teachers—or celebrities—identified by their sexual orientation. Identity integration is one purposeful way to blur the boundary between private and professional identities in order to create a public identity that more comprehensively reflects all aspects of a teacher's character and will allow him/her to focus on teaching without the anxiety or fear that often characterizes life in the professional closet.

CHAPTER THREE:
QUEERING QUALITATIVE RESEARCH:
A THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Introduction

Before I embarked on this research journey under the aegis of queer theory as a theoretical framework, I needed to address a theoretical and methodological conundrum: Qualitative research methodology often requires coding and classification of data into relatively discrete categories or themes. Queer theory, however, attempts to subvert essentialized categorization and deconstruct allegedly stable methods of classification. How can queer theory—a framework that subverts any alleged categorical or ontological stability—be used to classify and organize bits of qualitative data (e.g., passages from interview transcripts, transcribed field notes, documents, recorded observations) in an effort to analyze these data, derive valid conclusions from them, and create useful knowledge?

I examine this question by focusing on four related issues, which I endeavor to synthesize into a convincing resolution to the queer theory/qualitative coding conundrum:

1. Queering research
2. Using a queer theoretical framework to contextualize qualitative research
3. Queering qualitative methodology

4. Queering data analysis and coding

A review of the research literature regarding queer theory and the ways in which it can be and has been used in qualitative research provides a foundation for my argument, and I detail, throughout this chapter, the ways in which I have situated the current research study within this theoretical framework. To highlight the dialogic relationship between the theoretical underpinnings of the research and their practical application throughout the study, in the remainder of this chapter, I use *italics* to indicate the passages that describe the ways in which I applied the theory to my research activities.

Queering Research

The goal of scientific research—whether quantitative or qualitative, whether in the “hard” sciences or in the social sciences—is to construct or create verifiable, useful knowledge based on concrete, verifiable data. A great deal of these data, especially in quantitative research, is characterized by some definite, essential property. For example, in a research study examining the effects of a fatty diet on cholesterol levels in the blood, the number of fat grams ingested by a participant and the level of cholesterol in the participant’s blood can be measured (to varying degrees of certainty) with trusted, accurate instruments, and these numbers represent concrete, unambiguous facts. In qualitative research, data are often more ambiguous; consequently, constructing meaning from these data is more challenging and depends, to a large degree, on the researcher’s ability to consider

various, often contradictory, meanings and determine which meaning is most accurate and makes the most sense within the context of the study and the other data collected.

Qualitative research eschews the concept of epistemological certainty and instead operates under the principal that all knowledge is constructed. As Sears (1992) argues, “Fundamentally, qualitative inquiry is a state of being: a willingness to engage and to be engaged, the ability to momentarily stop internal dialogue and to engage reflectively in a search for the meanings constructed by others *and* ourselves” (p. 152). Sears uses the term “epistemological reflexivity” to describe this willingness to examine one’s epistemological beliefs and argues that it is a distinguishing characteristic of qualitative research, especially when the phenomenon or topic being studied is sociological in nature or concerns human behavior. As Pillow (2003) argues, reflexivity “acknowledges the unknowable without making it familiar” (p. 181).

“Queer research” utilizes epistemological reflexivity to cultivate a certain perspective or disposition on the part of the researcher—a choice to subvert any “conventional” knowledge and call into question that which is presumed to be already known. Queer research queers knowledge from a queer perspective. As Honeychurch (1996) asserts, “Approaching social knowledge from a queered position is a postmodern rejection of epistemological certainty. A queered tenor calls the bluff of heterosexist epistemology and reveals the arbitrary and mediated nature of its otherwise apparently unquestionable logic” (p. 344). What

distinguishes queer research from conventional qualitative research is its focus on the disruption of the heteronormative assumptions that inform many theoretical frameworks.

For example, throughout this qualitative study, I considered every detail and every piece of data collected within the context of heteronormative expectations for teachers. Aspects of each participant's personal life (gender, marital status, sexual orientation, etc.) as well as aspects of each participant's professional life (subject area taught, years of experience, pedagogical style, rapport with students, etc.) were examined along the spectrum of conformity/transgression with respect to heteronormativity in an effort to ascertain whether and/or how each participant queered his/her identity development/integration. Throughout my examination of the data and my engagement in the coding process, I consistently reflected on my existing perceptions and beliefs—which were based on my own experiences and knowledge—in order to question their accuracy and relevance. As my findings demonstrate, the data support conclusions that differ from my initial expectations and prior knowledge.

Queer research not only assumes a particular perspective regarding its subject(s); it also takes as its subject(s) certain issues and phenomena that are often overlooked or taken for granted by mainstream research. Dilley (1999), who acknowledges that queer research assumes “a position outside of the normal trope of daily life that affords perspectives apart from the norm,” also identifies specific concerns of queer research: “In academic circles, to queer something is to analyze a situation or a text to determine the relationship between sexuality, power, gender,

and conceptions of normal and deviant, insider and outsider” (p. 458). Furthermore, he identifies three tenets of queer research: (1) it must examine the lives and experiences of those who do not identify as heterosexual; (2) it must juxtapose those lives and experiences with the lives and experiences of those considered “normal”; and (3); it must examine how and why those lives and experiences are considered outside of the norm (p. 462). The first of Dilley’s tenets might be usefully modified to include those performative heterosexuals who also identify as queer, for—as Nelson M. Rodriguez (2007) explains—“the straight self” may be “queerly reconstituted *antagonistically* [emphasis in original] to hegemonic heterosexuality” (p. 281).

Since two of the participants in the current research study identify as heterosexual (although they queer their performative heterosexuality in significant ways), two identify as gay, and one identifies as a lesbian, this study qualifies as queer according to the first two of Dilley’s tenets. In chapters 5, 6, and 7, the forthcoming analysis of the data I collected throughout the study will satisfy the third of Dilley’s tenets—and it will also consider the possibility that each participant integrates his/her multiple identities uniquely, therefore subverting the very notion of a “norm” by which to evaluate private/professional/public identity integration.

De Castell and Bryson (1998) offer this note toward a queer researcher’s manifesto: “I will persist until queer research, that is, research explicitly by and for queer subjects, becomes a reality in this profession” (p. 249). Of course, not everyone who conducts queer research need identify as queer—*although I do, and I*

relied heavily upon my queer identity and my queer orientation toward research, as well as my personal experience as a classroom teacher, throughout this study. Perhaps Butler's (1990) idea of performativity will be helpful here. Just as Butler argued that the performativity of gender "is not a singular act, but a repetition and a ritual" (p. xv), the queerness of research resides in its performativity. This understanding of queer research accounts for both the queer perspective and the queer content of queer research—one performs queer research by examining queer subjects from a queer perspective.

Luhmann (1998), who defines queer research according to its goal, argues that identity as an aspect of the research itself carries greater significance than the identity of the researcher: "*queer* aims to spoil and transgress coherent (and essential) gender configurations and the desire for a neat arrangement of dichotomous sexual and gendered difference, central to both heterosexual and homosexual identities" (p. 145). In addition, she cautions against the "desire for authority and stable knowledge" and wonders whether queer theory can "resist disseminating new knowledge and new forms of subjection" (p. 147).

As a gay man who also identifies as queer, I obviously satisfy one of De Castell and Bryson's criteria to conduct queer research. I aim, however, for a broader audience than the queer community. As will become clear throughout the study (and certainly in the conclusion), the findings of this study should benefit all educators. Mindful of Luhmann's admonition to avoid establishing some sort of alternate "authority and stable knowledge," I am attempting to subvert prescriptively

heteronormative expectations regarding the gender and sexuality of educators as I establish some common ground among all educators with respect to the challenges they face when integrating their personal and professional identities. Relying upon the data provided by my participants, I struggle to disseminate the knowledge generated by those data as contextual without implying that knowledge is somehow universal. This struggle, I propose, is a significant aspect of my performance of queer research.

Using a Queer Theoretical Framework

As Gamson (2000) mentioned, a queer theoretical framework for qualitative research is discursive in nature, both appropriates and repudiates critical theoretical frameworks, and problematizes the stability and literal reality of social categories such as gay, bisexual, transgender, and lesbian (p. 348). As Luhmann (1998) explains, “The queer insistence on undermining idyllic stabilities of normalcy might be an important point of entry from which to employ queer theory” (p. 146). One of these “idyllic stabilities of normalcy” is the common distinction between the researcher and the researched and the myth of objectivity. Dilley (1999) argues that “Queer theory...comes from queered perspectives of the researcher and the researched. The sexual dimensions of a subject become the central site of investigation, primarily in juxtaposing the queer to the norm” (p. 461). Although the sexual dimensions of the subject constitute one focus of investigation, as Gamson (2000) explains, these sexual dimensions do not necessarily correspond to any sort of fixed identity categories:

Queer marks an identity that, defined as it is by a deviation from sex and gender norms either by the self inside or by specific behaviors, is always in flux; *queer theory* and *queer studies* propose a focus not so much on specific populations as on sexual categorization processes and their deconstruction. (p. 349)

He adds that “Identity...cannot be taken as a starting point for social research, can never be assumed by a researcher to be standing still, ready for its close-up” (p. 356). This lack of discursive stability regarding identity permeates queer research. As Glasser and Smith (2008) argued in their analysis of the use of the term *gender* in education research, “Theoretical terms that play key roles in researchers’ analyses should be explained clearly enough in print that readers can determine what parts of the examined world are associated with them” (p. 344). Such a call for discursive clarity is especially challenging for queer researchers who employ a framework predicated on discursive uncertainty. Glasser and Smith’s contention, however, that “without explicit efforts at clarity, the reading and interpretation of research on gender will remain highly problematic” (p. 349) is not without merit—and may well be applied to the use of all theoretical terminology.

The five participants in the current study inhabit different positions along the spectrum of professional identity development—two of them are early-career educators, one may be considered “experienced,” and two are veterans. This rich variability in professional experience among the participants—as well as the corresponding variability in their respective personal identity development—expresses

the instability that Gamson describes; furthermore, as the data analysis will show, each participant is continually developing as a private individual, as a professional educator, and as a public figure through the process of integrating, constructing, and deconstructing his/her identity.

Moustakas' (1990) heuristic research methodology, which bridges the space between the researcher and the researched and problematizes the binary construct of subjectivity and objectivity, complements a queer theoretical framework. As Moustakas explains, "In heuristics, an unshakable connection exists between what is out there, in its appearance and reality, and what is within me in reflective thought, feeling, and awareness" (p. 12). Queer researchers must renounce "objectivism and its normative, ideal structures" and instead view society "from a critical theory perspective as socially constructed—and, therefore, socially reconstructed" (Broido & Manning, 2002, p. 437). A queer theoretical framework provides this perspective and destabilizes other binary constructs such as sexuality by drawing upon "social constructionism to deny any transhistorical or transcultural essential aspect to sexual orientation or gender identity" (p. 440). Sears (1992) sees a queer theoretical framework as a context contained within or bracketed by critical theory, which, he says:

allows us to question taken-for-granted divisions (e.g., gay/straight, butch/femme) of a sexualized world constructed on the basis of power, control, and ideology. Critical theory enables us to understand how the

changing intersections of sexuality, race, class, and gender-manifested personal biographies are rooted in a society's history and culture. (p. 151)

Chang (2005) believes that a queer theoretical framework facilitates the deconstruction of the alleged divide between institutions (for example, schools) and the sexualized persons (for example, teachers and students) who populate and constitute those institutions because it allows queer researchers to “bring empirical inquiry of social and institutional structures together with queer theory’s critical analysis of sexual categories, in order to analyze the relevant intersections between cultural meanings and institutional structures” (p. 179). *This study utilizes the lens of queer theory to focus on the “taken-for-granted divisions” between men, women, gay, heterosexual, sciences, arts, et al. and to deconstruct the institutional power that is used to deny the sexualities—and their intrinsic value—of the persons who serve the mission of those institutions.*

Gamson (2000) likewise considers a broad range for queer research and recognizes its promise for qualitative research as a whole. Asserting that queer research “is about invisible people becoming visible,” Gamson concurrently notes that “key tensions built into the field...are ultimately productive for qualitative research on sexualities” (p. 348). As he acknowledges queer research’s “great productive promise for new topics of qualitative research” (p. 358), he is hopeful that “the complex tension between institutionally oriented qualitative analysis of lesbian and gay studies and the discursively oriented queer theory... can and should itself be a resource for important new directions in qualitative research” (p. 360).

Broido and Manning (2002) suggest that “When the assumptions of queer theory are taken into account during qualitative research, the research goals, interview questions, and data analysis possibilities that emerge operate from a different standard than the heterosexualized one embraced in the past” (p. 441). Considered as an inquiry into the nature of queer identity vis-à-vis any given cultural moment, one of these “different” standards concerns the aforementioned distinction between the researcher and the researched. Britzman (2000) argues that such an inquiry must begin with the qualitative researcher slowly leaving “his or her own cultural perceptions in order to find new forms of logic that are only available when preconceptions or cultural prejudices are checked” (p. 51). In other words, the researcher must first queer whatever it is that he or she believes to be true about the researched. Rather than equating the researcher’s subject position with normalcy and the researched’s subject position with abnormalcy, Luhmann (1998) offers the idea that queer theory ambiguates and radically deconstructs these subject positions “into a fluid, permanently shifting, and unintelligible subjectivity” (p. 146). Honeychurch characterizes queer theory as “a category of contradiction” and asserts that “a queered perspective offers recognition of both heterogeneity in, and the possibilities of mutual identifications across, difference” (p. 342).

As the researcher, I was aware that my subject position (that of a former closeted high school teacher) could not be equated with “normalcy”; more importantly, upon reflection, I needed to arrive at the realization that even among LGBTQ educators my subject position could not be equated with “normalcy” since other

LGBTQ educators did not necessarily employ identity management strategies in the same ways or under the same circumstances that I did. Throughout the research process, I was able to identify numerous instances of “heterogeneity in, and...mutual identifications across, difference.”

Queering Qualitative Methodology

A queer qualitative research methodology will be predicated upon two principles mentioned earlier: (1) the acknowledgment that queer research methodology is characterized by an amalgamation of its perspective and its focus; and (2) the deconstruction of all binary distinctions, especially the distinction between the self (researcher) and the other (researched). While Kopelson (2002) understood *queer* as “a term that offers to us and our students an epistemological position—a way of knowing, rather than something to be known” (p. 25) and Britzman (2000) considered “it useful to read queer theory not as a set of contents to be applied but as offering a set of methodological rules and dynamics useful for reading, thinking, and engaging with the physical and social of everyday life” (p. 54), broadening—or queering—these notions of *queer* may clarify the blending of theory and methodology.

Conceptualizing methodology in much the same way that Butler (1990) conceptualized gender can queer methodology in much the same way that she queered gender. Butler theorized that “gender proves to be performative—that is, constituting the identity it is purported to be. In this sense, gender is always a

doing” (p. 34). Similarly, methodology “is always a doing.” As Butler argued further, “There is no gender identity behind the expressions of gender; that identity is performatively constituted by the very ‘expressions’ that are said to be its results” (p. 34). When this idea is used to queer methodology, it begins to blur the distinctions between theory and methodology (i.e., perspective and “doing”).

Plummer (2008) also argues that in order to be characterized as “queer,” research must originate from a radical perspective that subverts the conventional presumptions of a methodologically binary lens and that it must examine specific issues:

What seems to be at stake...in any queering of qualitative research is not so much a methodological style as a political and substantive concern with gender, heteronormativity, and sexualities. Its challenge is to bring stabilized gender and sexuality to the forefront of analyses in ways they are not usually advanced and that put under threat any ordered world of gender and sexuality. This is just what is, indeed, often missing from much ethnographic or life story research. (p. 493)

Hence, methodology is queered by its performative focus on the deconstruction of binary constructs—or what Butler (1990) called “regulatory fictions” (p. 46)—that strive to categorize and label sexual identities and align them within established paradigms of gender and power. Patton (2002), as he describes critical theory and queer theory, explains, “the *ideological* orientation or perspective of the researcher determines the focus of inquiry” (p. 129). Therefore, the very focus of queer

research (and of this research study in particular)—which lies well outside the norms of conventional research (especially in fields such as education)—queers the methodology used to study it.

Echoing and developing Butler's (1990) contention that cultural knowledge (and specifically, sexuality) is "always constructed within the terms of discourse and power" (p. 41), Honeychurch (1996) discusses the discursive methodological union of perspective and subject:

A queering of standpoint in social research is a vigorous challenge to that which has constrained what may be known, who may be the knower, and how knowledge has come to be generated and circulated. A queered position first dislocates the agent of its constitution. While homosexuals have largely been defined by the discourse of others, queers participate in positioning themselves through both authoring and authorizing expertise. As lesbian and gay (queer) subjects are located in an evolving discourse that preexists and constitutes them, they are, at the same time, its creative agents. Any claim to a queered perspective is therefore an embrace of a dynamic discursive position from which subjects of homosexualities can both name themselves and impact the conditions under which queer identities are constituted. (pp. 342-343)

Dilley (1999) also considers the ways in which a queer methodology—or what he terms "queer praxis"—can combine perspective (theory) and doing (action) as well

as counteract the inequities that have dominated established research on queer subjects and “the subaltern”:

It is akin to what McLaren (1989) terms critical pedagogy: an application of the theory as an action. When it is evident, the primary conclusion of a work of queer praxis is that the dominant culture’s stronghold on proclaiming normality and deviance must be overthrown, or at least displayed as power-laden and repressive” (p. 466)

Dilley’s focus on the social justice inherent in the application of queer methodology alludes to its use as a tool to deconstruct binary distinctions. He describes the connection between knowledge and the manner of its construction with respect to the alleged distinction between outsider (researcher) and insider (researched):

queer theory is about how both the knowledge (found and produced) and the positions (also both found and produced) create a new body of knowledge, a delimitation of the space between position and product, investigator and investigation. Queer theory inverts the notion of outsider giving voice to the insider as well as the notion of insider information being untouched by outsider information. (p. 460)

The use of heuristic research methods, which involve “self-search, self-dialogue, and self-discovery” can help problematize the boundary between the researcher and the researched in queer research methodology; in heuristic research, “the research question and the methodology flow out of inner awareness,

meaning, and inspiration” (Moustakas, 1990, p. 11). *For example, my own life experience as a closeted high school teacher struggling with the tension between my private identity as a gay man and my professional identity within the heteronormative confines of academia provided the foundation for my scholarly inquiry that came to fruition in this dissertation. Furthermore, my queered perspective on identity management strategies and the need to rely upon them allowed me to more readily recognize the use of these strategies by other LGBTQ and non-LGBTQ educators who employed them for various reasons—and not always with the intent of managing their sexual identities.*

Sears (1992) also notes the connection between self and other that distinguishes qualitative research, which he calls “an inquiry into the personal worlds of others that, if one is fortunate, becomes a journey into oneself” (p. 147). He adds, “qualitative inquiry offers opportunities for the researcher to inquire into oneself while inquiring into the ‘other’” (p. 147). Qualitative research methods like immersion in the culture of “the other,” purposive sampling, and collaboration with participants, argues Sears, serve no purpose when utilized by researchers with a missionary purpose who are blinded to “the need for transformation of the self” (p. 153).

As Pillow (2003) explains, reflexive qualitative research entails “doing research ‘with’ instead of ‘on’” and consequently will “deconstruct the author’s authority” (p. 179). According to Pillow, “To be reflexive...not only contributes to producing knowledge that aids in understanding and gaining insight into the

workings of our social world but also provides insight on how this knowledge is produced” (p. 178). Furthermore, she describes “four reflexive strategies,” which may prove useful to a queer researcher: “reflexivity as recognition of self; reflexivity as recognition of other; reflexivity as truth; reflexivity as transcendence” (p. 181). These various kinds of reflexivity result in “a reflexivity of discomfort” (p. 192) and “messy” research (p. 193) that reflects the epistemological uncertainty inherent in queer qualitative research. *In the current study, in an effort to do research “with”—rather than “on”—my participants, I asked them to compose short autobiographies focused on their experiences with gender and sexuality in education. These autobiographies, which were often challenging for the participants to produce, are a clear example of “messy” research—the exercise elicited many questions from the participants regarding precisely **what** I wanted them to write about, which could be considered an attempt to evade the “messy” topic of their own experiences with sexuality during their careers as students, preservice and in-service teachers.*

Moustakas (1990) explains that the researcher, as he discursively creates his/her own story through research, “portrays the qualities, meanings, and essences of universally unique experiences” (p. 13). For a heuristic researcher—or for a queer researcher who employs heuristic methods—the initial data are contained within the self: “the challenge is to discover and explicate its nature. In the process, I am not only lifting out the essential meanings of an experience, but I am actively awakening and transforming my own self” (p. 13). Since queer research methodology shuns “essential meanings,” a queer researcher would need to argue

that “the essential meanings of an experience” reveal its unstable and unfixed nature, for, as Dilley (1999) argues, “queer theory might offer the most qualitative of methodologies for collecting and analyzing data” because “it questions, even defies, notions of objectivity and the essentiality of fact” (p. 461). I queered my methodology by identifying my own “universally unique” experiences and then examining the anisomorphic qualities of my participants’ experiences. As it is used in linguistics, *anisomorphism*, according to González-Jover (2006), “is the opposite of isomorphism, that is, the quality of being identical or similar form, shape or structure” (p. 225). The term is often used in translation studies to describe the problematic nature of preserving meaning in translation; words or phrases in different languages may connote relatively similar meanings without corresponding exactly. In similar fashion, queer methodology is anisomorphic with regard to its application to participants who confront similar challenges (i.e., identity integration) but whose individual elements (e.g., sexual orientation, gender, socioeconomic status, geographic locale, etc.) do not correspond exactly.

Warner (2004) also advocates “some basic heuristics that a queer methodology should account for” and advocates—for various reasons—the suitability of qualitative methods for queer research:

First, queer research methodology should be reflexively aware of the way it constitutes the object it investigates....second...it must qualitatively account for its object of inquiry...Qualitative approaches have a better chance of

accounting for queer experiences in the same terms as the actual people living these experiences. (pp. 334-335)

Note that Warner, too, mentions the importance of epistemological reflexivity on the part of the researcher.

The seemingly self-contradictory phrase “universally unique” seems quite appropriate for queer research—my impetus for launching this study was my presumably unique attempt to balance and/or blend my private identity as a gay man with my professional identity as an educator; during the course of the study, I discovered that my challenge was unique insofar as the specific elements of my identities and my context were concerned, yet it was also universal since it appears as though every educator (regardless of sexual orientation or gender) faces this very challenge. I needed a queer methodology to investigate this phenomenon among other teachers whose private and professional identities might share some elements with mine but would undoubtedly be unique as well. Queering the linguistic term anisomorphism proved helpful in explaining the nature of the methodology I used.

Queering Data Analysis and Coding

After processing and digesting all of these admittedly complex and problematic theoretical concerns, a queer researcher is still faced with a very practical challenge—how does one queer data collection, data coding, and data analysis? The concept of “epistemological reflexivity,” or the constant practice of questioning the “truth” of the data, helps guide the queer researcher.

As mentioned earlier, Sears (1991) described epistemological reflexivity as “a willingness to engage and to be engaged, the ability to momentarily stop internal dialogue and to engage reflectively in a search for the meanings constructed by others *and ourselves*” (p. 152). In queer qualitative research, this epistemological reflexivity is especially salient when it comes to collecting, coding, and analyzing data pertaining to gender, sexuality, and power. Honeychurch recommends some concrete questions a queer researcher can ask as he/she works with data:

By reflecting upon that which has not been reflected upon, and examining the lived verities of the experience, the researcher gains access to an understanding of how rules and categories around the sexual body might be reevaluated and generated through the operations of social research. Further, once the sexual body’s implications are claimed rather than disowned as prurient, the researcher is able to fruitfully explore the constituting effects of its agency. How might eros motivate and invigorate the process for participants? How might rapport and candor be influenced by sexual attractions? How might the veracity of results be impacted by desire? What are the differences between heterosexual and homosexual researchers who study others similarly identified? Are sexual relations between researcher and researched always outside the bounds of reasonable possibility? (p. 352)

Broadening the range of the data collected and using them to address these kinds of questions is one way that data may be queered.

St. Pierre (1997) confronted this issue as she sought to “shift [her] understanding of the research process to some extent and thus to think about different kinds of data that might produce different knowledge in qualitative research in education” (p. 177). By placing *data* “under erasure” (p. 177)—as Derrida conceptualized the term—and employing Deleuze’s metaphor of “the fold” (p. 178), St. Pierre “identified at least three non-traditional kinds of data—emotional data, dream data, and sensual data—and named another, response data” (p. 179). These kinds of data may help a queer researcher to queer data as he/she attempts to produce different kinds of knowledge in different ways. Another way to queer data, as Warner (2004) suggests while he discusses social categories and labels, is to utilize a number of “queer questions” that a researcher may ask of his/her data:

how did these categories come to dominate the way people understand themselves and others? What are the criteria that society uses to demarcate the boundary between one category and another? What kind of life is lived in these categories, and can we ever change to something more liberatory and equitable? These are queer questions, because they look at sexual and gender identity as phenomena of an emerging subjectivity in a temporal, sociohistorical power structure. (p. 324)

In asking these questions, however, a queer researcher must endeavor to maintain his/her participants’ presence and voice in the research by inviting them to confront these questions as well.

I attempted to incorporate Honeychurch's suggestions by formalizing—via written instructions—my request for participants to reflect upon their experiences with gender and sexuality in professional educational settings, thus broaching a connection between two topics that are rarely discussed in conjunction with each other. I also adapted Warner's "queer questions" by asking the participants questions about gendered expectations in education and their experiences with the LGBTQ community. Although St. Pierre's idea of emotional data and dream data intrigued me, I did not believe that I possessed the experience or level of skill as a researcher to seek and understand these kinds of data in this study.

Jackson (2004) acknowledges that "the steps in grounded theory—coding the data and defining boundaries of the codes—are inconsistent with queer theory that seeks to eradicate categorization"; she explains, however, how the process of axial coding can be used effectively to analyze data within a queer framework: "I argue, though, that breaking down the data through analysis and reassembling it in new ways through synthesis can provide useful insights into participants' lives. In this way, the researcher uses categorization as a means but not an end" (p. 3-107). Therefore, while coding data, the researcher must resist definitive, essentializing categories such as *gay*, *straight*, *male*, or *female* and instead conceptualize these categories within greater spectra such as *sexuality* and *gender*, remaining mindful that these spectra—and the various elements contained within them—are mutable, unstable, and subject to contextual interpretation. The researcher may, in this

manner, queer the data analysis process without necessarily compromising the theoretical underpinnings of a queer framework and a queer methodology.

In addition, epistemological reflexivity requires the queer researcher to abandon any pretense to objectivity in the conventional, positivistic sense of the word. As Honeychurch (1996) explains, “Under queered terms...objectivity is not about counterfeit claims to exceeding subjectivities, but, rather, is about specific embodied beliefs and values that situate knowledges in cultural contexts with recognized underlying structures, power relations, and material conditions” (p. 346). This perspective on objectivity results in conclusions and “knowledge” that is unstable, contextual, and tentative at best. As Sears (1992) asserts, “although the richness and depth of data collected through qualitative methods far outdistance those collected through simple empirical tools, this very richness and depth makes the reporting of data cumbersome and lessens the likelihood of unambiguous, definitive conclusions” (pp. 149-150). Since a queer researcher works with volatile, variable data—one might even say that the variables vary in queer data analysis—any conclusions drawn from such research will be highly qualified and ungeneralizable in the positivistic sense. As with any qualitative research, these conclusions, however, may possess validity if the methodology used is well suited to the research questions asked and if the data collection and analysis processes are verifiable and correspond to a well-structured and well-articulated theoretical framework.

The data coding process required perhaps a greater degree of reflexivity than any other part of this study. As I sifted through interview transcripts, field notes, and autobiographies in my quest for relevant data, and as I then considered that data and created codes to organize and construct meaning from it, I continually questioned the accuracy of the codes, renamed them to avoid essentializing any data within a binary categorization system, and re-evaluated the data within and across the various codes I created. As a result, I discovered, constructed, and reconstructed new meanings, but I also encountered data that eluded categorization. This constant reconsideration of my data queered the coding process in ways that enabled me to synthesize meaning from both patterns and inconsistencies in the data.

Conclusion

As Dilley (1999) cautioned, “Attempting to classify a theory that posits a breakdown of classification is perilous” (p. 462). That does not mean, however, that attempting such a classification is futile. Queer research remains, for the time being, an emergent methodology, and it has yet to develop any sort of canonical set of principles or guidelines. Considering the theory behind queer research, it very well might not *ever* develop any sort of concrete tenets or methods—such theoretical or methodological calcification would contradict the very meaning of queer theory. The “defining” characteristics of queer research could conceivably be the need for every researcher who wishes to employ queer theory or queer methods to constantly reassess and rearticulate his/her theoretical framework and research methods in

order to situate them within and among the various queer contexts that prevail at any given cultural moment.

As I embarked upon a research project that examines queer teachers of various sexual orientations and seeks to understand the ways in which they negotiate queer identities in the classroom and the ways in which those identities affect their pedagogy and their relationships with their students, their peers, their administrators, and their communities, I also attempted to establish my own identity as a queer researcher. Having already developed an academic identity within the heteronormative confines of academia, navigating—and at times constructing—a queer theoretical framework and a queer research methodology presented me with numerous and unexpected challenges. I discovered, as St. Pierre (1997) did, that language falls apart and that the data I collected, at times, proved “uncodable, excessive, out-of-control, out-of-category” (p. 179). Inherent in these challenges, however, were unforeseen opportunities to genuinely “produce different knowledge and to produce knowledge differently” (p. 175), knowledge that—I hope—illuminates the lives and practices of queer teachers and help educators understand, appreciate, and embrace the value of queer pedagogy.

CHAPTER FOUR: RESEARCH DESIGN, METHODOLOGY, AND PARTICIPANTS

Introduction

The research questions I developed for this study relate directly to its focus on identity development and the integration of private and professional elements of a public identity as a teacher. Keeping in mind Luhmann's (1998) assertion that "queer aims to spoil and transgress coherent (and essential) gender configurations and the desire for a neat arrangement of dichotomous sexual and gendered difference, central to both heterosexual and homosexual identities" (p. 145), Chang's (2005) encouragement for queer researchers to "bring empirical inquiry of social and institutional structures together with queer theory's critical analysis of sexual categories, in order to analyze the relevant intersections between cultural meanings and institutional structures" (p. 179), and Warner's (2004) recommended "queer questions" (p. 324), I developed the following research questions to guide this study:

1. *How have school gender regimes affected the identity integration/development process for each participant? How do the participants express their gender identity in professional settings? How do their gender expression and the expression of their sexual orientation affect*

their relationships with students, colleagues, administrators, and parents?

How do they affect their pedagogy?

2. *Which identity management strategies do the participants use and what are the reasons they use them? If non-LGBTQ participants use identity management strategies, how and why do they use them? How do the identity management strategies used by LGBTQ participants differ from those used by non-LGBTQ participants? How are they similar? What do participants believe are the benefits of integrating their private and professional identities?*

Design of the Study

This research study used qualitative methods. In order to situate myself as a researcher “in the empirical world” and connect myself “to specific sites, persons, groups, institutions, and bodies of relevant interpretive material” (Denzin & Lincoln, 2008, p. 34), I conducted interviews and field observations and collected artifacts to investigate the challenges that LGBTQ teachers encounter and whether those challenges are unique to LGBTQ teachers as they integrate their private identities with their professional identities in the heteronormative, hegemonically masculine gender regimes of P-12 schools. Denzin and Lincoln (2008) note that qualitative research utilizing a queer paradigm should “use methods strategically...as resources for understanding and for producing resistances to local structures of domination,” and they suggest “critical ethnography” and “open-ended interviewing” as suitable data collection methods (p. 33). To ensure validity, I triangulated these data

collection methods—the aforementioned interviews, field observations, and artifacts—and used “multiple perceptions to clarify meaning” (Stake, 2008, p. 133; see also Huberman & Miles, 1994, p. 438; Creswell, 2009, p. 191).

Plummer (2008) argues that in order to be characterized as “queer,” research must originate from a radical perspective that subverts the conventional presumptions of a methodologically binary lens and that it must examine specific issues. Although he believes that no particular “methodological style” is better suited to queer research than any other, this proposed study reflects his conviction that queer research is characterized by “a political and substantive concern with gender, heteronormativity, and sexualities”—and especially efforts to analyze and deconstruct “stabilized” conceptions of gender and sexuality (p. 493). Hence, I queer the methods used in this study by focusing on the deconstruction of binary constructs—or what Butler (1990) called “regulatory fictions” (p. 46)—that strive to categorize and label sexual identities and align them within established school gender regimes. Patton (2002), as he describes critical theory and queer theory, explains, “the ideological orientation or perspective of the researcher determines the focus of inquiry” (p. 129). Therefore, the very focus of this study queers the methodology used to study it.

Participants

As Patton (2002) advises, “The sampling strategy must be selected to fit the purpose of the study, the resources available, the questions being asked, and the

constraints being faced” (p. 242). Therefore, I recruited participants through purposeful sampling. Due to the delicate and private nature of some of the subject matter this research study investigated, I suspected that in-service teachers who were not personally known to me, who were unfamiliar with my research interests, and who had not already established a significant level of trust in me would have been highly unlikely to volunteer to participate in this study. Therefore, I invited five teachers (both LGBTQ and non-LGBTQ) whom I know personally to participate in this study; their experiences are relevant to the aforementioned research questions, and—fortunately—all five were willing to share their experiences for the purposes of this study.

I initiated recruitment via email, the content of which was been approved by Purdue’s Institutional Review Board [see Appendix A]. I recruited three participants from an earlier pilot study I conducted. That study investigated the reasons a teacher would choose to be out to his/her students, colleagues, administrators and community; the various levels of “outness” each teacher chose to share with each of these groups; and the possible consequences of those choices. I also recruited two new participants.

Since I was interested in comparing the challenges that LGBTQ teachers experience as they integrate and develop their public identities with the challenges that non-LGBTQ teachers experience, I chose to recruit teachers who identify as LGBTQ as well as teachers who do not. I was able to recruit three men and two women. Table 1 summarizes some basic demographic data about the participants;

more detailed profiles of the participants and their schools will appear later in this chapter.

Table 1
Participant Demographic Data

Name*	Age	Gender	Orientation	Subject Taught	Experience	Community
Brutus	29	Male	Heterosexual	High school English	6 years	Suburban
Karen	23	Female	Heterosexual	High school Social Studies	2 years	Urban
Luke	24	Male	Gay	K-12 band	1 year	Rural
Mindy	44	Female	Lesbian	High School Chemistry	20 years	Suburban
Patrick	50	Male	Gay	High School German	28 years	Suburban

* All names are pseudonyms chosen by the participants.

Data Collection/Management

I utilized three data collection methods: interviews, field observations, and artifacts. As Josselson (2013) explains, the goal of qualitative inquiry “is not to measure, predict, or classify” other people but “to *understand*, more extensively or more deeply, other people’s experiences” (p. viii). One of the most effective ways to achieve this understanding “is to create a conversation that invites the telling of narrative accounts” (p. 4). Thus I chose interviews as one of my data collection methods. Wolcott (1992) identifies *enquiring* (or interviewing), *experiencing* (which

he also terms “watching and listening”), and *examining* “materials prepared by others” (p. 19) as the three basic techniques of qualitative data collection. Therefore, I elected to use field observations (a form of experiencing, watching, and listening) and artifacts (materials prepared by others—in this case, autobiographies) as additional data collection methods.

Interviews

I conducted two private one-on-one interviews with each participant; the initial interview took place before I observed the participant at work in his/her school setting, and the second interview took place after my field observation (see the following section). Appendix B lists the protocol for the initial interview. I developed custom protocols for the follow-up interviews based on my field observations of each participant. Appendix C lists topics related to the field observation about which I questioned each participant. Each initial interview lasted approximately one hour in length, and the follow-up interviews varied in length from 15-30 minutes. I audiotaped each interview using a digital voice recorder, and I transcribed each interview using a simple software program that allowed me to easily pause each interview repeatedly as I transcribed. After transcribing an interview, I sent a copy of the transcript via email to the participant so that he/she could verify and confirm the contents. After this “member check” had been completed, I used axial coding techniques to organize and classify the data (details of the coding process will be discussed later in this chapter).

Field Observations

After receiving written permission from each participant's principal via email, I spent a full school day observing each participant in various contexts and settings throughout the day. I communicated with each participant via email in order to arrange a mutually convenient day for the observation, and I discussed with each participant his/her preferred method of preparing his/her students and colleagues for my visit. I observed each participant as he/she taught various classes; as he/she interacted in various capacities with students, colleagues, staff members, and administrators (e.g., in the hallways between classes, during duty periods); as he/she engaged in tasks related to preparation and other professional duties; and as he/she spent unassigned time during the day (e.g., lunch and free periods). Only one participant (Mindy) engaged in any extracurricular activities during my visits (as the advisor of her school's Gay-Straight Alliance, she facilitated a meeting of the organization on the day that I observed her), and she graciously invited me to attend.

I focused my observations on the participant's behavior and interactions that constitute "professional" behavior (i.e., the participant performing his/her professional role as teacher). I strove to be especially perceptive of behavior that might indicate the participant's construction of his/her gender or sexual identity. For example, I noted the manner in which the participant dressed, the manner in which he/she spoke (tone of voice, cadence, diction, volume, etc.) in various contexts, and any behavior that might have indicated his/her use of an identity

management strategy. I also observed the participant's physical classroom setting and private office or office space (if he/she had one) for any artifacts or information that might pertain to the participant's private, professional, and/or public identity (e.g., photos of family members, posters, placards, bulletin boards, notices, announcements, etc.). Each participant turned out to have his/her own classroom; none of them shared his/her professional space with another teacher. As I conducted these observations, I took handwritten notes as inconspicuously as possible; I utilized a split-page format that allowed me to record descriptive, concrete, and detailed observations on the left side of the page and associated impressions, thoughts, or analyses of those observations on the corresponding right side of the page. During times when students were not in the classroom (e.g., before the start of the school day, during free periods), I used my smartphone to photograph artifacts and parts of the classroom—bulletin boards, posters, examples of student work—that might provide insight regarding the participant's private, professional, and/or public identity.

I transcribed my field notes as soon as possible after the conclusion of the observation period (usually within the next day or two), and I developed the protocol for each follow-up interview as soon as possible after transcribing my field notes. I then scheduled the follow-up interview with each participant within two weeks of having completed the observation. I also maintained a reflective journal that allowed me to record my thoughts and impressions of my observations.

Artifacts

At the conclusion of each initial interview, I asked the participant to provide me with copies of any teaching-related documents that he/she believed might be relevant to his/her professional identity development or documents that he/she may have received from the school or the school district. These documents might include, for example, curriculum guides, lesson plans, assignments, teacher manuals or guides, etc. I planned to temporarily label each document with a confidential code number assigned to the participant, and I planned to examine these documents for information that might pertain to the participant's private, professional, and/or public identity. I planned to return these documents to the participant at the conclusion of the study. Ultimately, however, none of my participants provided me with these kinds of documents. To compensate for this lack of documentation, I located on the Internet the manual/code of conduct/handbook for each of the schools where the participants worked. I downloaded a copy of each manual/code of conduct/handbook, along with the athletic handbooks for two of the schools (athletic handbooks for the other three schools were not publicly available online).

In her study of preservice teachers, Alsup (2005) advocates the use of "borderland discourse," which she believes can effect "the ideological integration of multiple senses of self" and "that such integration through discourse can lead to cognitive, emotional, and corporeal change, or identity growth" (p. 36). Similarly, Vavrus (2009) has suggested that autobiographical discourse can assist teachers in developing curricula that will help them understand how school gender regimes

affect both them and their future students. Since I hoped to encourage each participant to reflect upon his/her “integration of multiple senses of self,” at the conclusion of my initial interview with each participant, I asked the participant to compose a 400-500 word autobiographical essay in response to the following prompt:

Write a mini-autobiography that describes your experiences with gender and sexuality—both as a student and as a teacher. In addition, discuss any instruction, advice, guidelines, or information you received—either formally or informally—regarding gender and sexuality in professional educational settings.

I instructed the participant to spend as much or as little time as he/she wished completing this task; I asked each participant to submit the completed essay to me via email within three weeks. I examined these documents for information that might pertain to the participant’s private, professional, and/or public identity. Interestingly, in the case of two participants, these were the most challenging pieces of data to collect—mainly, I suspect, because it forced them to engage in the “messy” process of reflection.

Profiles of the Participants and their Schools

Brutus

I first met Brutus when he was an undergraduate enrolled in a teacher education course that I taught in English/Language Arts teaching methods. The class focused on the teaching of writing. Since it was a relatively small class (about a dozen students), I was fortunate enough to become well-acquainted with the students. At the time, Brutus affected a distinctly Casanova-like persona. He was a tall, athletic, attractive young man with a disarming smile and an irresistible charm—and he shamelessly employed these assets at every opportunity. After the semester ended and after his graduation, Brutus and I became friends; I even recruited him to join a recreational softball team I had played on for a number of years. I came to know Brutus quite well as a student and as a friend, and one specific question that he asked during class one day stuck with me. As I was designing this study and trying to identify potential participants, I recalled that question—and that memory convinced me that Brutus would be a suitable participant.

Within the course of class discussion one day regarding “ownership” of a student’s writing, students began to debate various aspects of teacher-student relationships. Brutus pointedly asked me, “Is it ever OK for a teacher to date a student?” The other students in the class saved me the trouble of having to respond to Brutus; they all summarily informed him that at no time is it ever acceptable for a teacher and a student to date. He then qualified his question: “What about after a student graduates? Or how about if a teacher stops working at a school—can he date

a former student?” Lively discussion ensued; more importantly— for the purposes of this study—Brutus’ questions revealed that he had already begun to consider the challenges of managing private and professional aspects of his teacher identity.

At the time of our initial interview, Brutus was 29 years old and had been teaching for six years, all at Rome High School¹, which he characterized as “a very conservative, upper-class environment.” Rome is located about an hour from Chicago. Brutus described Rome as “a one-community, one-high school environment. We have 35 or 40,000 people in our little community. All kids go to that one high school, so we’re a school of nearly 3,000 kids.” Rome High School actually enrolls approximately 2,700 students, nearly 82% of whom are White. Hispanics (just over 11%) comprise the largest minority group. Asian students (2.3%) outnumber Black students (1.6%). Just 20.6% of Rome High School students receive free or reduced price meals. According to a local real estate website, Rome is “more family-centric than the surrounding county” and boasts a median household income of almost \$65,000, which is about 37% higher than the state median of \$47,529. The four-year cohort graduation rate for 2012-2013 was 96.2%, which was 7.6% greater than the state average.²

Brutus enjoyed what he calls a “traditional Midwestern childhood.” He grew up in a nearby city with his parents and an older sister—in his words, “a very blue-collar family.” His hobbies include exercising, sports, reading, enjoying summer, and

¹ All school names used in this dissertation are pseudonyms chosen by the participants.

² All school statistics used in this dissertation were found on the state’s Department of Education website, which I have chosen not to identify in order to maintain anonymity.

watching his favorite professional and college sports teams. Brutus identifies as straight. He was currently sharing a house with two male roommates, both of whom were also in their late 20s and English teachers at Rome High School. He has never been married and has no children, but he does have a girlfriend who works at a local hospital. The relationship is relatively new; they had been dating for about three months at the time of our initial interview.

When he first enrolled in college, Brutus was pursuing a degree in communications, but he soon lost interest in the field. As he was considering options for a new career choice, he “reflected back to [his] high school teachers and the love of English and writing in general,” so he enrolled in teacher education courses and soon became “passionate about it.” Like many young professional educators, he aspires to have a positive impact on his students, and he considers education to be the “only career” for him.

Karen

Like Brutus, Karen is a former student teacher at the university where I work. I was never Karen’s instructor, however. I met Karen during the fall 2010 semester when she was preparing to student teach. As the Student Teaching Placement Coordinator, I was responsible for arranging student teaching placements for candidates. Karen was interested in one of the alternative placement options offered by the university. Rather than complete the customary student teaching placement at a local suburban or rural secondary school, Karen

wanted to student teach in an urban environment. During our meetings about potential student teaching placement sites, Karen expressed a genuine desire to experience a school environment that lay outside of her “comfort zone.” She wanted, as she said at the time, “something different.” Through one of our program’s partnerships, I was able to arrange a spring 2011 student teaching placement for Karen in one of the five largest urban school districts in the country.

I will describe here the school where Karen completed her student teaching, since it is also the school where she teaches now. The Learning Academy is a military academy located on the south side of a major Midwestern city. It is a public school that utilizes selective enrollment practices. According to the school website, the academy is designed “for students who wish to develop leadership and team-building skills as well as receive military training.” According to Karen, “it’s one of the top ten...poorest schools in” the state. Of the 500+ students enrolled at the academy, 95% are considered low-income students. Just 0.4% of the students are White. Hispanic students account for 51% of the population, and 48% of the students are Black. No Asian students are enrolled at the Academy. In 2013, the school boasted an 89% four-year graduation rate; in 2014, that rate improved to 100%.

The Learning Academy was—and is—certainly a new environment for Karen. As she mentioned during our first interview, “when I was placed there...I cried ‘cause I had no idea what to expect. It was like, I know nothing about the military. If anything, I have opinions that would make it not OK for me to be in an

environment like that.” She elaborated on the stark contrast between the schools she attended and the Learning Academy:

[It’s] an interesting setting, because I can’t use my own experience of being a student to guide my instruction because I had a very different upbringing, a very different situation, being in a suburban school where you have an incredible support system. If you don’t, then it’s tackled right away. There’s no delay in that process, whereas in our school, we’re understaffed, under-resourced—everything is just against us, it seems at times. But it works—it works.

Despite these differences, and after rapidly overcoming the shock of being placed in such an unfamiliar environment, Karen thrived as a student teacher. The administration was so impressed with her performance that they offered her a position before she graduated. Since there were, however, no openings available in Social Studies, Karen’s area of expertise, they offered her a position as a Special Education teacher for one year, in anticipation of an available Social Studies position the following year. After considering the potential risks involved in accepting a position outside of her initial area of certification, Karen accepted the offer (the school district helped her secure emergency licensure as a Special Education teacher), and she has taught at the Learning Academy for two years—one year in Special Education, and one year in Social Studies.

As I was designing this study and trying to identify suitable participants, I recalled Karen’s interest in working outside of her “comfort zone.” She had

demonstrated a curiosity about exploring difference and she seemed comfortable taking risks; therefore, I suspected that she would be interested in being part of a study that investigated queering teacher identity and school gender regimes.

Happily, my suspicion was correct.

Karen grew up in the suburbs just outside of the city where she now teaches; she described her childhood as “typical, nothing crazy,” and she says she enjoyed “a typical suburban education.” Her father manages real estate, and her mother is a first-grade teacher. Karen pointed out, however, that her mother only recently became a teacher. During Karen’s childhood, her mother was a stay-at-home mom. When Karen and her younger sister entered high school, her mother enrolled in college, and she began her teaching career as Karen entered college.

When I asked Karen, who was 23 at the time of the initial interview, about her hobbies and interests outside of teaching, she jokingly replied, “I used to have those,” but she added that she enjoys reading (so much, in fact, that she selected a bookstore as the site of our interview) and traveling. Within the past year, she had visited Spain, Portugal, Quebec, and Mexico. She was happy to be able to afford to travel so extensively, since she was currently still living with her parents, but she mentioned that her next “vacation” would be to seek a place of her own. She identifies as heterosexual, and she is “totally single” with no children. She claims to have “no time” for dating; the night before our interview, she had even cancelled a date because she was “too tired.” She attributes her interest in teaching—and specifically teaching Social Studies—to “really amazing history teachers” that she

had in high school and the infectious passion for their subject that they conveyed to their students. Karen explained that she chose to become a teacher because she “wanted a job where [she] knew that there would never be a second that [she] was bored.” She is quite happy with her career choice; she claimed that she “loves” being a teacher and that, for her, teaching is “just constant experience, constant stimulation, which—that’s exactly, that’s what I look for in life, that’s why I travel and do all those things, so teaching just seemed to fit that bill really well.”

Luke

I first met Luke on a social networking app for gay men. We started chatting, discovered that we both worked in education, and met for coffee. Over the course of a few very informal dates, we developed a mutual understanding that, despite the lack of any romantic connection between us, we related well to each other as friends and colleagues. During one of the many conversations we had regarding teaching, Luke asked me about my research. I described to him the research study that I was developing (i.e., the topic of this dissertation), and he hopefully asked whether he could participate. Luke is an articulate (and garrulous) young man who is eager to learn more about himself and his profession; he is also gay, closeted in his professional life, and a beginning teacher. I was pleased that he was willing to participate.

Luke, who was 24 years old at the time of our initial interview, grew up in the suburbs of two medium-sized Midwestern cities. He is the younger of two sons, and

he described his upbringing as “loving and happy,” filled with lots of family vacations at the beach and long summers. He recalled being “tapped...to join the advanced classes” at some point in elementary school as one of the prouder moments of his “good, good childhood.” When I asked him if he could think of anything particularly sad that happened to him when he was a boy, the most traumatic event he could recall was the death of “a beloved family dog.” His father is an engineer for a major automotive company, and his mother has worked at administrative jobs in both the private and public sector. He identifies as gay, and—as a result of the discovery of some online correspondence—he was outed to his family when he was a sophomore in high school. His father “took it in stride,” and his mother was concerned and supportive. He recalled that her reaction “was very loving and very much from a place of care.” Luke enjoys a close relationship with his family members.

Luke, a band director and music teacher, considers himself a musician, and he states, “while it’s also my job, it kind of covers over the realm of hobby as well, because I don’t give myself a lot of time for other things.” He sings with a men’s chorus in the city near his hometown (about an hour from his current residence), he’s involved with that city’s LGBT film festival, and he enjoys watching television and movies with friends. Luke is single, and he has no children. He lives with a male roommate, who is also the choir director and vocal music teacher at the school where Luke works.

When I asked him how he first became interested in teaching, Luke recalled “a very distinct memory of telling my seventh grade band director that I wanna be a band director just like you.” He remembered band as a “creatively engaging” environment where he was “excelling.” He also fondly recalled the powerful “social aspect” of band. Becoming a band director “never left [Luke] as a goal,” so earning a degree to become a band director “wasn’t like a choice” to him—he considered it “a continuation” of his lifelong goal. Luke had just completed his first full year as a teacher at Rural Junior-Senior High School.

Rural J-SHS is located in a rural community in a Midwestern state. It enrolls just over 500 students in grades 7-12, the overwhelming majority of whom (94%) are White. Just 18 students (3.5%) identify as Hispanic, and no Black students are enrolled. Approximately 36% of students qualify for free or reduced price meals, and the median household income in the community was \$37,400, about 21% below the state median. The four-year cohort graduation rate for 2012-2013 was 90.5%, which is slightly above the state average. Luke mentioned that “it’s the kind of community and school where everybody knows everybody,” and he described the community as “conservative” and “insular” without “a lot of diversity.”

Mindy

I have known Mindy for over ten years. She and I met through mutual friends at a local gay bar (which has since gone out of business). As we became better acquainted, we bonded over our common profession—education. Mindy and I

encountered each other regularly at social events around town, and I became very fond of her somewhat shameless insistence on “keeping it real”—regardless of the topic of conversation, Mindy pulls no punches. She speaks her mind, and she always offers a frank opinion. I soon learned that she is an out and proud lesbian, and—in keeping with her values of honesty and authenticity—she makes no secret of her sexual orientation at work, which is rather uncommon in the conservative community where we live. I was thrilled that she was willing to participate in this study.

Mindy, who was 44 years old at the time of our initial interview, has been teaching high school chemistry for twenty years. She has spent her entire career at suburban Lincoln High School in a nearby community. She is the oldest of five siblings; she says that she grew up “all over the US,” since her family lived in Texas, California, and Michigan before they settled in the Midwestern state where Mindy now resides. She “played outside a lot” as a child, and as a result, she developed a deep love for the outdoors. As she put it, “I love being outside and just communing with nature.” Mindy enjoys “a bunch” of hobbies, and her newest passion is “shooting different types of firearms and archery.” She is an NRA-certified instructor for pistol, shotgun, and rifle, and she owns several bows. She also enjoys backpacking, hiking, and camping.

Mindy hails from a family of civil servants. Her mother was a nurse; her sister is a social worker. She became interested in teaching because when she was in high school, she enjoyed “helping other people understand material”—especially her

youngest brother, who routinely struggled with spelling tests and was subjected to their father relentlessly “barking” words at him until he got the spelling right. She decided to become a teacher because, as she explained, she “wanted to be a parent, and I knew that I could practice my craft while also being available for my kids. Ultimately, I love my job, but my family is foremost in my personal life.” Mindy is currently single, and she has two sons, one age 22 and the other age 17. Her younger son, who lives with her, attends Lincoln High School, where Mindy teaches.

Lincoln High School, located in a suburban community close to a major research university, enrolls over 1700 students. Almost 82% of the student population is White; Hispanic students (8.7%) comprise the largest minority group. Nearly 3% of the students are Black, and 2.5% are Asian. A little more than a quarter of all students qualifies for free or reduced price meals, and the median household income for the city where Lincoln is located is \$29,510, nearly 38% below the state median. This figure, however, is likely skewed by the significant number of college-aged student “households” in the community, since the median family income is over \$71,000, which is a least 20% higher than the state median.³ Lincoln’s four-year cohort graduation rate is over 91%, which exceeds the state average.

Mindy described the school as “a work in progress” and noted that the demographics of the student population had noticeably changed since she began her

³ According to the US Census Bureau, “A family consists of two or more people (one of whom is the householder) related by birth, marriage, or adoption residing in the same housing unit. A household consists of all people who occupy a housing unit regardless of relationship. A household may consist of a person living alone or multiple unrelated individuals or families living together.” The many households comprised of only college students would significantly reduce the median household income in the community.

career. She stated that when she started teaching at Lincoln, there were a large number of “farm kids and faculty kids” along with “some trailer park kids.” She notes that now the school enrolls many students from “families in [university] student housing...a lot of international kids,” and a lot of students within “a large Latino movement into the community.” Mindy, who is the faculty advisor for Lincoln’s Gay-Straight Student Alliance, believes that an important part of her job as an educator is to help make the school “a safe place for everyone.”

Patrick

Patrick and I have known each other for over fifteen years. We met through mutual friends in the local gay community, and we even went on one very chaste date soon after meeting. Although we have never been partners, I consider Patrick a good friend and a respected colleague. He is politically active, and he holds a leadership position in a local civil rights organization. Patrick is eloquent and passionate about matters that are important to him—namely education and politics, which are often inextricably linked in his beliefs. I was confident that he could contribute greatly to this research study, and he approached his participation with the same degree of fervor that he exhibits in his teaching and in his political activities.

Patrick, 50 years old at the time of our initial interview, grew up in a very small town (population 200-300) in the Midwest. His mother was an elementary school teacher, and his father worked for the state. His mixed Irish (on his mother’s

side) and German (on his father's side) heritage figured prominently in his childhood, which was decidedly rural and featured lots of 4H activities and "a huge market garden" that his family cultivated to help earn money to send him and his younger sister to college.

Patrick lists biking, travel, politics, theater, and movies among his hobbies. He also loves "talking a lot, and debate and arguing." He identifies as gay, he is single, he lives alone, and he has no children—other than his students, who, he says, "are my children." There are ten teachers in Patrick's family, and he had "really, really good teachers in high school," who were responsible for his interest in German. He became interested in teaching because he enjoys "working with kids," and he considered teaching "a good profession because you're respected, you have a certain amount of security in terms of job and so forth—at least we used to have with tenure—and you get to work with people." He cannot recall ever consciously deciding to become a teacher, but he believes that he was "just kind of training for" a career in teaching for his "whole life." Patrick has taught German for 28 years at two different schools in the state where he has lived his entire life—for the first 18 years at a small school (approximately 350 students in grades 7-12) in a rural community and for the last 10 years at West Monroe Junior-Senior High School, which is located in close proximity to a major research university in a city in the Midwest.

West Monroe J-SHS is widely regarded as an elite secondary school. A well-known national news organization ranks West Monroe as one of the top five schools in its state and one of the top 400 in the nation. The school boasts a four-year cohort

graduation rate of 99.4%. Fewer than 12% of its nearly 1100 students qualify for free or reduced price meals. More than two-thirds of the student population is White, and Asian students constitute the largest minority group (18%); Hispanic students account for 5.7% of the student body, and Black students 4.6%. West Monroe is located in the same community as Lincoln High School, where Mindy teaches, so it shares the socioeconomic data regarding income levels mentioned in the previous section.

Patrick described West Monroe as “unique” in the state, primarily because of its deep degree of diversity. He pointed out its large Asian student population, and he also mentioned that there are “openly Atheist and Muslim and Hindu students” at West Monroe. He added, “We have students from all over the world, students who’ve travelled all over the world but have never been ten miles outside of their city and have no idea what a farm looks like in our state.” According to Patrick, the students at West Monroe are “so focused on...academic stuff, that they don’t always have some of the social skills” that many of their peers in other schools have. He only half-jokingly stated, “the nerd rules at our school, which is great. It’s a great place for me to be.” He qualified that characterization, however, by adding that athletics are also “valued” at West Monroe—as long as the student-athlete is also strong academically. Although he claimed that “there’s a niche for everybody” at West Monroe, he did admit that “The place we don’t have diversity is socioeconomic. Our kids do not have a concept of what it’s like to be a person who doesn’t have money to buy stuff.”

Data Analysis and Coding

I had initially planned to use NVivo qualitative analysis software to assist me in organizing and coding the data I had collected. I soon discovered, however, that simultaneously attempting to learn how to use a new software program while coding and analyzing data for my first major independent research project (i.e., this dissertation) was naïve and unwise at best and counterproductive or potentially disastrous at worst. Therefore, I chose to use more traditional methods—namely, printed transcripts, index cards, pens, and highlighters—to review, code, and analyze the data I had collected.

After having compiled interview transcripts, field notes, and an autobiography from each participant, I used a process similar to the one Creswell (2009) describes (pp. 185-190): I organized and prepared the data for analysis; I read through all the data; I began a detailed analysis with a coding process; I used the coding process to generate descriptions, categories, and themes for analysis; and I represented those analyses in my qualitative narratives.

First, I randomly assigned a color to each participant:

- Brutus – blue
- Karen – green
- Luke – orange
- Mindy – red
- Patrick – yellow

The list above also indicates the order in which I read, notated, and coded each participant's data. I meticulously read each document; as I perused these documents, I highlighted and underlined important information and made summative and analytical marginal notes. I then transferred these highlighted and underlined data bits, along with my marginal notes, to color coded 3" x 5" index cards. To facilitate the subsequent coding process, I was careful to include on each index card discrete bits of data. I labelled the top left corner of each index card with the source ("1st int" for initial interview, "FN" for field notes, "2nd int" for follow-up interview, or "Auto" for autobiography), and—for easy reference should the need arise for me to refer back to the original context of the data—I cited on the index card the page number of the source document from which it originated.

After I had transferred all of the data from a given participant to index cards, I then pored through the index cards and assigned each card, in the lower right corner, a keyword or brief phrase that characterized the nature of the data. Some of these codes were, for example: *gender*, *relationship with students*, *classroom décor*, *IMS (identity management strategy)*, *social media*, *hybrid identity*, *community*. I repeated this process until I completed coding the data for all five participants.

Bearing in mind Huberman and Miles' (1994) admonitions regarding the transparency of data analysis methods and endeavoring to maintain "a reflexive stance" as I created "successive versions of coding schemes" (p. 439), I then began the axial coding process. I disaggregated the index cards—which were originally grouped according to participant/color—and re-aggregated them according to

codes. The initial round of axial coding yielded approximately twenty-five stacks of index cards grouped according to the codes that I had initially assigned to each card. I then examined each stack of cards more closely in order to combine them into more manageable groupings according to theme. For example, one card that contained data regarding the faculty breakfast potluck at Patrick's school clearly pertained to the school's gender regime (see Figure 1). A card that contained data regarding Karen's relationship with her students, however, revealed the power differential at work within their interactions (see Figure 2). Therefore, although I had initially labelled the card "power relationship with students," I classified it with data pertaining to school gender regimes, since power relationships within an institution are a significant component of the institution's gender regime.

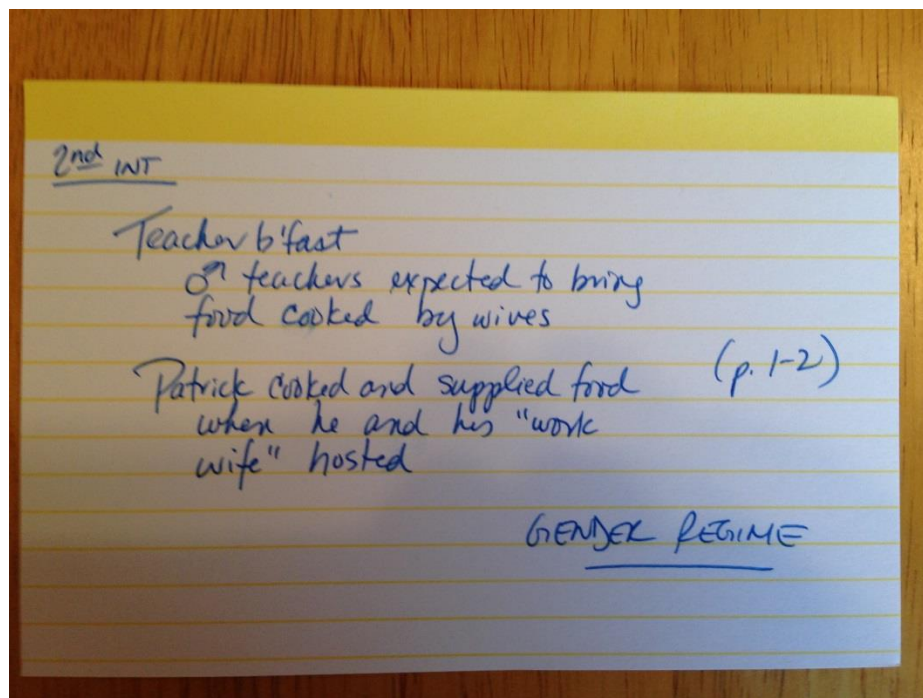


Figure 1. Data card from Patrick's second interview.

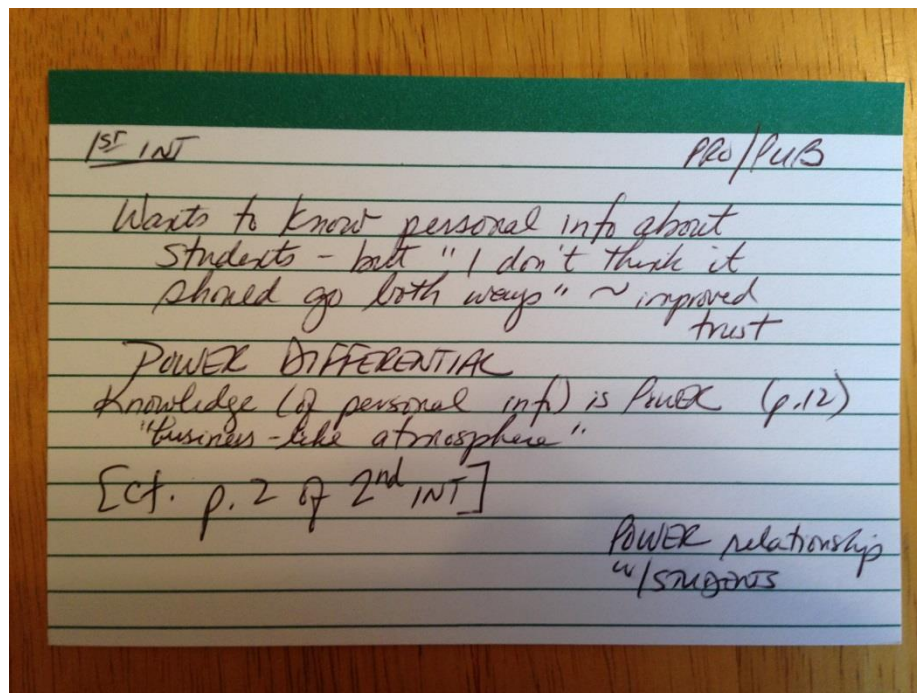


Figure 2. Data card from Karen's first interview.

Just as the index card that describes the faculty breakfast potluck at Patrick's school focuses directly on the school gender regime, a data card from Mindy's first interview focuses specifically on her use of the identity management strategy of being explicitly out to her colleagues, and I coded it as such— "IMS—expl out" (see Figure 3). But a data card containing information from my field notes during my observation of Karen describes the contrast between her businesslike approach during class instruction and her acknowledgment of her personal life after class ended (see Figure 4). I coded this card as "Distinct boundaries, pro(fessional) identity" but classified it—like the data card from Mindy's first interview—under the overarching theme of identity integration, since it illustrates an absence of integration.

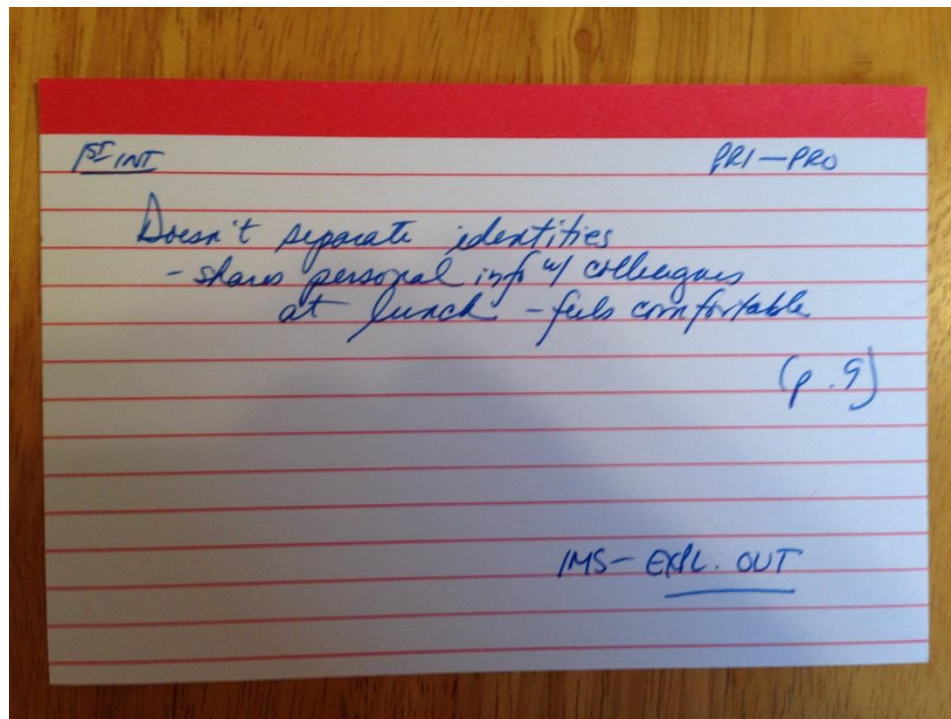


Figure 3. Data card from Mindy's first interview.

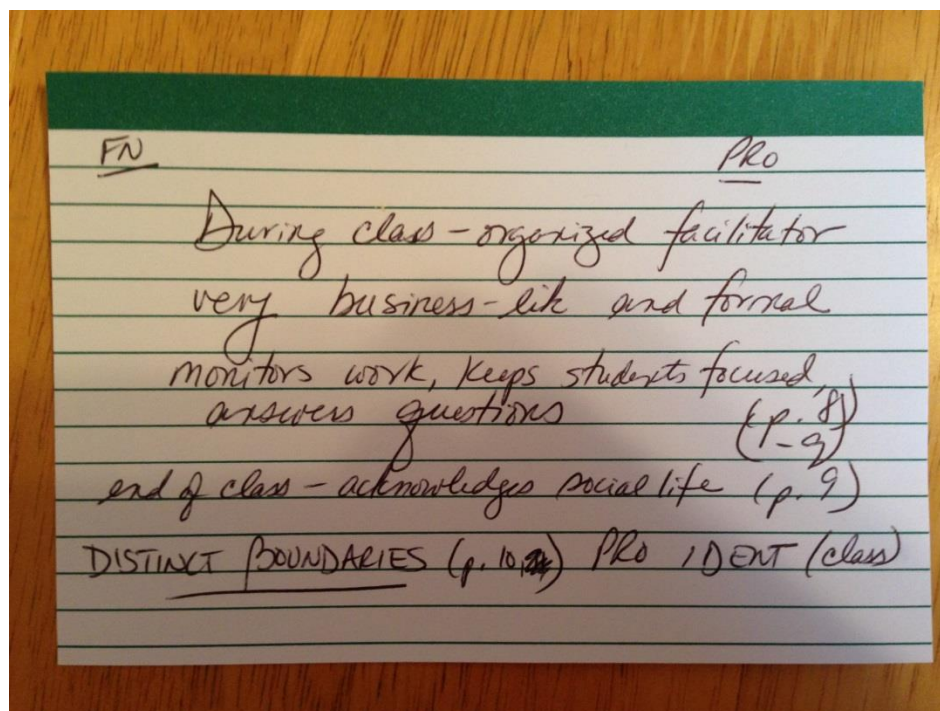


Figure 4. Data card from field notes taken during observation of Karen.

The final two examples illustrate data that pertain specifically to the participants' development of community. During Luke's second interview, he described his band room as a safe space over which the students demonstrate "a great deal of ownership"; since these remarks pertained directly to Luke's concern with his academic and social community within the school, I coded this card as "community space" (see Figure 5). And in the course of Mindy's first interview, she mentioned her desire for Lincoln High School to be regarded as "a safe space for everyone" (see Figure 6). Since these remarks characterized the broader school community, I coded the card as "school environment/community" and ultimately classified both of these cards under the overarching theme of community.

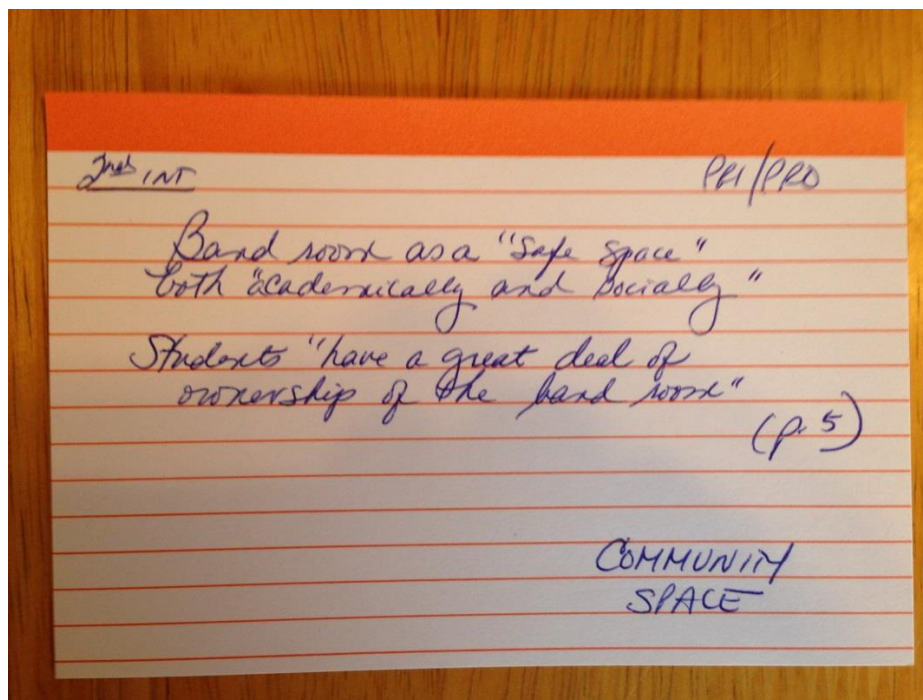


Figure 5. Data card from Luke's second interview.

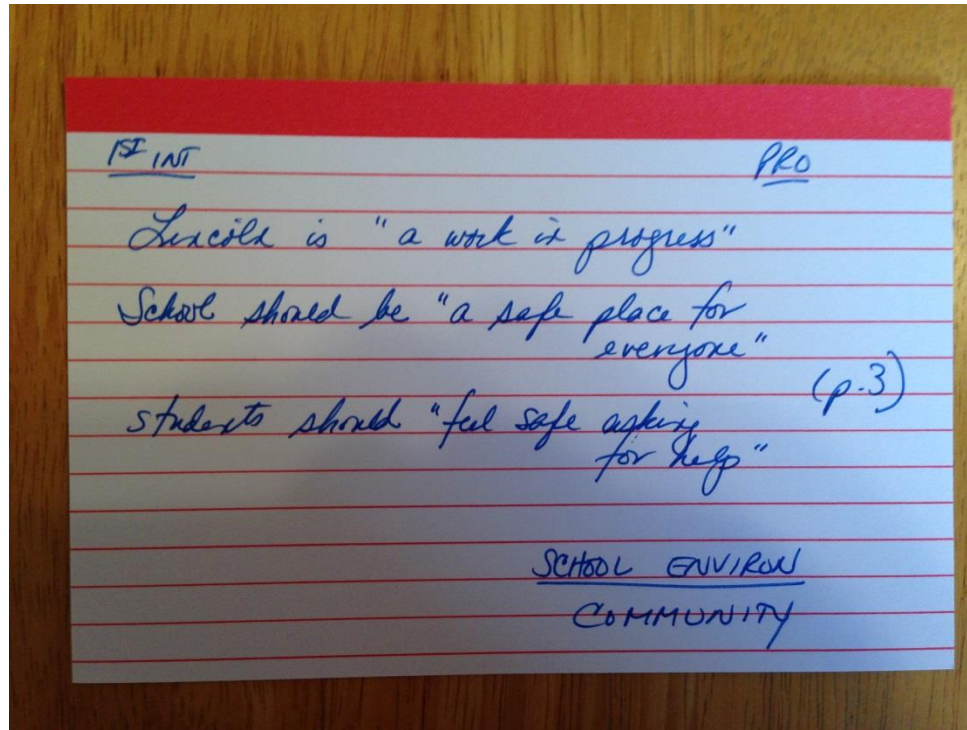


Figure 6. Data card from Mindy's first interview.

This distillation process resulted in ten thematic groups of index cards:

- relationship with students
- school gender regimes
- teacher identity as performance
- LGBTQ students and social justice
- "gay" objects
- identity management strategies
- social media
- multifaceted professional identities
- private identity
- community

After considering the ways in which these ten themes pertained to my research questions, I chose to combine the first five themes (relationship with students, school gender regimes, teacher identity as performance, LGBTQ students and social justice, and “gay” objects) into one overarching theme I identified as “School gender regimes”; the next four themes (Identity management strategies, social media, multifaceted professional identities, and private identity) into a second overarching theme I identified as “Identity integration”; and the final theme I chose to treat as another overarching theme, “Community”:

1. School gender regimes, including the impact on private and professional identity development, relationships with colleagues, and rapport with students
2. Identity integration, including the use of identity management strategies, teacher identity as performance, and multifaceted professional identities
3. Community and its role in LGBTQ and non-LGBTQ teachers’ identity development

The first two overarching themes address my research questions, and I analyze these data and themes in Chapters 5 and 6, respectively. In Chapter 7, I discuss the third overarching theme, which emerged as a differentiating factor between the identity development of LGBTQ and non-LGBTQ participants.

Balancing Private and Professional Relationships: My Role as a Researcher

As I collected research data from professional colleagues whom I also consider friends (to varying degrees), I found myself in an unfamiliar situation—it was my first formal foray into the realm of empirical research, and—although all of my participants knew that “PhD student” was a significant aspect of my identity—none of them had ever interacted with me in my capacity as a graduate student/PhD candidate. As I conducted the interviews and field observations with these friends-who-are-also-professional-colleagues, I strove to respect the boundaries of our friendship by not presuming to know details about their private, professional, or public identities based solely on our existing relationships. At the same time, I discovered interesting dimensions of their professional identities that I could never have known if I hadn’t engaged in this research study with them. The participants’ commitment to my research and their belief in its value certainly contributed greatly to my ability to complete data collection with relative ease.

In preparation for data analysis and interpretation—the results of which I discuss in the following three chapters—I queered my perspective. Having integrated the dimensions of my participants’ identities with which I had become acquainted, I could no longer regard any of them as simply “a friend” or “a colleague.” I can no longer regard Brutus or Karen as “just” former student teachers or former students who became colleagues. Luke, Mindy, and Patrick are no longer “just” friends who are also teachers. In addition to the existing identities they inhabit, they are all now co-researchers and co-investigators who have contributed

to my quest to queer the collective knowledge base about teacher identity. Each one embodies compound and complex identities that resist fixation. All six of us now occupy multiple shifting positions along the identity spectrum from private individual to professional educator to (semi-) public figure.

CHAPTER FIVE:
DATA ANALYSIS: SCHOOL GENDER REGIMES

As I discussed in Chapter 2, school gender regimes—or “the totality of gender arrangements within a school” (Connell, 2000, p. 152)—mediate the masculinities and femininities expressed within the institution (Mac an Ghail, 1994, p. 4). Power relations, symbolism, patterns of emotion, and a division of labor constitute a given school’s gender regime (Connell, 2000, pp. 153-154). Heterosexual men usually dominate these largely heteronormative gender regimes, which often dictate—sometimes overtly, and sometimes subtly—who may express which emotions, who may perform which job functions, and how gender and sexuality may be expressed. In this first data analysis chapter, I discuss the data I’ve collected in response to my initial research question:

How have school gender regimes affected the identity integration/development process for each participant? How do the participants express their gender identity in professional settings? How do their gender expression and the expression of their sexual orientation affect their relationships with students, colleagues, administrators, and parents? How does it affect their pedagogy?

The five participants’ experiences as educators, as documented in the data, create an image of schools as decidedly heteronormative gender regimes situated

within the equally heteronormative gender regimes of late twentieth and early twenty-first century US culture. For example, in its student handbook, Lincoln, the school where Mindy teaches, proscribes “Clothing or accessories which draw negative attention to the individual,” and it cites “boys in skirts” as a specific example. These gender regimes affect teachers’ private and professional identity development, exert an impact on curriculum and pedagogy, and influence teachers’ relationships with their administrators, their colleagues and their students. In this chapter, I discuss each of these elements of the gender regimes within the schools where the participants teach.

Gender Regimes and Private Identity Development

The dominant heteronormative gender regime of twentieth century US culture exerted a noticeable impact on Patrick and Mindy, the two oldest participants. The generational difference—one with which I personally identify as a member of the same generation—seems significant since the other three participants either failed to mention any strict gender-policing that they experienced in their youth or proudly noted the ways in which they were empowered to defy gender expectations. Both Patrick and Mindy recalled the limitations of gender that they learned at relatively early ages. In his autobiography, Patrick remembered “some definite views expressed in [his] family about what was manly or not, including what tasks one did and how one was supposed to act.” His mother—who was herself a teacher—even attempted to dissuade him from a career

as an educator because, as Patrick explained, “Her context was, yeah, that men should not be teachers because it—well, y’know, she went into teaching because there were two professions in the [19]60s for women—a nurse or a teacher, that was it.” Furthermore, she argued, he would never be able to “have a spouse and children, raise a family and whatever on a teacher’s salary.” He concluded that statement by adding, “Solved that, didn’t I?”—a clear allusion to his sexual orientation. Albeit clever, Patrick’s concluding remark might also reveal that he has internalized the restrictions of the heteronormative gender regime that ruled his youth and early adulthood. Same-sex marriage is now legal in the state where Patrick resides, and—in any case—a legal spouse is not required in order to create a family. Patrick has always had the option to find a partner and create a family, regardless of whether the state sanctions that choice. His adherence to the gender regime that dominated his early life, however, has led him to believe that option was unavailable to him.

Mindy, just a few years younger than Patrick, recalled similar restrictions of the cultural gender regime that prevailed throughout her childhood. Although she insisted that her parents “never told [her] that [she] couldn’t do anything,” she did recall the bitter memory of being allowed to practice with her brother’s “pee wee soccer team” (which her father coached) but being prohibited from playing in games because she was a girl. As an adult, she has avenged that injustice by co-founding a women’s soccer league in the city where she now lives. And despite her similarity in age to Patrick, she has embraced a considerably different perspective on family than

he has. In 1996, at the age of 27, Mindy legally adopted her then-partner's son, and, later that year, she became pregnant through artificial insemination. As a healthy woman of child-bearing age, Mindy's desire to create a family was no doubt facilitated by her functioning womb, a feature not readily available to Patrick.

Brutus, who enjoyed a fairly typical upbringing, engaged in stereotypically masculine activities while growing up—exercising, sports, and cheering on his favorite college and professional sports teams. He is aware, however, of the pressures of heteronormativity and strives to challenge those expectations in both private and professional ways. He sees himself as a “male role model,” and he is aware that his current living arrangement—he shares a house with two other unmarried male English teachers in their 20s—is somewhat unconventional by the community standards of Rome and its surrounding communities, where most of the households are composed of nuclear families. Brutus, whose all-male residence either challenges the heteronorms of Rome and similar communities or simply recreates a collegiate fraternity house in a residential suburb, is well aware that his private living arrangements cause him to “stand out...in that community.” As he explains, Rome is “this little suburban utopia where that's what you see—successful families with successful kids. That's the norm.” He contends that his happy life with his single, successful, independent friends/colleagues confounds many members of the community, who believe “you should be married by 25” and “you should have your first kid by 27”—two “goals” that, by the age of 29, he has declined to achieve.

Like Brutus, Luke enjoyed “a loving and happy childhood,” and, like Brutus, he lives with an unmarried male colleague. Gender expectations did not seem to affect him as they did Patrick and Mindy (who belonged to the generation that preceded Luke’s), but he mentioned that his parents “used to joke that they wanted to have a doctor and a lawyer who could support them in their old age, but they got the artist [Luke’s older brother is a graphic designer] and the musician.” Luke is out to his family, and he is grateful for their love and support; his sexual orientation has prompted his father to adopt a more “moderate” stance on social issues, and his relationship with his mother has grown and strengthened as a result of his being out. Luke described his students as “over-curious about” why he and his colleague—the choir director at his school—live together, but he maintains that his private life, including whom he lives with, is “not their business.”

Karen’s private identity development hewed closely to heteronormative gender expectations. She admits to succumbing to gender expectations very early on. As she states in her autobiography:

My femininity was very apparent at a young age. I was always complimented on my very feminine style as a student. My gender as a girl was amplified by my interest in figure skating and dance, which I was probably drawn to because of the dresses and sparkles.

Despite her adept femininity, she did not yield to heteronormative expectations of passivity or subordination—she also confessed that she was “known for getting in

arguments with football players about how figure skating and dance were more of a 'sport' than professional football.”

All five participants acknowledged the impact of heteronormative gender expectations that they experienced in their private lives. And all five of them, in some way and to varying degrees, transgressed—or queered—those expectations: Patrick by choosing to become a teacher, a profession that he was told was more suitable for women; Mindy by starting a family and, in fact, pioneering same-sex adoption in the county where she lives; Brutus by resisting the pressure to get married and have children and instead choosing to live with other single men; Luke by choosing teaching over medicine or law; and Karen by challenging the supremacy of masculine sports over more feminine ones—and also by choosing to teach Social Studies, a traditionally masculine subject area.

School Gender Regimes and Professional Identity Development

Whether intentionally or not, the schools where the participants teach clearly perpetuate the traditional heteronormative gender regimes that regulate power, emotions, and personal liberties. For example, consistent with national trends⁴, most administrative authority is wielded by men, most of the teachers are women, certain academic subjects are considered more suitable for men than women, others are deemed more suitable for women than men, and gender dictates specific behaviors and opportunities to express emotion.

⁴ According to the NEA (2010), 70% of all teachers are women, while the NCES (2012) found that 71% of all public secondary school principals are male.

Every participant made some mention of the academic gender divide, with respect to both power relationships and subject area. Luke mentioned that he had witnessed “more...male administrators and female teachers in those fields that are traditionally dominated by females.” Similarly, Karen cited “the majority of teachers” as women but pointed out that “people in positions of leadership” are men; there are, she said, “a lot of male administrators.” And Brutus stated that, in Rome, all but one of the building-level administrators in the district are male, although the Superintendent is a woman.

Rome High School, where Brutus teaches, employs 24 teachers in the English department, just eight of whom are men. Despite the dominance of female teachers in the department, Brutus noted that the gender division is becoming “more even” because, when he began teaching in Rome in 2006, only three of the teachers in the department were men. He believes that the gendering of academic subjects is “slowly starting to dissolve” as younger educators enter the profession. Luke likewise noticed a gradual dissolution of this gender divide:

Social Studies is a dude thing—Math is pretty male-dominated, English and Art are the female studies, and I guess Science is pretty male too. I have noticed more people crossing those barriers, but I think that’s bigger than my school. It’s more than systemic.

Karen also acknowledged the gender divide in her subject area, Social Studies, noting that it is “definitely gendered towards males.” She attempts to counteract this gender imbalance by eschewing the use of textbooks in her classes,

because, she argued, “all of the people that are featured in there are men, particularly white old men.” She wrote in her autobiography:

Quite often, when I tell people I teach history, a male dominated field, and to add to that, high school history, their reaction is genuine to a fault... they make a point that because I am a young woman, I will have a “tougher time” than most and I need to “be careful” ...I earn special points of “respect” from these people because I am taking on a role that is typically masculine. After having this dialogue many times, I always have wondered what this conversation would sound like if I was a male in the same position.

Karen also mentioned that the girls in her classes often express disdain for math and science, while the boys struggle with creative assignments.

Teachers encounter the effects of the school gender regime both inside and outside of the classroom. Mindy spoke about her female predecessors in the science department at Lincoln, who were harassed by their male colleagues, and she reported that she has experienced discrimination because she is “a petite female in the sciences.” On the day that I visited Patrick’s school to observe him, the faculty was enjoying an informal potluck breakfast, which Patrick invited me to attend. In my field notes, I observed:

Today’s breakfast was brought in by a male teacher, who admitted that his wife actually prepared the food... One older male colleague comments that it’s okay when women bring in a good breakfast, but it sets the bar too high

for other male teachers when a male colleague provides such a delicious breakfast.

During my follow-up interview with Patrick, I asked him about this incident, and he stated that it is usually “assumed that if a guy’s brought the food, generally, that it’s the wife that’s actually done it.” He also, mentioned, however, that just two weeks earlier, when he and his “work wife” provided the food for the potluck breakfast, he was the one “who did all the cooking...I made peach cobbler, and I made two huge breakfast casseroles.” At that time, he related, “there was no comment there at all. That was really good that nobody made some comment like, ‘Wow, you set the bar high.’ So to some degree it’s like expected that I would do that.” The implication here, of course, is that most of his colleagues expect Patrick, as a gay male, to be a good cook.

Patrick also observed the emotional affordances of school gender regimes and the roles they permitted teachers to play. He stated, for example, that in his department alone, certain female teachers embody a number of stereotypes: “the mother figure,” the “insensitive bitch,” and the “very, very prim and proper” French teacher. He theorized that men, on the other hand, “don’t have that ability to be a little more different, express themselves in different ways.” Patrick also admitted that he considered himself “pushy and aggressive,” which he believed are qualities expected of male teachers. He also believes he’s “fairly outspoken” and, consequently, gets appointed “to a lot of leadership positions.” While he acknowledges that teaching is “a profession that’s considered to be female,” he has

observed that “definitely the men take control.” Luke also identified gendered behavioral expectations in education, particularly the prohibition against men expressing emotion:

I think that those expectations of men in culture carry over to men in education in general, like the manly ideal, the macho stoic doesn't-share-feelings and all those aspects that make someone masculine—those things carry over in education. People expect things like that of male teachers and male administrators, and male students, I think.

And while Brutus—who coached Rome's baseball team for five years—conceded the “lack of ‘machismo’ associated with” his career choice as an English teacher, Mindy believes that men are privileged when it comes to coaching sports teams. She argued that “there's a lot more male coaches than there are female coaches even for the girls' teams” because, she believes, “it's just more acceptable for a guy to be absent from his family.”

Just as all of the participants managed to transgress some of the strictures of the cultural gender regime mentioned in the previous section of this chapter, they have all resisted certain aspects of their respective school gender regimes and transgressed in measured ways. For example, all of them represent gender non-conformity with respect to their subject areas. Brutus, in his autobiography, states, “I stand proudly as a sensitive, over-enthusiastic lover of the arts and literature”; Karen asserts:

In the past and present when I tell people that I am a high school teacher, comments about my gender are some of the first topics of conversation. I highly doubt that the people who argue I will have a tough time teaching because I am a young female are purposefully typecasting me, but regardless, their comments reveal preconceived notions about gender in my field.

Mindy knows that “most people, when they think of rocket science, they think of nerdy white guys,” yet she is developing a research program in rocket science for her students. And Patrick and Luke both teach in female-dominated fields—languages and the arts, respectively. The participants also endeavor to queer school gender regimes through their curriculum and pedagogy as well.

School Gender Regimes, Curriculum, and Pedagogy

Patrick and Luke, men teaching in female-dominated fields, both discussed the prevalent gendering of their subject areas. Patrick specified the gendered elements of various world languages available at West Monroe for students to study:

Spanish is the language that you take because your parents tell you that you have to or they think it's really good for the future... You take French because you are a girl or you are a gay boy or you're a boy who's figured out that lots of girls take this so maybe I'll get laid, and you take German because you are—it's kind of a masculine thing, and so I get a lot of football players, soccer players...But yeah, in our school, the French is about 65 to 70% female, and the German is 60 to 75% male, depending on the class.

The gender division among the students in Patrick’s classes supports his analysis; in the six classes that I observed Patrick teaching, 84 of 131 students—or 64%—were male. Some aspects of the décor in Patrick’s classroom also revealed the heteronormative, hegemonically masculine character of the German language. For example, a bulletin board depicted a typical heteronormative extended German family (see Figure 7); each individual family unit consisted of a man, a woman, and their children. The students in Patrick’s two German I classes had completed projects on famous German Americans. These projects were displayed around Patrick’s classroom and in the hallway adjacent to the classroom. Men accounted



Figure 7. Bulletin board depicting a heteronormative family in Patrick’s classroom

for over 90% (37 out of 41) of the German Americans represented by the projects. During our follow-up interview, Patrick acknowledged the dearth of women depicted in his classroom décor and on the assignment, explaining:

it's very hard to find the level of women who are the same level as the men who are depicted there, who are German American immigrants—because let's be honest, the majority of the stuff in the house, doing the work, keeping the family or whatever, and they weren't able to do other things outside the home.

The lack of women available for Patrick to include in this assignment exemplifies an important way in which the gender regime of the broader culture affects—and is reproduced by—the gender regimes within schools and even within specific subject areas.

This hegemonically masculine gender regime also affects Luke's band instruction. As he explained, the musical instruments themselves are gendered, which in turn affects options available to male and female students. Luke claimed that "band directors are historically male," despite the female dominance of the arts—yet another example of men assuming control in the "feminine" profession of education. He explained that "old men...and society" ingrain in students which instruments they should and should not be playing:

there's this gender divide between what kind of boys and girls pick what kind of instruments, and you've got your trumpets and trombones and low brass things that tend to be more masculine—saxophone too—and you've got your

flutes and clarinets and oboes and bassoons that tend to be more feminine, and so—because, Ohhh—those boys don't wanna play the flute! No, those girls don't wanna play the trombone!

He identified the French horn, the saxophone, and percussion instruments as “gender neutral,” although female percussionists tend to “specialize in keyboard percussion—marimba, xylophone, and bells,” while male percussionists favor the drums. The instrumental gender division that I witnessed when I observed Luke's band classes closely resembled the dynamic that Luke described in his initial interview, with all girls playing the flute and mostly boys playing the brass instruments. Luke also mentioned the gendered elements of other musical activities, such as the color guard, which features male participants wielding weapons such as rifles and sabers.

Despite the oppression of these school gender regimes, Patrick and Luke—as well as Brutus and Karen—also discussed their intentional efforts to challenge them within their subject areas. Luke, in just his second year of teaching at the very conservative Rural High School, challenges gender expectations in very indirect ways. For example, as he was teaching the elementary level band class, he compared the sound of the instruments to something “strong and beautiful, like Aphrodite, some Greek goddess.” During our follow-up interview, when I asked him about his use of that specific metaphor, he explained that he was attempting to dissuade the students from thinking in terms of polar opposites or equating “soft with wispy and unsupported.” He mentioned that students “equate loud with ugly,” and in order to

challenge such binary thinking, he encourages them to consider “What is loud but beautiful? What is soft but beautiful? What is soft but supported?” Luke therefore chose to use a female image—Aphrodite—to represent both strength and beauty. Such subtle subversion of the school’s gender regime might escape Luke’s young students, but it is nevertheless an effort.

Patrick’s efforts, however, are more overt. The AP German class that I observed Patrick teach featured an essay on Marlene Dietrich and video of her performing songs in German. Patrick explained that he chose to include Dietrich in the curriculum because she challenged gender expectations and often dressed in men’s attire. He noted that Dietrich was “fairly fluid with her sexuality,” and he specifically included this point in his class discussion, explaining that such a discussion could be useful to his students when they complete the AP exam in German, a portion of which covers various interpretations of beauty and aesthetics. Patrick speculated that his students are comfortable with such topics because they are already accustomed to being considered as “other”: “for you to choose [to study] German... you have decided, I wanna be different, I wanna step outside, a little bit, out of what everybody else is doing.”

Karen’s attempts to subvert the heteronormative gender regime at the military academy where she teaches are equally as overt as Patrick’s if somewhat more frustrating. In the Law class that she teaches—which she describes as “a class in life...law that actually applies to your everyday life”—she includes in the curriculum the legal implications of persecuting or harassing people based on race,

ethnicity, religion, or sexual orientation. As she mentioned, though, “That curriculum is explicitly taught, but we still have a culture of—if someone were to come out, they would still be bullied even though we teach them that you could be sued for this.” Equally disconcerting to Karen is the intolerant reaction of some of her students to a marriage exercise she uses in that same class in order to teach students about finances, communication, and the responsibilities of parenthood. Some of the simulated marriage pairs created in the exercise are same-sex marriages (which are legal in the state where Karen teaches), yet:

some of the boys are so uncomfortable with it, and they just are constantly making comments like, stop being so gay, you’re such a homo, and then I have to [tell them]...you can’t say those things because...I don’t think that that’s a good thing for the culture of the classroom.

Despite—or perhaps because of—these sometimes discouraging responses to her curriculum, Karen vows to strengthen her efforts in the future.

Like Patrick’s efforts to challenge the school gender regime through curriculum and pedagogy, Brutus addresses this issue in his AP class. On the day that I observed Brutus teaching, his AP class was discussing the topic of gender and equality in Ernest Hemingway’s “Hills Like White Elephants” and in Virginia Wolff’s “Professions for Women.” It was also the day during Rome’s Spirit Week that seniors were encouraged to dress as either “babies” or “old people”—and many students interpreted this encouragement as, somewhat appropriately, non-gender specific. Brutus facilitated rather lively small group discussions, and, based on a number of

student comments I heard (printed below), he seems to be succeeding in encouraging his students to challenge the prevailing gender regime:

- A male student, discussing the issue of gender equality, asserts that women are still the product of a patriarchal society and that they are still subjected to misogyny and sexism. As an example, he cites his cousin, who has said to him, “If Hilary [Clinton] runs for President, when she gets her period, world look out!”
- A female student argues that American culture is male-dominant: “Whether women are subservient or rebellious, we are a product of our environment.”
- A male student points out that we have had 44 Presidents, and they’ve all been male.
- A female student argues that women do not earn as much money as men do for performing the same jobs.
- A female student mentions to a boy wearing Batman pajamas that she could envision him crying because he’s a more emotionally sensitive guy and adds, “It’s not a bad thing.”

Brutus also spearheads an extracurricular activity with his two male colleagues/ housemates; they facilitate a poetry club that has become quite popular among male students. In his autobiography, Brutus stated that part of his mission as an English teacher is to encourage students—especially male students—to embrace all of their interests, regardless of gender expectations: “I want my male students to see that it is perfectly acceptable to love sports AND Shakespeare; to love rap music AND

classic Romantic British literature; to love weight-lifting AND an enlightening evening at an Art Museum.”

The Effects of School Gender Regimes on Participants’ Professional Relationships

The participants’ relationships with their colleagues and their students are powerfully affected by the schools’ gender regimes. For example, Luke—who is not out to his colleagues—has little to no social interaction with them. He mentioned that he lives in the same city as some of his colleagues, both teachers and administrators, but he hasn’t “had a moment when [he] want[s] to cross that bridge, hang out with them, and go grab a drink.” He identified a married female colleague who lives nearby and with whom he has discussed the possibility of socializing. He has, however, avoided doing so because he is not out to her, and he worries that “it might become clear if we were to hang out outside of school and it was her and her husband and me and nobody—or me and a man.” Karen, meanwhile, finds it very difficult to work with colleagues in her building “that are so just openly uncomfortable with gay and lesbian students.” She has heard some of these colleagues state that they would disown their own children if they were to come out as gay or lesbian, and she wonders how these colleagues “teach every single student in [their] classroom” if they’re so intolerant of gay and lesbian students. Patrick, on the other hand, feels supported by his colleagues, with whom he says he would feel quite comfortable discussing a prospective partner or other aspects of his private life.

All of the participants enjoy a positive rapport with their students, although the school gender regimes appear to affect each participant's rapport with his/her students in various ways. Mindy, who is explicitly out, believes that her subject area (Chemistry) tends to attract "more guys than girls" (especially in the advanced course), and she has earned the trust and respect of many of her students. She spoke of one student who expressed his gratitude to her in a unique way:

I mean, it's just like...yeah, just be out, especially for the kids. I had one kid was going through his whole sexual orientation identity type of thing. And teenagers are an emotional mess anyway—then you throw social stigmas in there—and it's uncomfortable. I'm not like that...he just, he passed me a note in a hallway, just slipped me a note as if he was dealing drugs or something on the sly, and I read it, and he was just thanking me for just being out, who I am, and just showing that you can be gay and a normal person at the same time.

Luke, who is not out at all at his school, fosters respectful and supportive relationships with his students in more traditionally academic ways, whether he is on lunchroom duty encouraging a student to attend college or offering a student positive reinforcement during class—e.g., "Hey, you're getting really good," "Much better!", and "Nailed it!" Luke noted that he gets along with female students "in a different way than male students," and he certainly appeared to be more comfortable interacting with female students than with male students. He acknowledged a "need to keep part of me private," and he understands that his

discretion regarding his private identity “creates a certain distance” between him and his students; he did, however, speculate about a time in his future when he foresees selected students—mostly female—entering his “circle of confidence.”

On the day that I observed Luke, one particular incident that occurred during his duty period supervising “Catch-Up Café” illustrated his efforts to cultivate a positive rapport with students. “Catch-Up Café” is a lunchtime program at Luke’s school that allows students to spend a part of their lunch period making up assignments that they have missed. As one female student was completing her work, Luke gestured to her footwear and asked “Are those Uggs?” I wondered whether Luke’s question about the female student’s boots might have inadvertently revealed his familiarity with women’s footwear—a possible transgression of the school’s gender regime. During our follow-up interview, I asked him whether he was concerned that students might make inferences about his sexual orientation based on this incident, and he explained that his question “felt like a way for me to get to know that girl and to kind of just olive-branch that girl.” He related that a couple of days after my visit, the same student attended Catch-up Café again, and—instead of having to restart her work, as she did on the day that I was observing—she had it completed and ready to go, sought Luke out before Catch-up Café, handed it to him with a “big smile on her face, and was just happy at least not to have to go to Catch-up Café instead of lunch.” Luke, hopeful that “maybe she likes [him] a little more” because of the interest he expressed in her, transgressed his school’s gender regime in order to create “a little endearment” and form a connection with a student.

Luke also described two incidents with students that demonstrated the harmful effects that school gender regimes can have on teacher-student relationships. A student—who was not in Luke’s class but whom he knew from a study hall he had been supervising—passed Luke in the cafeteria one day and asked “How’s your boyfriend?” Although the student apparently asked the question as a form of ridicule based on her perception of Luke’s sexual orientation, Luke considered this question disrespectful not because it presumed his sexual orientation but because the student (obviously not a candidate for inclusion in his “circle of confidence”) inappropriately inquired about his private life. Luke escorted the student to the main office, where she was disciplined for her infraction. Another student would take “a defensive posture” whenever he encountered Luke and avoided him “at all costs.” Luke described the student’s behavior as:

a very visual disrespect, and so whenever he saw me, he wouldn’t walk by my room...if he saw me and passed me, he would hug the wall, basically and just—as if afraid to have his back towards me, which I took offense to.

As Luke observed, this student’s behavior was also apparently prompted by his suspicion of Luke’s homosexuality.

Brutus likewise related two troubling incidents that exemplify the impact of school gender regimes, which mediate power relationships as well. In his autobiography, Brutus spoke of a time when he attempted to enforce his school’s dress code by advising a female student that she should be wearing “longer shorts”; the student replied, “Why are you looking anyway?”—an implication that it was

inappropriate for a male teacher to be assessing a female student's attire. A more alarming incident occurred when Brutus, while socializing at a bar with colleagues, inadvertently shared a few alcoholic beverages with a female Rome High School student. A colleague who had learned of the incident had informed Rome administration, and Brutus, unaware that the female in question was a high school student—why, he reasoned, would a high school student be permitted to hang out in a bar?—was subsequently interrogated about the incident by his principal, the Assistant Superintendent, the Director of Personnel, and the Athletic Director. Upon being questioned, Brutus was shocked to learn that one of the women he had met at the bar was a student; “Do you honestly think that if I knew they were Rome students,” he argued, “I would say, hey, let me buy you a drink?” Although his administrators ultimately refrained from any sort of disciplinary action, Brutus became so concerned about the incident that he hired an attorney. He feared that his reputation as a professional educator would “be shot”; consequently, within a month of the incident, he made a number of changes in his life. He moved out of Rome to another community, and he has since avoided any kind of social activity within Rome. He also feels betrayed by a number of his colleagues—the one who introduced him to the student at the bar, the one who informed the administration about the incident, and one who gossiped incessantly about the incident afterwards—and he learned a frightening lesson about the power of gender regimes; he concluded, “it just made me more aware of my decisions and it just made me think about long-term consequences even in situations where I knew I

wasn't doing anything wrong." Brutus' harrowing experience highlights the consequences of even a perceived violation of gender norms and an alleged abuse of power. He, a male teacher, was believed to have inappropriately socialized with a female student and allegedly exploited both his gender and his authority as a teacher for personal pleasure. Fortunately, he suffered no formal reprimand for his perceived misconduct, but the experience did have a permanent impact on his relationships with both colleagues and students; there is now certain private information that he simply will not divulge to his students. He stated, "They don't need to know about it."

Karen, on the other hand, understands that she can harness the power differential at work within school gender regimes to improve her pedagogy by developing her relationships with students. She asserts herself as the authority rather than, in Foucauldian terms, the confessor. For example, she resists sharing much private information about herself with students, but she encourages her students to share information about themselves with her. She posits:

if they can do all the talking, that is my end goal because that's—the more that they're willing to share with me, the more that they trust me...I don't think if a student tells me what they did over the weekend, then I have to tell them what I did. I don't think that it should go both ways. I think that just by them sharing that with me, that's my—that's building a relationship, that's building trust.

She has a genuine interest in her students' personal lives, because she believes that knowing more about her students will help her be a more effective teacher, but she ultimately strives "to maintain some sort of business-like atmosphere."

Even in a case when Karen was unable to successfully mediate her power relationship with a student, she managed to transform the experience into a positive outcome. Atop a bookcase in Karen's classroom sits a stuffed animal (see Figure 8). When I asked Karen why she displayed a stuffed animal in her classroom, she told me the story behind the stuffed animal she has dubbed "Philosophical Phil." A former student of hers, whom she described as "an angry person," resisted her attempts to help him develop problem-solving skills. As she stated, "for someone who is an angry male, with several problems, I typically wanna teach how to problem-solve." The student, however, "did not want to accept any of [Karen's] suggestions or advice" and developed a strong antipathy toward Karen; he also criticized her curriculum and—inexplicably—called her a racist. Although Karen

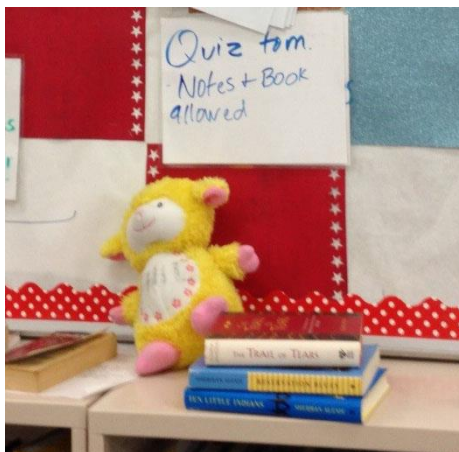


Figure 8. Philosophical Phil

was unable to resolve the conflict with this student, the student appeared to abandon his provocations. Sometime later, however, during an event in the school auditorium, the student threw a stuffed animal at Karen. She caught it and confiscated it. When the student didn't bother to ask for it back, Karen christened the stuffed animal "Philosophical Phil," and she now uses it as a token to mediate class discussions. She explained, "now Phil is Philosophical Phil, and he is the person that like—the thing you hold when you wanna speak during a class discussion, so when you're trying to problem-solve through your thoughts through discussion, you're holding Phil." In the absence of any other identifiable motives for the student's contempt, it's reasonable to conclude that it was fueled by his and Karen's differences in gender, race, and power—all aspects of the school's gender regime. And despite her inability to overcome the student's enmity, Karen, recalling that Phil "came from a bad place with an angry boy that didn't like me, and I had to turn it around," salvaged some benefit from her disconcerting relationship with the student.

Patrick and Brutus have used their curriculum to assist them in developing constructive relationships with their students. In the conversational journals that Patrick requires students to write for his German classes, many students "make it personal" and share with Patrick many of their private thoughts and concerns. Not coincidentally, Patrick's own experience as a junior high school student—when he completed journals to satisfy class assignments and, privately, to "express a lot of [his] feelings" about his burgeoning sexuality—inspired his use of journals for

instruction. And Brutus described a social justice assignment he gave to one of his classes, which resulted in some of his students forming an anti-bullying group, which they asked him to sponsor.

Within this context of school gender regimes and their respective impacts on the participants' private and professional identity development, curriculum, pedagogy and relationships with colleagues and students, the participants implement various identity management strategies with respect to a wide range of aspects regarding their personal lives, their professional lives, and—for those who so choose—the integration of the two in order to create a public identity. The following chapter discusses the participants' use of these strategies, the motivating factors behind their use, and the participants' assessment of their success.

CHAPTER SIX:
DATA ANALYSIS:
IDENTITY MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES AND IDENTITY INTEGRATION

In the first chapter of this dissertation, I described four identity management strategies used by LGBTQ educators. Although these strategies were originally identified within the context of research focused on LGBTQ educators only, the data collected within the course of the current study suggests that these strategies are also used by educators who do not identify as LGBTQ. Since one of my goals in this study is to compare and contrast the identity management strategies used by LGBTQ educators with those used by non-LGBTQ educators, I broaden my description of those strategies to reflect their potential use by teachers of all sexual orientations. Doing so queers these terms in a somewhat ironic fashion—it enables me to consider their application by educators who do *not* identify as gay or lesbian. Therefore, for the purposes of this chapter, I will use the terms in the following manner:

1. *Passing*: An educator's intentional use of misleading information in order to perpetrate a falsehood about himself or herself.
2. *Covering*: An educator's careful avoidance of any connection with issues or persons he or she would prefer not to be associated with. Covering (or *self-distancing*), an indirect way of dodging a question or topic, could involve

refraining from interactions with colleagues, superiors, and students in order to hide or mask personal information or feelings (Woods & Harbeck, 1992, p. 152); covering techniques could also include censoring one's words and actions without explicitly lying (Kissen, 1996, p. 41).

3. *Implicitly Out*: An educator engages in the strategy of being implicitly out when he or she assumes that others will determine his or her feelings, beliefs, or opinions regarding a particular issue without any public declaration (Kissen, 1996, p. 41).
4. *Explicitly Out*: If an educator engages in the strategy of being explicitly out, he or she publically declares his or her feelings, beliefs, or opinions regarding a particular issue or identifies himself or herself as a member of a particular group or community.

In this chapter, I address my remaining research question as I queer the concept of identity management strategies:

- *Which identity management strategies do the participants use and what are the reasons they use them? If non-LGBTQ participants use identity management strategies, how and why do they use them? How do the identity management strategies used by LGBTQ participants differ from those used by non-LGBTQ participants? How are they similar? What do participants believe are the benefits of integrating their private and professional identities?*

Each of the participants in this study used one or more identity management strategies for a variety of reasons with respect to a range of issues and topics. In the

cases of the three gay and lesbian participants—Luke, Mindy, and Patrick—much (but not all) of their use of these strategies related directly to their sexual orientation. The two heterosexual participants, Karen and Brutus, did not use these strategies to conceal or reveal their sexual orientation—within their culture’s heteronormative gender regime, they could safely assume that their heterosexuality would be taken for granted—but they did employ these strategies for other reasons.

As I re-examined the data I had originally classified under the overarching theme of Identity Integration, specific subthemes emerged that distinguished various features of participants’ private identities that they chose to integrate with or keep separate from their professional lives through the use of identity management strategies: sexual orientation (which encompasses marital/dating status), domestic life (including family structure, and living arrangements), hobbies/personal interests/leisure activities, the use of social media, and performativity (including attire and mannerisms). I subsequently re-organized the data according to these subthemes. The three younger participants—Luke, Karen, and Brutus—also used these strategies to manage multiple professional identities, which I attribute to their status as early-career educators still in the process of exploring various career paths and opportunities within education. Mindy and Patrick, the more experienced educators among the participants, already enjoy well established roles as veteran teachers, and neither expressed an interest in pursuing new career opportunities beyond teaching.

My analysis of the aggregate effect of each participant's degree of identity integration (with respect to the five subthemes mentioned in the previous paragraph) suggested that each participant had achieved either a low, moderate, or high degree of identity integration. Therefore, in order to avoid the implication that the use of these strategies occurs in any kind of sequential manner, rather than structure my analysis according to the ways in which each strategy was used by each participant, I have chosen to organize my analysis according to the resulting degree of identity integration that each participant's use of these strategies has created. This organizational approach, I hope, reflects the constantly shifting effects that combinations of these identity management strategies can have on the participants' queered identities. I do not wish to imply that each participant's degree of identity integration is "fixed" or stabilized in any way. As I endeavor to make clear in the ensuing analysis, each participant's degree of identity integration is continuously developing and—sometimes—shifting; Thus, I have created the following categories to characterize the low, moderate, and high degrees, respectively, of identity integration each participant has achieved:

- Hermetic boundaries: Minimal or no integration
- Semipermeable boundaries: Selective integration
- Permeable boundaries: Significant integration

A participant's presence in one of these categories is impermanent and ephemeral—my analysis simply attempts to describe each participant's then-current degree of identity integration. I conclude my analysis of each of these categories with a

discussion of the respective participants' likelihood and/or ability to shift their degrees of integration. I conclude the chapter with a brief discussion of the participants' satisfaction with their chosen degrees of identity integration.

Hermetic Boundaries: Minimal or No Identity Integration

Luke, a professionally closeted gay man teaching band in a rural school district, and Karen, a privately heterosexual woman teaching Social Studies at an inner-city high school, would appear to represent opposite ends of the identity spectrum. And the specific elements of their personal identities certainly support that distinction. They both mentioned that they could foresee working towards a greater degree of private and professional identity integration at some future point in their careers; as early career educators who have not yet developed a strong sense of their professional identities, however, they both utilize identity management strategies to construct hermetic boundaries between their private and professional identities. Consequently, their public identities feature minimal integration and more closely resemble their professional identities, with only scant traces of their private identities peeking through.

Sexual Orientation, Marital/Dating Status

Karen, whose sexual orientation conforms to her school's heteronormative gender regime, spends very little time worrying over her heterosexuality or whether her students will detect it. She asserted that she is "totally single" and has

“no time” for dating. Her life is focused squarely on her professional activities. When her students ask if she has a boyfriend, she says:

Yeah—his name is Bob. He’s great—that’s not true. The name changes every time... And I’m like, You should assume that I’m not [telling the truth]—I’m not gonna tell you those personal things about me, so I’m incredibly reserved with my students.

By being honest about lying to her students, she blurs the line between passing as a heterosexual female teacher who is actively dating and covering as heterosexual. The cumulative effect of this deliberately ambiguous response is to leave her students as unenlightened about her personal life as they were before they asked the question. As I observed when I visited her classroom, she is a highly organized and structured facilitator; while teaching, her disposition is very business-like and formal. She monitors student work, keeps them focused and on-task, and answers questions judiciously. She acknowledges her personal life to students only before or after class, if at all. And when she does, it is within the context of professional duties. For example, a female student asks Karen, “When do we get our grades back? Friday?” Karen responds, “Friday? So I should have no social life for the next three days?”

Luke needs to exert more energy in managing aspects of his personal life within a professional context. Two elements that present a challenge are his subject area (music) and his position as band director. As Luke stated:

Within the arts field, I think teaching arts is a certain expectation—like if I were a visual art teacher who was male, [the students] would think I was gay. If I'm a band director, it's not the first thing, but because it's within the performing arts, it's still like on their minds—that that guy, because he's a band director, could be gay. Like I have to prove to them I'm straight if I was interested in that.

Luke's comments then beg the question, Are you interested in that? When confronted with this question, Luke responded somewhat evasively and shifted his response from the first-person to the hypothetical, which perhaps signaled his use of an identity management strategy (covering) as he responded to the question:

I think the field I'm in...people have a cultural expectation that sometimes band directors are gay. So I have to—a band director... might have to try a little harder to convince people they're straight, and they might have to throw out the girlfriend or talk about the girlfriend—maybe they do that and maybe they don't.

He worries that his curriculum and pedagogy sometimes make him vulnerable to suspicions of homosexuality. He speculated, for example, that the videos of musical performances that he chooses to show in class “might reflect on” him and cast doubt on his presumed sexual orientation. Likewise, he acknowledges that his skill at playing the clarinet and the flute—allegedly feminine instruments—constitutes “crossing a barrier.” In the case of his mastery of various instruments, however, he can rely on his professional identity to counteract any questions about his sexual

orientation: “it’s like a band director thing—it’s what I’m paid to do. It’s what I trained to do.”

One incident that occurred early in Luke’s first year as a teacher at Rural High School reveals a great deal about Luke’s students’ interest in his personal life and the strategies he’s adopted to address that curiosity. Having taken over the position as band director from his well-established and popular predecessor (who moved on to a band director position at a larger school in an adjoining county), Luke was largely unknown to his students and the broader school community. The mother of one of Luke’s students, who was a consultant specializing in helping professionals manage transitions, offered Luke her services, and—with his administrators’ approval—facilitated a discussion with Luke’s students regarding their expectations for him as an educator. Luke was not present for this discussion, during the course of which students asked numerous questions about Luke’s personal life. As he recounted in his autobiography: “Some of the students expressed uncertainty at some of my methods, and one of their curiosities was my relationship status. Is Mr. [Luke] married? Single?” Luke acknowledged that the exercise helped him understand his students’ academic needs and expectations better, and he made some changes in his pedagogy as a result of their feedback, but their curiosity about his personal life “stuck in [his] craw.” He mused, “Could I be a more effective teacher if they felt the closeness of sharing that side of myself? Or would it be professional suicide to self-report my homosexual side? I chose not to address it.” Luke’s decision to ignore this issue is a clear example of covering.

Luke also chooses to cover when he encounters LGBTQ students. He explained his understandable reservations about interacting with gay or lesbian students:

I don't really go out of my way to interact with the high school students who are—who I already know or who are perceived as gay—um, or lesbian—I just, I mean, I don't think I'm ready to take that kind of role in the community where that would kind of aim scrutiny back on myself, if any parent or teacher was looking for some reason for me to not be a teacher at this school, any untowards interaction with acknowledged homosexual students would be a good place to start.

Thus, he draws a very clear line between his professional identity as an educator and his private identity as a member of the LGBTQ community. He utilizes a similar covering strategy when interacting with his students' parents. He characterizes his relationship with them as "very business-like," and he is grateful that "they don't pry," although he believes some parents "might know" he is gay. In any event, his private life—including his sexual orientation—is "not something that [he's] advertising to them."

Domestic Life, Family Matters, and Living Arrangements

Both Karen and Luke are similarly circumspect about maintaining fairly rigid boundaries between their home lives and their school lives. They consciously decline to share with students most details of their family lives and living

arrangements, along with other aspects of their personal lives. For example, Karen's school district requires teachers to live within the schools' city limits. Since Karen does not, she wisely chooses to keep that fact private. She passes as a resident of the city. She is not even comfortable allowing her students to know what kind of music she enjoys. She told of a time when she inadvertently left her iTunes account open on her laptop computer in her classroom and some students were able to see the music she had been listening to. She "felt really uncomfortable that [her] students were having a glimpse into" her music selection; she declared, there is "just a certain line that I draw with that." In addition, experience has taught her the dangers of "playing the friend card" with a student. She attempted that strategy during her first year as a teacher; the student then "cross[ed] boundaries," exploited their relationship as an excuse to avoid assignments, and caused "discipline problems." She admitted that, rarely, she will "cross the line" in "a crisis situation" and "share something very personal, but only in a situation where it's like I've pulled out all the other guns and this is just—maybe this will work. And some of it works, but sometimes it doesn't work." Ultimately, Karen views these boundaries between her personal and professional lives as both practical and philosophical necessities at this point in her career as a "young" teacher. She claims that she is "just an adult in the classroom," and since students "hear adults talk to them all day—the last thing they need to do is hear about my personal life."

Luke also maintains clear boundaries between his domestic and professional lives. He allows very little of his personal life into his professional environment. For

example, although he is fairly vigilant about not sharing details of his domestic life with his students, he did introduce the school band to his parents. As he reasoned, “My dad wanted to come to football games all the time early on and so that’s a private life aspect that there’s no point in hiding...Everybody has a dad and everybody has a mom.” Sharing this part of his private life with his students was clearly low-risk. He stated, however, “I don’t talk a lot about how I live.” His students’ curiosity about his domestic living arrangements—Luke shares an apartment with his heterosexual male colleague, the school’s choir director—makes him uneasy. He characterizes their living together as “very much a roommate-ship of necessity” since it allows them to live more affordably as early career educators on modest salaries, yet “students still are over-curious about why we live together, where it is we live, and does that mean we’re gay.” He believes that these issues are not his students’ “business,” just like the question of whether he has a partner or spouse. Luke insisted, these are “all aspects that I keep for me.” He has chosen to use the strategy of covering to address/ignore his students’ curiosity about these aspects of his life, and, as a result, they “just became a non-issue.” As he remarked, “it’s something that I didn’t wanna discuss in front of them. I don’t think I should have to.”

Hobbies and Leisure Pursuits

The subject of hobbies and leisure interests also affords Luke the opportunity to cover, often in the form of using his professional status as a band director and

music teacher as justification for personal pursuits that might otherwise lead his students and colleagues to question his sexual orientation (as was the case with his mastery of the allegedly feminine musical instruments). Luke commented, "I am a musician, and so while it's also my job, it kind of covers over the realm of hobby as well." Although this identity as "a musician" combines both his professional and personal identities, it also allows him to preserve a distinction between them. Luke is a member of a men's chorus, and he is quite proud of his involvement with the group, which does not officially call itself a *gay* men's chorus even though it is, according to Luke, "pretty overtly gay regardless." At his school, he does not "advertise" the group's concerts to either his colleagues or his students. He is concerned that "other teachers who are not arts teachers who've been dealing with gays their whole lives would take issue with what would be perceived flaunting," and—as he does with the aspects of his personal life discussed previously—he keeps this part of his personal life shielded from his students. Luke did, however, move toward integrating these aspects of his identity when a student—whom he identified as a candidate for his "inner sanctum" (the aforementioned "circle of confidence")—asked him during class one day if he were a member of the men's chorus:

Once, in front of the class but not pointedly or the intent of the question wasn't to put me on the spot or out me, she asked if I was with the men's chorus, and...at that point, I made the decision that, for her and for that

particular question and that particular group, it didn't matter to me, right then.

This decisive moment when he chose not to cover his involvement with the men's chorus indicates that Luke's position along the identity integration spectrum is fluid and variable; when he shifts identity management strategies, as he did in this instance, he queers his degree of identity integration.

Karen also chooses to integrate her personal interests with her professional identity in ways that emphasize their academic aspects—that is, she pointedly chooses to share with her students and colleagues personal information that is usually academic in nature or that reflects her interest in professional goals. For example, she cited “free professional developments and meeting new teachers” as a hobby. She seeks in travel the same intellectual stimulation she achieves through teaching. When I asked her what kinds of personal information she shares with her students, she responded:

they know my past. I share all of my high school grades, I share my ACT score, I share all of the trials and tribulations that I had throughout high school when it comes to academics and even socially. I share the things that I value in the classroom.

A bulletin board in her classroom proudly displays one of her 6th grade progress reports, her high school transcript, a paper that she wrote for a US History class, and a brochure advertising her college alma mater. In addition, she avowed that she “loves reading” and that she benefits from the “Zen time” that leisure reading allows

her. Consequently, she allots twenty minutes of each class every Thursday to independent reading so that her students may also enjoy those benefits. Karen's classroom also represents her efforts to achieve some limited identity integration. In contrast to the markedly formal and highly structured pedagogical style that I witnessed when I observed her teaching, Karen's classroom resembles, in the words of her principal, a "gypsy castle" that combines academic content and inspirational slogans (e.g., "Living the dream" and "Work hard and be nice") with stylish, bohemian design (see Figure 9).



Figure 9. Décor in Karen's classroom.

Social Media

Karen's classroom also features a prominent display of her "Teacher Twitter," a Twitter account that she has created for use exclusively with her students (see Figure 10). Even more specifically, she uses the Twitter account only to tweet about books that she is reading. Karen tells her students that they may

choose to “follow” her on Twitter but if they do so, she may choose to “follow” them as well. She believes that this arrangement equalizes her cyber-relationship with her students and ensures the academic, professional boundaries of their interaction on Twitter, which she considers “less personal” than Facebook.

Regarding Facebook, Karen maintains a policy that she says is inexplicable to her colleagues: “they don’t understand that I won’t be Facebook friends with them. But I don’t know why that is—I just have this like line.” She enjoys close relationships with her colleagues— she regularly eats lunch with a selected group of colleagues, she socializes with them on weekends, and she’s even “slept on their couches”—but she prefers to build “personal connections in much greater ways” than Facebook allows. Karen sheepishly admitted that her concerns about Facebook and her colleagues are “weird” and that they “laugh about it,” but she enforces that divide because, as she explained:

there’s just this level of professionalism that I try to maintain, so the idea of them really having a glimpse—not that I’m ashamed of my Facebook in any way, I mean, I wouldn’t care if my administrator looked at it—but just keeping some sort of distance.



Figure 10. Classroom display of Karen's "Teacher Twitter"

And unlike her Teacher Twitter, she certainly will not become Facebook friends with her students. As she stated, "with my students, I definitely don't share anything." She describes her demeanor as "incredibly reserved" when she is around her students, primarily because, as she put it, she's "so young" and doesn't want her students to perceive her as a friend.

Luke also prefers to use the identity management strategy of covering in regard to his use of social media. This strategy, however, represents a shift in his practice. When Luke was a preservice teacher, he said, he "simply carried on on Facebook as I would have" if he worked in any other profession. He described his Facebook profile as implicitly out: "for the most part, what [was] on my Facebook, despite the overabundance of self-pictures and just lots of me and girls, like things

that indicate being gay without saying it.” But once he planned to become a full-time, in-service teacher, his strategy shifted to covering. He had begun to use his Facebook as a cover because he knew that he could not deny friend requests from family members to whom he was not out. Therefore, he was “already in the mode of scrubbing my Facebook of things that are questionable, whether alcohol, sex, drugs, whatever, because I knew I was going to be a teacher, so it wasn’t hard when I did become a teacher.” He has since refined this strategy even further:

More recently, I actually changed my name on Facebook so it doesn’t display my last name but my middle name, and so it’s just harder to just search me even if a student, a current student were to know my first name, which I tend not to share.

As Luke concluded, his “Facebook presence is pretty separate from [his] professional identity.”

Performativity

Tellingly, Karen and Luke both likened their professional identities to performances. For example, during her initial interview, Karen spoke of her experience as a young figure skater. She confessed that, as a skater, she “wasn’t that great”; she added, “But I was really good at smiling and putting on a show. Which is why I think I’m a good teacher.” The idea of teaching as a performance is a well-established concept (Griggs, 2001; Milner-Bolotin, 2007; Collins & Ting, 2010), and Karen considers the performative aspect of her professional identity to be rather

prominent. One of the book titles Karen displayed on her Teacher Twitter wall is *Quiet: The Power of Introverts in a World That Can't Stop Talking* by Susan Cain. She mentioned that the book unexpectedly “had an incredible influence on [her] as a teacher.” When I asked if she considered herself an introvert, she replied, “I’m probably an ambivert—the in-between one.” Then she elaborated, alluding to the performative nature of teaching:

I think also, if anything, I’m an introvert kind of like the author, where I’ve convinced myself to develop coping mechanisms to make myself extroverted...But I am a teacher. I think every teacher has to appear to be an extrovert and find ways to cope with that.

Luke likewise discussed the performative nature of his professional identity. In his autobiography, he recalled that, as a preservice teacher, the topic of homosexuality was never addressed in his coursework or by any of his mentors. He mentioned, “there was an unspoken understanding that the gay teacher was wise to keep mum.” The comparison between teaching and performing became even more explicit: “It was also a common refrain for the education faculty to remind us that teachers have a lot in common with actors.” Luke accurately suspected that, as a teacher, the role he would be playing “was that of a heterosexual man.”

In addition to “teacher,” Luke and Karen have opportunities to assume other professional roles. Performativity is also a factor in these other identities. For example, as one of his assigned duty periods, Luke sometimes performs the role of substitute Assistant Principal when one of his administrators is either absent or

unavailable. In this role, Luke is primarily responsible for meting out disciplinary consequences to students who have committed infractions. When he is aware that he will be functioning in this capacity on a given day, he chooses to wear a tie to school so that he will “feel more in control.” Luke said that when he was asked to perform these duties during his first year as a teacher, he was not comfortable. He stated that he is still “developing” skill in this capacity and that he is growing more comfortable in this disciplinary role.

Karen’s additional professional roles include union member, which—like Luke’s role as substitute Assistant Principal—entails wardrobe modifications. On Fridays, teachers in Karen’s school district are expected to wear their union t-shirts. And despite the male dominance among administrators in her school, Karen has taken on a number of leadership positions, although she demurs when anyone suggests that she might make a good principal. She believes that such aspirations are premature, since she feels as though she has not yet mastered her role as teacher. She also resists the idea of being “so far removed from the classroom,” where she believes real change happens.

Potential Shifts in Degree of Integration

Karen acknowledged that, during her nascent career as an educator, she has already experienced noticeable development of her professional identity. She described her professional identity as “artificial” during her first year as a teacher; she claimed her demeanor was robotic, as if she were trying to “be Harry Wong.” In

her second year, she believes she was “more [her]self...more of a person.” She is confident that as she gains more experience, more confidence, and more skill, she will gradually become more comfortable integrating her private and professional identities to achieve “a better hybrid.” Citing more experienced colleagues as examples, she theorized, “as the years go on, you learn ways to incorporate your personality more so into the classroom—you’re not as afraid of doing that and it just comes more naturally.” If she eventually chooses to act upon the suggestion that she pursue a formal leadership role as an administrator, commensurate modifications in her identity integration would certainly result.

Luke views any potential changes in his identity integration as triggered more by specific events rather than gradual development. He notes that in his second year at Rural High School, students have expressed less interest in his personal life. He believes, however, that it would require a specific event or a major change in his personal circumstances—for example, acquiring a partner who becomes an important part of his life or obtaining a position at a school in a more progressive or liberal community—to inspire his efforts to integrate his identities. Indeed, a specific event has already prodded Luke to adopt the identity management strategy of being implicitly out to his principal even as he is covering in most other situations. The previously mentioned incident with the student who asked Luke “How’s your boyfriend?” resulted in a discussion that Luke had with his principal. As he described it:

by that point—it wasn't unclear that I was homosexual. I don't think that there was a moment where she [the principal] had to ask, but she said that she knew what I—she understood when kids ask you questions or when kids say things like that because she had experience with people close to her.

Luke is also hopeful that education as a profession will progress to a point when a teacher's private identity will be "moot" and that coming out will not detract from his effectiveness as a teacher. He is, in fact, envious of teachers for whom identity is not an issue:

when it's understood or when it's assumed, kids don't ask. I feel like that's what it would be like... And we could just focus on content and get it done...I want there to be a future where that can be understood and not an issue—I feel like if I were to come out, it would just necessitate a whole ton of questions and it would take away from my effectiveness as a teacher, simply on time, like the amount of time I'm choosing to devote to educating students on being gay. I'm not there to teach them about how to be gay. I'm there to teach them how to play the trombone, the trumpet, the flute and the clarinet, and so the Holy Grail, the end result, the best case scenario...is a situation where the identity of a teacher is moot, where it doesn't matter—that's what I'd like.

At the conclusion of his autobiography, Luke contemplates a major change: "In the next three years' time, will I be an out, homosexual teacher?"

Semipermeable Boundaries: Selective Integration

Among the five participants in this study, Brutus most clearly maintains a middle ground when integrating his private and professional identities. Although the incident at the bar involving a Rome High School student (discussed in chapter 5) has certainly caused him to be more discreet about his personal behavior, he believes that he has created appropriately selective boundaries between his private and professional identities. He stated, “I feel like I’m just at that line. I don’t feel like I bend that line, I don’t think I cross that line.” Brutus’ comment is reminiscent of Johnson’s (2004) observation regarding the boundaries in teacher-student relationships: “Though the ‘line’ isn’t always clearly delineated between teacher and student, talking about where that line is located and how it can become blurred helped my participants situate their bodies and their desires in the context of their classrooms” (p. 22). His assessment of the effectiveness of his identity integration boils down to his students’ perception of him as a professional: “I don’t think I’ve ever had a kid look at me and think, I don’t respect who you are. They know I’m business first.”

Sexual Orientation, Marital/Dating Status

Among the numerous personal items that Brutus displays on his classroom walls—pictures of him with his family, posters about television shows and movies he enjoys, photos of him playing and coaching baseball—is a photo of his niece. This particular photo, Brutus mentioned, often prompts his students to ask him if he has

any children. He has no reservations about telling his students that he is single without any children, and he accepts the often lighthearted teasing that sometimes results from the disclosure of that information. He seemed confident that his students' repartee implies no suspicions about his sexual orientation:

I'll get teased but in a light-hearted manner about not being married, but it's just a matter of, Oh, why aren't you married? But it's never been like, are you this? Are you that? Is there something wrong with you?

Whereas Luke will sometimes use his professional identity to justify potentially suspect behavior (e.g., his skill with "feminine" instruments and his involvement with the men's chorus), Brutus cites his professional goals as a reason he has delayed conforming to the gender regime's expectation that he should already be married:

I've had student aides that asked me, straight up, like why don't you have a wife? And I'm like, is that what's expected of me as a 28 year-old or 29 year-old? And they're like, well, isn't that what people your age do? I'm just like, maybe 50 years ago, but nowadays, I view 29 as—I have no desire to get married, because...I knew that by 30, I would have my Master's, and lo and behold, I have it. I know that by 35, I wanna be in some form of a PhD program. That is my goal. Sometimes it opens their minds to say, Wow, I don't have to get married right away? I can do other things as well?

He did recall a "weird" incident early in his career when a student meddled in Brutus' relationship with an ex-girlfriend, but he readily shares with his students his

interest in women. During a class discussion of *Lord of the Flies* on the day that I observed Brutus teaching, Brutus commented, “I know plenty of women that are not nurturing. Trust me—I dated a lot of them.” As Brutus carefully blends his private and professional identities, he is explicitly out as both a heterosexual single man and a professional educator with career aspirations beyond his current position— aspirations that, if realized, would require him to adjust his identity integration.

Domestic Life, Family Matters, and Living Arrangements

Brutus’ living arrangements also reflect his ability to integrate his private and professional identities. After retreating from sharing too much private information about himself with his students in the wake of the bar incident, Brutus now believes that sharing a judicious degree of personal information with his students is advantageous. He stated:

when I started I was paranoid and I always wanted to make sure that my life was closed off. And then I realized that’s not a way to build a relationship with students. They wanna know, what do you do? What’s your weekend like? And I joke around with them. I’ll say I hang out with my cat a lot and stupid stuff like that. And they absolutely love it.

Brutus was clear that he shared only “stupid” or “goofy” tidbits of information about his private life with his students—he does not reveal to them intimate details about his relationships with his family members, his girlfriend, or his

colleagues/roommates, although his students and other colleagues are aware that he shares a house with two other male English teachers.

He believes that the students and other colleagues regard him and his roommates as “the dynamic trio of weirdness and goofy people that do stupid things because none of us are married.” He insists that there is no stigma attached to this characterization, because:

all three of us have a pretty strong rapport with our students, so it’s funny that we’ll talk about each other as other teachers or as friends. We’ll mention that in class, just to kind of make light of it, or something goofy or whatever. I think that they like those little stories because it makes them almost feel like they have an inside scoop. ...it’s always goofy, shallow stuff...

He also uses facts about his domestic life in order to joke with students and create a relaxed and welcoming classroom atmosphere. For example, on the day that I observed Brutus teaching, he told the class that he calls a student “Arnold”⁵ (instead of his actual name “Anthony”) because the student does not call Brutus’ cat by its proper name. During another class, he mentioned that his cat “got a haircut. He looked good.”

Hobbies and Leisure Pursuits

Brutus is equally comfortable and adept at incorporating his personal interests and hobbies into his professional activities. As I mentioned previously, Brutus’ classroom décor is a seamless blend of his personal and professional

⁵ These student names are pseudonyms.

identities; personal photos of him border official school posters and inspirational placards. Humorous posters relate directly to his personal life (his cat) and represent his academic past and extra-curricular interests such as sports, film, and television shows, some of which also relate to his professional duties (see Figures 11 and 12). An inspirational poster proclaiming, “The expert in anything was once a beginner” displays a young child (presumably a boy) ready to play baseball, one of Brutus’ extracurricular passions. The artifacts adorning Brutus’ classroom visually represent the integration of his private and professional identities and create a tone that is by turns whimsical, tender, inspirational, academic, and rigorous.



Figure 11. A bulletin board in Brutus’ classroom



Figure 12. Another bulletin board in Brutus' classroom

As Brutus explained, he shares his private interests with students in a number of other ways as well: unlike Karen—who was apprehensive about her students learning of her musical tastes—he plays for his students music he enjoys, he often discusses sports with his students, and he is comfortable sharing with them aspects of his life that “showcase [his] personality” and “what [he] like[s] to do.” He believes that featuring this human (i.e., private) side of himself in a professional environment makes him more approachable to students, which—he reasoned—leads to an improved rapport between the students and him and which makes him a more effective teacher. He summarized, “because I open up about who I am, it matters to them.”

Social Media

Despite Brutus' readiness to share numerous aspects of his personal life with his students and colleagues, he has firmly chosen to share no personal information through social media. He has, in fact, deleted his Facebook profile, which he formerly maintained regularly. Brutus explained that, after the bar incident, he chose to remove all digital traces of himself from social media. He also cited specific school district protocol designed to regulate teachers' use of social media. He stated, "it got to the point where it was just too much" to deal with; therefore, he chose not to. In contrast to the rather permeable boundaries Brutus has created to facilitate the integration of his private and professional identities via personal interaction and classroom décor, Brutus has constructed a decidedly impermeable boundary with regards to social media.

Performativity

Brutus' classroom performance is another indication of his ability to easily integrate his private and professional identities. For example, his typical classroom attire alternates between standard professional shirt-and-tie and a blend of casual clothing:

I always wear a tie. Monday through Thursday I always go full tie and dress pants and a collared shirt with a tie...And then Friday is our red-and-white [school colors] day, so I'll wear jeans and a collared shirt, a red shirt, a white shirt or something.

I visited Brutus' classroom on a Thursday—and in spite of his claim that he “always” wears a tie on days other than Fridays, on the day I visited he was not, although he was wearing a dress shirt and pants, representing a more “relaxed” version of his typical professional attire.

His conversations with the class also revealed a high degree of identity integration. He discussed his cat, as previously mentioned, and during a discussion of *Lord of the Flies*, he confessed that he would “probably be crying” if he were a character in the novel, stranded on a deserted island. At a later point in the lesson, Brutus—attempting to illustrate the social mores featured as one of the novel's themes—announced that he would give students a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to throw a small football at him from across the room; he assured them that they would miss because of their socially conditioned restraint against injuring a teacher. He then stood boldly as four volunteers missed him with the football. He later related an anecdote about a former student who threatened to kill him in retaliation for Brutus' having reported him for a disciplinary infraction. During the course of this anecdote, he mentioned his height and weight as evidence that he was not frightened of the former student, and he claimed that he defied the threat by saying to the former student, “What have you got?” Both his actions during the classroom exercise and his alleged defiance of a death threat clearly implied that he considers himself brave and “tough.” Within the space of one class period, Brutus managed to blend the private character traits of stereotypically masculine bravery with atypical

(in terms of hegemonic masculinity) empathy as he performed the role of professional English teacher.

Brutus also assumes the role of aspiring master teacher and future educational leader. As his AP students were completing a group assignment, he told me of his desire to become an administrator; he also mentioned that he is earning a stipend to pilot a set of discussion strategies in his classes and then teach those strategies to his peers during professional development sessions.

Brutus' performance of these roles integrates various aspects of his private and professional identities—strong, brave masculine man; professional educator; future administrator and educational leader. While all of these identities conform to the heteronormative expectations of school gender regimes, Brutus did choose to queer his identity integration somewhat by confessing his fear at the prospect of being separated from civilized society and by repeatedly discussing his cat, a pet not widely regarded as typical of a heterosexual male. This calculated blend of identities may indicate Brutus' corresponding level of confidence in each aspect of his public identity. He is confident enough in his masculinity to counter some of the limitations of the hegemonic gender regime and display these unconventional elements of his private embodiment of masculinity within his professional environment, yet his ambition to become an administrator—along with the object lesson he learned as a result of the bar incident—inhibit any desire to completely integrate his identities.

Potential Shifts in Degree of Integration

Brutus' degree of identity integration experienced some fluctuation as a result of the bar incident that caused him some anxiety. Before the incident, he was rather lax about drawing any boundaries between his personal and professional identities. As a reaction to the incident, he took specific measures to separate those two aspects of his life. He then experienced a type of rapprochement that prompted him to re-integrate his identities in a way that appears to meet his private needs while improving his professional effectiveness. Brutus acknowledged the impact that the incident had on his identity management strategy: "You just have to always see things through a different lens as an educator." Brutus seems quite content with his current level of identity integration, but it is certainly possible that he would, at some point in the future, incorporate even more elements of his personal life—perhaps a wife and children—as well as additional professional roles—for example, administrator or curriculum expert—into his integrated identity.

Permeable Boundaries: Significant Integration

Mindy and Patrick, the two participants with the most experience as educators, have also attained the most thorough degree of identity integration in comparison to the three other participants. Patrick claims to have made no conscious effort to integrate his identities, and he insists that his primary identity is German teacher: "it subsumes everything else" about him. He considers his role as teacher as comparable to that of a parent. When I asked him if he has any children,

he responded, “No. Other than my students, because from my perspective, they are my children.” In his autobiography, he stated simply, “the majority of my life is pretty integrated. I am a public school teacher, who loves his students, works hard to complete his projects, is active in his church and politics and is gay. It's just who I am.” Mindy also considers her private and professional identities to be fully integrated: “As far as my professional life, there’s really no part of me personality-wise that is not integrated into my professional life.” She rather succinctly stated, “If I wanna do stuff, I just, I do it” and happily asserted, “I don’t even know what the closet means anymore.”

Sexual Orientation, Marital/Dating Status

Mindy, who—upon graduating high school—was consciously out to herself “but had no adult role models to guide [her] through the confusing feelings [she] had about girls,” no longer separates her identities or constructs boundaries between them. She feels quite comfortable sharing personal information with her colleagues, for example, during lunch (as I witnessed when I visited her classroom for a day), and she has no qualms about bringing a date or a significant other to school events or functions. She even chuckled as she recalled that often it’s the date she’s bringing with her who expresses reservations about accompanying her. As will become clear later in the *Performativity* subsection, Mindy’s students also know that she is a lesbian.

Patrick's students are likewise aware that he is "the gay teacher." But while Mindy is exclusively out in almost every imaginable way, Patrick alternates between being implicitly out (usually with respect to students) and explicitly out (mainly in his relationships with colleagues and administrators). He mentioned that "almost all of" his colleagues know that he is gay, and he senses that students are more tacitly aware of his sexual orientation since "they're not asking as much anymore because I'm as out as I am or I seem to be out." He believes that "students would feel stupid asking me if I had a wife. So they don't ask." Patrick recalled a time when a student questioned him indirectly about his sexual orientation. In his classroom before the start of a school day, the student commented, "Y'know, some of the kids say that you're gay." Patrick offered a non-committal reply: "Well, kids say a lot of things." The following year, the same student—who does not identify as gay—saw Patrick at the local gay pride celebration and greeted him with a smile and a thumbs-up sign, which Patrick interpreted as supportive. While chaperoning a group of students on a trip to Germany, one of them asked Patrick rather pointedly, "So, are you gay?" Shifting from the implicitly out strategy he used with the previous student, Patrick chose to be explicitly out and replied, "Yes"—a response that Patrick believes startled the student, who then later came out to Patrick.

Patrick does draw a boundary, however, that Mindy does not. Whereas she will feel quite comfortable bringing a date with her to a school event, Patrick insists that no one "needs to know who I'm dating." He reserves these kinds of intimate

details for colleagues whom he also considers close friends, such as his “work wife,” with whom he prepared the breakfast potluck meal mentioned in chapter 5.

Domestic Life, Family Matters, and Living Arrangements

Patrick, who lives alone, made no mention of sharing details about his family or his living situation with either his students or his colleagues, perhaps because his strong identity as a German teacher “subsumes” this aspect of his life. Mindy, on the other hand, focuses quite closely on her role as a parent and the importance of family in her life. Her younger son attends the school where she teaches; therefore, she explained, “a large portion of my students that we have right now are my son’s age, so they’ve grown up with him and know that he’s got two moms, and that she’s one of the teachers at [Lincoln].” Mindy’s career as an educator is inextricably linked to her role as a mother. She explained that she chose teaching as a career because it would allow her to be a professional while also being available for her own children. As she stated, “I love my job, but my family is foremost in my personal life.”

Although Mindy readily displays family photos in her classroom and mentions her family members to students during class, she has experienced some professional challenges as a result of her unconventional family structure. For example, she expressed to me her frustration with Lincoln High School and the inexact meaning of the phrase “immediate family.” Not long ago, when Mindy’s former partner was recovering from surgery, the school could not grant Mindy medical leave for a family member, since the school did not consider Mindy’s former

same-sex partner as “immediate family.” She also described having in one of her classes a student who, while in middle school, had harassed her son “horribly.” She worried, “I wasn’t sure, as a professional, if I could treat this young man with the same standards as everybody else.” Rather than ask her principal to assign the student to another class, she chose to take on the challenge of treating this student professionally, and she ultimately succeeded.

Hobbies and Leisure Pursuits

Patrick’s active engagement in local politics began when he joined a protest against a group of community members who were harassing teachers they suspected of being gay or lesbian, and although he prefers to work more “behind the scenes” in his political activity, he personally knows a number of local and state politicians. Although he prefers to keep this aspect of his life separate from his identity as a teacher, Patrick is very concerned about the effects of public policy on teaching and learning. Despite stating, “I don’t think politics belongs in the classroom,” Patrick is almost helpless to resist the urge to integrate his political interests into his identity as a professional educator. He confessed, “I cannot not be involved, that’s part of my DNA from my family, my parents,” and he proudly displays in his classroom an Advocacy Award he received from a local civil rights organization “for continuous promotion of education and advocacy of the [local city] LGBTI Community” and an award he received from the state commending him for his civil rights efforts—right next to the Middle School Teacher of the Year Award he

earned from the state division of the American Association of Teachers of German. This conglomeration of awards explicitly outs Patrick as a politically active, gay-friendly (if not outright gay) teacher of German.

Patrick, who does not consider himself an athlete even though he genuinely enjoys biking, is an ardent supporter of his school's athletic teams. His advocacy for West Monroe athletics and his students' involvement in them integrates his personal interest in sports with his professional role as a teacher. During a class I observed Patrick teaching, a student stated, in German, that the West Monroe football team is better than a rival school's; Patrick agreed but seized the opportunity to introduce to the class the German word *Beweis* (proof).

Mindy, who loves nature, the outdoors, and camping, readily shares her interests with her students. She told me that she had recently become certified by the National Rifle Association as an instructor for pistol, shotgun, and rifle. Since I had observed in her classroom a number of trophies sitting atop a tall cabinet in a corner of her classroom, I asked her about them, presuming that they were related to her expertise in marksmanship. She laughed as she explained that they were dartball trophies—which she had not earned but received for free from a local church looking to rid itself of them:

They're somebody else's trophies that I've peeled the name off of the thing, just for conversation pieces. The students are like—are those your trophies? I'm like, well, yeah, they are my trophies. 'Cause the church gave 'em to me.

Mindy, who enjoys a high degree of comfort in her almost effortless ability to integrate her private and professional identities, considers her display of these trophies as a whimsical way to engage her students in friendly conversation. On a symbolic level, however, her display of these trophies may be considered her satiric effort to “pass” as a dartball champion—until she is asked and readily confesses that she is not. The story behind her acquisition of the trophies and her lack of guile regarding their true origin might very well parody the masquerade of a closeted teacher attempting to pass as straight. If Mindy is indeed lampooning identity management strategies—either consciously or unconsciously—in this manner, she may have achieved a previously unidentified exalted level of identity integration.

Social Media

Both Mindy and Patrick maintain personal Facebook profiles⁶. Mindy is an infrequent Facebook user, and Patrick has fashioned a neutral, ambiguous identity on Facebook. Neither on Facebook nor in the local newspaper—to which Patrick occasionally writes letters to the editor that are often published both online and in print form—does Patrick identify himself as gay; he prefers, in these very public forums, to be implicitly out: “I’ve always been very, very careful and never actually say that, whether that’s important or not, but that’s like that little carved-out part—I’m not saying this, I’m just saying this in general.” Patrick also mentioned that he frequently uses Facebook as a way to keep up with former students who have

⁶ I am Facebook friends with both Mindy and Patrick; I have not, however, used any specific information from our Facebook relationships as data for this study.

graduated. Neither Mindy nor Patrick accepts friend requests on Facebook from current students.

Perhaps due to their age or their status as digital settlers (as opposed to Luke and Karen, who are digital natives), Mindy and Patrick made minimal mention of Facebook or other forms of social media, hence the relative dearth of data on this topic in this analysis of their identity integration. Social media might also be one aspect of their private identities that Mindy and Patrick have clearly designated for exclusion from their professional identities, which could be inferred from Patrick's statement that he interacts on Facebook only with students who have graduated.

Performativity

Mindy's performance in school, both in and out of the classroom, broadcasts clearly her private identity as a lesbian and her professional identity as a chemistry teacher. Mindy's attire reflects both the practical considerations precipitated by her subject area and her personal identity. She typically wears to school "a polo and some capris or a sweater and some cord[uroy]s." She mentioned that she used to dress more fashionably, but her work with hazardous chemicals motivated her to alter her work wardrobe; she simply "got sick of...getting acid holes in nice clothes." On the day that I visited Mindy at Lincoln, she wore a t-shirt advertising the school's Gay-Straight Alliance (GSA), a wristband stating "End bullying," and a rainbow necklace adorned with an entwined double-female symbol (♀♀). Like Karen, her demeanor in the classroom is strictly business-like. During class, she focuses

exclusively on academics. However, during the school's scheduled weekly activity period—which I was fortunate enough to witness on the day of my visit—she transforms into a staunch advocate for the school's LGBTQ and ally community in her role as faculty advisor for the Lincoln GSA. Unashamed to be “very out at school,” she is energetic, proud, and almost giddy with delight over the robust attendance at that day's meeting—66 students were present. Whereas her attire explicitly outs and integrates both her private and professional identities, it is nearly impossible to determine whether her shift from teacher to GSA advisor and back again represents identity integration or simply a highly skillful ability to publically transform herself in order to adapt to the role she is required to play in a given setting.

Patrick's performance in school, though not as distinctly queer-positive and overt as Mindy's, clearly identifies him as gay and integrates numerous elements of his personal and professional identities. His customary work attire is business-like: a collared, button-down shirt; a tie; dress slacks; dress shoes. He mentioned that for certain school functions, he will wear—and his students expect him to wear—German garb, including lederhosen. Although earlier in his career he worried that many of his students were aware of his sexual orientation because of his “slight lisp...hand gestures [and his] total time for them” due to his lack of a wife and children, he now feels “more authentic” with his students and “more at ease in general”—so much so that he includes in his curriculum relevant LGBTQ-related material, such as the treatment of gays and lesbians during the Holocaust and the

fact that same-sex marriage is legal throughout Germany. He is confident that the vast majority of his students view him “primarily as a good teacher and not as a gay teacher.” His professional success, he reasons, has generated in him a sense of personal freedom, which—in turn—has made him more approachable and effective as a teacher.

Potential Shifts in Degree of Integration

Considering that Mindy and Patrick seem to have achieved some level of self-actualization and progressed beyond concern for their degree of identity integration, there remains some possibility, however remote, that either could experience a shift.

Patrick, recalling the development of his identity integration, stated that he received no guidance at all as a preservice or early career educator regarding identity management strategies. As a young adolescent, he became aware of his attraction to other boys, and—like Luke—he understood that he had “better keep that longing secret.” In fact, he regarded his entry into teaching as a distraction from his identity as a gay man; he was hoping that his assumption of the professional identity of teacher would somehow replace his troubling private identity as a gay man and make him “forget about it.” As he stated in his autobiography, he threw himself into his work, and the closet he “had already built became bricked up.” His need to pass and cover at the first school where he worked, in a small rural community, began to disturb him as he came out in his personal life. Although a

colleague at that school assured him that “nobody really cared” about his personal life, he could no longer tolerate the fishbowl of a small town where he both lived and worked and where everyone seemed to know his business. Feeling the double impact of his predicament “holding [him] down”—he could be out there neither privately nor professionally—he sought and found a job at West Monroe, where he has been able to integrate his identities in a way that benefits him and his students.

He believes that being out affords him a high degree of insulation against parents or other community members who might desire to “out” him to his administrators, as one parent threatened. Since he is already out, he has nothing to fear from the “revelation” of this non-secret. In fact, being out is sometimes a safer choice. Patrick described a “big scandal” that occurred at a large local school district during the mid-1990s. According to Patrick, a number of parents in the community were secretly harassing teachers they suspected of being gay. These parents sent letters to the school superintendent identifying suspected gay and lesbian teachers and pressured him to take action against those teachers. Although the superintendent chose to take no action, the scandal apparently created a great deal of anxiety among some of the closeted teachers who had been targeted. A number of them chose to leave their jobs. Mindy, who works in this same school district, also mentioned this scandal. She argued that being out during the incident was a “huge advantage” to her:

A bunch of people approached me—“Hey, have they, have they targeted you?” And I’m like, “They have no ammunition ‘cause I’m already out, y’know.

I'm already a strong part of the community, and they don't have anything over me."

Although Patrick has never worked for the school district where this scandal occurred, he did mention that being out at school affords him the same kind of "psychological advantage" that Mindy discussed: "I don't worry about somebody calling in trying to blackmail me...because if they're gonna call my principal, they're gonna call my superintendent...they kinda already know that." Patrick also mentioned that being out precludes any "secret whispering" among his colleagues, since his sexual orientation is not subject to speculation. His age, his experience, and his reputation as an effective teacher, Patrick believes, all contribute to his identity integration. He asserted:

I'm at a certain age where I don't give a fuck anymore. Well, I'm over 40, what the hell? What are they gonna do? You can do a lot of things to me, and yes, I do desperately need the job, and I do need my identity because teaching is my identity...

But, he vowed, "I'm not gonna lie. I'm not good at lying anyway." Patrick, like Luke, did consider that he might need to escalate his degree of identity integration if he were to acquire a partner who became an important part of his life.

Mindy also recalled her reluctance as an early career educator to integrate her private and professional identities and the absence of any sort of preparation for managing her identities. At the start of her career, she said, she "couldn't talk about [her] family" in a professional context. She would have to refer to her partner as her

“roommate,” and she even refrained from letting her colleagues know that she was a parent. She maintained those boundaries, she said, to protect her son, who was “still a lad” at the time. Mindy believes that a combination of changes—in both herself and the culture at large, including gender regimes—has empowered her to integrate her identities to the extent that she genuinely no longer worries about the matter. As she stated, “I’m just who I am, and people just can really just figure it out.” Ironically, she is more concerned that her students and colleagues will discover her involvement as a volunteer with the Boy Scouts of America—a traditionally homophobic organization—than she is that she will suffer any repercussions due to her sexual orientation.

One rather ominous potential repercussion does loom, however, for Mindy and Patrick. In spite of their confident identity integration and their faith in their reputations as effective educators, they both work in one of the five states in the US where a teacher may legally be fired simply for being gay (Machado, 2014). Their success in eluding this potentially devastating consequence throughout their careers may be due to a combination of factors—personal wisdom and sound judgment; supportive and sympathetic colleagues, administrators, and community members; the relatively progressive political climate of the communities where they live and work; or just sheer luck. In any event, if the political winds should change or if someone should instigate another, more damaging, homophobic witch hunt in their community or in their state, they might have no choice but to shift their degree

of identity integration and retreat back into the professional closet simply out of necessity.

Participants' Satisfaction with Identity Integration

It would be short-sighted to equate success in identity integration with the degree to which a participant has managed to blend his/her personal and private identities to forge an integrated public identity. Furthermore, such a simplistic unidirectional equation (more identity integration = more successful identity integration) would counter the queer spirit of this study. And linking the use of a specific identity management strategy to a specific degree of integration is not necessarily accurate. For example, a closeted teacher who passes as straight might be explicitly out about any number of other aspects of his/her life and thus achieve a high degree of identity integration while masking his/her sexual orientation.

Considering the broad range of factors that contribute to a participant's ability and desire to integrate his/her personal and professional identities—for example, years of experience as an educator, marital/partnered status, school and community's level of LGBTQ awareness and inclusion, to name a few—I prefer to focus, instead, on each participant's own assessment of his/her satisfaction with his/her level of identity integration.

Patrick, for example, is considerably pleased with his level of identity integration because, as he enumerated, he has enjoyed four distinct benefits as a result: less worry, more energy, less preoccupation with minutiae, and a greater

understanding of LGBTQ students. Mindy, also satisfied with her degree of identity integration, cited an example of how her outness has helped at least one student who was struggling with his sexual orientation: "He passed me a note in the hallway...and I read it, and he was just thanking me for just being out, who I am, and just showing that you can be gay and a normal person at the same time." Although Karen acknowledges that she hopes to integrate her identities to a greater degree in the future, she characterized her current degree of identity integration as "positive." Brutus, whose identities are not as thoroughly integrated as Patrick's, is also quite pleased with his current state of identity integration; he is happy because, he stated, "I don't think I reveal too much." Luke, on the other hand, is dissatisfied with his current level of identity integration. Alluding to factors beyond his control, he declared, "I would be interested in it not being an issue. I would be interested in the kind of easy, coming-to-school, connecting-with-students-and-getting-it-done-without-having-it-be-an-issue. I would happily fully integrate if I didn't think that there was, that it would be a problem." Luke added that "it's a complete non-issue for heterosexual male and female teachers," implying some distinction between LGBTQ teachers' and non-LGBTQ teachers' use of identity management strategies. While the current chapter has focused on the commonalities of identity management strategy use among LGBTQ participants and non-LGBTQ participants, the following chapter examines a distinct difference in the way that the LGBTQ teachers in this study have responded to their need to utilize these strategies.

CHAPTER SEVEN:
DATA ANALYSIS: COMMUNITIES AND IDENTITY MANAGEMENT

As I was analyzing the data and composing my findings regarding the second research question that guided this study, I determined that one specific part of that question—*How do the identity management strategies used by LGBTQ participants differ from those used by non-LGBTQ participants?*—merited its own chapter due to one rather noticeable difference between the LGBTQ participants and the non-LGBTQ participants. All of the participants addressed the idea of community as an integral part of their professional identities. But as I examined the data that I had collected and coded within the overarching theme of Community, it became clear that the vast majority of the data on this aspect of identity was generated by the three participants who identify as gay or lesbian. The two heterosexual participants—Karen and Brutus—discussed the topic of community in a rather cursory fashion, and usually within the context of the larger school community, the broader community in which the school was located, or the professional community of educators, administrators, policymakers, etc. For example, Karen spoke of some of the problematical community values against which she sometimes struggles in her teaching. She found it especially challenging to promote social justice in a community where parents try to enlist teachers in their efforts to make their daughters act “more feminine” and where religious leaders preach that

homosexuality is immoral and unacceptable. Karen also expressed her philosophical reservations about an educational system seemingly obsessed with measuring “progress and improvement and growth,” ostensibly through test scores alone. She opined, “You wish that you could value things like trust in human relations.” Brutus felt similarly constrained by the “very conservative” community of Rome and its hyper-observant residents, whom he compared to “Big Brother looking at you.” He did concede, however, that Rome is “progressing” in its struggle to embrace diversity and overcome the “ignorance” that fences it off from those who are different. The heterosexual participants, it appears, easily see themselves as active members of both their immediate school communities and the more general communities of educational professionals. The three gay and lesbian participants, on the other hand, emphasized the importance of creating and nurturing more immediate communities within the larger school community. This chapter focuses on the gay and lesbian participants’ community-building and attempt to understand the reasons behind this distinctive characteristic of identity development/integration among those participants.

The Importance of Community

While none of the five participants minimized the importance of the affective domain of learning, Mindy, Patrick, and Luke appeared to be somewhat more in tune with their students’—and their own— affective needs than either Karen or Brutus. One reason for this heightened sense of affect among the gay and lesbian

participants could be their sensitivity to the importance of community—or the need to feel a sense of belonging—in the school environment. Karen did not mention her involvement with any student groups or extracurricular activities, although she did allude to her own need to feel a professional connection to the group of teachers with whom she eats lunch regularly and of whom she said, “I associate myself with [them] because they’re amazing educators.” Brutus did speak of his involvement with the student poetry group he sponsors with his two male colleagues/roommates, but he did not convey the sense that his work with those students, while admirable, was focused on creating any sense of community—a sense he clearly enjoys with his colleagues/roommates. In addition, he expresses superficial familiarity with the student groups at Rome High School, identifying only the anti-bullying student group, a Muslim student group, an African-American student group, and a step-dancing club.

School, Communities, and Safe Communal Spaces

Throughout their participation in this research study, Patrick, Mindy, and Luke repeatedly discussed the role of communities and affiliations in both their personal and professional identity development. The three LGBTQ participants mentioned community or alluded to a specific community at least 38 times throughout the data collection process (Patrick: 6 times; Mindy: 15 times; Luke: 17 times), whereas the two non-LGBTQ participants mentioned or alluded to the idea of community just five times (Karen: 2 times; Brutus: 3 times). The amount of data

regarding other aspects of identity management were relatively similar among the LGBTQ and non-LGBTQ participants. A comparison of the number of data coded as “community” from the LGBTQ participants and the non-LGBTQ participants, along with corresponding numbers of data pertaining to “family/domestic information” and “hobbies/leisure pursuits” (codes selected for the sake of contrast) illustrates the relative prevalence of this topic among the LGBTQ participants (see Table 2). Some of the communities and affiliation groups the LGBTQ participants identified as pivotal in their lives were specifically gay or lesbian, but many of them were not. Each of these three participants acknowledge and foster the positive impact of community—indeed, the very need for community—by actively creating and maintaining strong communities in their respective schools.

Table 2
Comparison of Selected Coded Data between LGBTQ and non-LGBTQ Participants

	Participant	Codes		
		Community	Family/Domestic	Hobbies/Leisure
LGBTQ	Patrick	6	4	7
	Mindy	15	5	4
	Luke	17	6	6
non-LGBTQ	Karen	2	6	6
	Brutus	3	5	4

Patrick

Patrick, who was a model student as a boy, enjoyed school. He found in an academic environment a place where he could thrive; as he recounted in his autobiography, “I was the kid who always got straight As and never got into trouble. I excelled at speaking (imagine that), writing, debating, organizing, and doing the work behind the scenes.” He found another community in the theater when he was in junior high school, but he soon fled that community after playing a role that “came dangerously close to reality—as a flamboyant suck-up effeminate student.” After becoming a teacher, he again immersed himself in the academic community. During the summers, which he described as “the worst” due to his absence from academia, he rediscovered the theater community, where he could explore “the many masks” he had created as a closeted gay man.

At West Monroe, where Patrick currently teaches, he also experiences a strong sense of community. As he stated, “the nerd rules” at West Monroe, and he fits right in; the school offers a “niche for everybody,” and Patrick feels like an integral part of the school community, identifying with the school’s strong academic reputation and its emphasis on sports, which Patrick supports enthusiastically.

Patrick, however, is also passionately motivated to create and sustain a robust community of students interested in studying German. This zeal arises partially from Patrick’s love of German language and culture and partially from necessity. As he explained, recruiting a community of interested students and sustaining that community is absolutely essential, since Patrick’s subject is an

elective and not a required course: “you must recruit people and have to convince them and you have to sell them on what you’re doing, and you have to continue doing that with their family members and the next generation and so forth.” Patrick speaks of this need to build and support a community of German students not as a burden but as another way to perpetuate his sense of belonging. As evidenced by the large number of students enrolled in his classes and the vibrant program he has curated over his ten years at West Monroe, Patrick has succeeded in leading this community. He also interprets his students’ continued interest in his academic program as validation and acceptance of him and his integrated identity. If his students were to reject him, he reasons, he “wouldn’t have any kids” in his classes and his program would die.

Patrick’s community of German students also closely identify with his classroom space, which—as previously mentioned—is festooned with abundant German décor. During the summer when Patrick and I met for our first interview, Patrick was in the process of relocating his classroom to a newly constructed space due to some renovations that were being made to his school building. At the end of the previous school year, Patrick removed posters and bulletin boards from his former classroom when some of his students visited him:

I had students who came after one weekend I took all the things off the wall finally, and they told me that they were like in mourning. They were like, Oh, this is not the right room anymore.... I realized some of them had been there for five years, so for them it was like, this is the way this room should look,

y'know, kinda thing. It's as if someone had taken their own personal room and destroyed it.

His relocation has been an apparent success, since both he and the students seem equally at home in his new classroom.

Mindy

Mindy, another self-confessed “nerd,” also sought the comfort of communities as a young student. Although she struggled to feel a part of the Catholic School community where she attended school, she “found confidence and a place to fit in” as a member of a co-ed youth soccer league that her father founded. This confidence and sense of community would later spur her on to coach the girls’ soccer team at Lincoln for three years. As a first-year high school student, she joined marching band and color guard, which she described as “another outlet for the nerd in me as I tried to figure out my identity.”

As a young professional with a family of her own to raise, community was a major factor in Mindy’s private and professional identity development. She has worked at Lincoln High School and lived in its community since becoming a teacher in 1993. She said of her community, “I like living here because I think it’s a safe place to raise kids.” Mindy believes she has a “good rapport” with students and her colleagues—and by all accounts, this is an accurate characterization—and she believes that having minored in multicultural education as an undergraduate makes her a bit more sensitive than some of her colleagues to issues in the community.

This sensitivity has motivated Mindy to devote a great deal of her time to forming and sustaining communities within her school that provide nurturing and supportive environments for students. She believes that school should be “a safe place for everyone” and that in schools, students should feel empowered and “feel safe asking for help.” To this end, at Lincoln, Mindy has:

- sponsored A Mile in My Shoes, a club for youth struggling with mental health issues
- promoted Rachel’s Challenge, a national anti-bullying initiative
- served as faculty advisor/sponsor for Lincoln’s Gay-Straight Alliance (GSA) for the past three years

Her classroom displays the Human Rights Campaign yellow “equal sign” sticker, “Safe Zone” stickers, and a state-sponsored youth group poster that states “This is a safe place to talk about...,” and, as Mindy explained “it lists pretty much any issue you can think of that a student could ever conceive of having an issue about.”

Mindy’s extracurricular involvement and her classroom décor clearly communicate to students that she provides them with a refuge where they can feel valued and supported as they cope with academic or personal matters that might be troubling them.

She is grateful for the Lincoln community and numerous colleagues who have provided additional support for her efforts. She believes that this assistance from her administration and her fellow faculty members validates both her commitment to helping students and her identities as a professional and as a lesbian. Mindy

acknowledges that she is fortunate to enjoy such a high level of support at Lincoln. When she attended a state-wide youth group summit, she had the opportunity to meet with some of her peers from across the state who also worked with their schools' GSAs. She reported:

there were sponsors there for the GSAs that, the principal was like, OK—you can have this group. Just kinda like, don't advertise it a lot, and we're like, so you're allowed to have a GSA as long as you're in the closet? And they're like, yeah, pretty much. I was like, what?

Mindy stated that she waited 16 years for the students at Lincoln to form a GSA; she was eager to sponsor such a group, but she wanted the initiative for its creation to arise from the students themselves. Her patience was rewarded, and she now enthusiastically promotes the group's mission, which is succeeding beyond her expectations. Mindy speculates that this progress can be attributed to the collective evolution of knowledge and acceptance among the community, her colleagues, her students, and herself; during our first interview, she stated, "The culture changed, and I changed also." As she boasted in her autobiography, "The meetings went from twenty-something attending to over seventy at the last several! Now the kids want to host a lock-in...I'm not sure if I'm ready for THAT!" Some work remains to be done, however, regarding Lincoln's gender regime, since the school's student handbook still cites "boys in skirts" as unacceptable attire.

Luke

Luke appreciated the value of belonging to a community early in his career as a student. He fondly recalled his sense of pride in having been selected, in elementary school, to “join the advanced classes,” where he “made all these better, more advanced friends, and...started feeling like [he] had something intellectual going on.” His interest in a career in education originated when he excelled in the “creatively engaging” environment of seventh-grade band class. He also enjoyed the prominent “social aspect” of band. After coming out in his private life, Luke found his first sense of gay community with a men’s chorus that he joined, as well as with “an LGBT film festival committee, which arose out of a mutual friendship and was just another group that was gay-oriented but looking to do some creative task.” Luke’s interests in academics, queer identity, and community are clearly interconnected.

He is keenly aware, however, that his sexual orientation prohibits him from being a genuine member of his school’s heteronormative gender regime or the community in which Rural High School is located—a community Luke described as “insular,” “conservative,” and “slow to change.” He will sometimes incorporate the community’s values into his pedagogy by, for example, utilizing religious references in his lessons as effective pedagogical tools to activate students’ existing knowledge of musical concepts familiar to them through their church attendance. Since Luke, however, is still at a stage in his identity development where he cannot comfortably integrate his private and professional identities, he instead cultivates a more

traditional community that he can both lead and feel a part of—the band community. Luke is sometimes apprehensive about being the only band teacher in his school—which is typical in schools of this size—yet he longs for some sort of specialized mentorship, like the kind he enjoyed in his previous (temporary) position. He does, however, derive great joy from promoting his band room as a communal “safe space” where students feel comfortable both “academically and socially.” Luke claimed that his students “have a great deal of ownership of the band room.” This sense of shared ownership was evident when I visited Luke’s classroom. Numerous students visited the band room between classes, some came to the band room during free periods to practice or simply relax, and before and after the school day, students congregated in the band room to socialize and enjoy each other’s and Luke’s company.

The physical space of the band room, however, along with Luke’s status as the school district’s lone band teacher—and more specifically, the lone band teacher who succeeded a popular heterosexual male band teacher—complicates his efforts to develop his professional identity and integrate it with his private identity. During our first interview, Luke mentioned that his students knew his predecessor’s wife fairly well. She was involved in band activities and would often help the band with costumes and other needs in preparation for band performances. His own lack of a wife “left a void for” his students, hence their curiosity about his sexual orientation and whether he has a partner or spouse. Luke’s students might have even used the shared space of the band room as a metaphorical arena to learn more about him. In

his autobiography, he described a minor dispute over tidiness that arose between him and his students regarding their careless habit of leaving their personal belongings strewn about the room:

After a few threats, progress was made towards a neater, more organized room, and we all moved on. One day, a giant, rainbow colored umbrella appeared among the forgotten sweatshirts and textbooks....the rainbow had all the shades necessary to remove any doubt; this umbrella was gay. For a few months, it remained as an elephant in the room, never being mentioned, never being claimed by anyone. A small part of me suspected that it was a gesture of understanding from some precocious student. *We know, and we're okay with it.* Another, larger part of me thought that might be a trap. *We'll see if he takes it, THEN we'll know for sure.* And then, as suddenly as it had appeared, it was gone without fanfare.

The ambiguous message of the “gay” umbrella—along with the mystery surrounding its origin and subsequent disappearance—represents Luke’s struggle to integrate his personal and professional identities within the shared space of the band room. Complicating this struggle is Luke’s inertia regarding his ownership of the space. When I visited Luke’s classroom for a day of observation, I noted a number of posters and other types of décor in the band room. When I asked Luke about these artifacts during our second interview, he stated that they were “remnants” from his predecessor and that, after having been at Rural High School for more than a year, he still hadn’t decided what to do with them because

“redecorating the room” was “very low on [his] list of priorities.” Although he chalked it up to “chance,” the posters and other artifacts are persistent reminders of his predecessor’s presence in the room—a presence that problematizes any of Luke’s efforts to differentiate himself, craft his own professional identity, and help his students understand, as he put it, that “he’s just not like this other guy.” Despite his efforts to provide a comfortable community for himself and his students, Luke continues to struggle with the shadow of his predecessor, a unique complication in his endeavors to integrate his identities.

Community: It’s Different for LGBTQs

Most effective teachers understand the value of community as an integral component of the teaching and learning process, and many strive to fashion their classrooms as “communities of learners,” a phrase that seeks to democratize and equalize academic environments, stripping them of any hierarchical or power-laden overtones. The two heterosexual participants in this study, Karen and Brutus, both demonstrated this understanding through their words and their actions, and I witnessed their appreciation for the impact of community when I observed their teaching. As members in good standing of their schools’ gender regimes, they can comfortably identify as active participants of practically all aspects of their entire school community. The three gay and lesbian participants, however, appeared to focus their energies—even if just a bit more intently—on the role of more specific communities and their power to facilitate teaching and learning by tending to

students'—and their own—affective needs. I do not mean to suggest that LGBTQ educators are inherently more sympathetic to or in tune with the affective domain, yet their life experiences as both student and teacher—which often cast them in the role of outsider or “other”—usually sensitize them to the plight of those students in need of a community. Whether those students are interested in a specific world language, coping with emotional problems, seeking the support of other gender non-conforming or queer students, or simply hoping to become part of a musical subculture, the three LGBTQ participants in this study have recognized and validated their needs by forming or taking leadership of the communities within their schools that can provide those students with the support and emotional sustenance they need to be successful.

CHAPTER EIGHT:
CONCLUSION: SO MUCH TO SAY

*I say my hell is the closet I'm stuck inside...
Keep it locked up inside—don't talk about it...
I find sometimes it's easy to be myself,
Sometimes I find it's better to be somebody else
--from "So Much to Say" by the Dave Matthews Band*

In the participants' stories of their identity management and integration (or lack thereof), I find much of my own experience reflected. In Karen's calculated standoffishness and in Luke's frustration with the heteronormative gender regime that throttles his desire to integrate his personal identity more thoroughly with his professional identity, I see the early stages of my career as a high school teacher working diligently to embody my professional role while suppressing my proud identity as a recently out gay man. In Brutus' moderate identity integration, I see the plateau I reached as I became more comfortable with my professional identity—a plateau that I found suitable for just a limited time because it stunted my own identity development and integration. In Patrick's self-confidence and in Mindy's celebration of queer identity in her professional life, I see the integrated identity that I had only hoped to achieve as a secondary school teacher and that I endeavor to enact in a different form at the post-secondary level as a researcher, an instructor, and an advocate for queer inclusion in education.

This research study, rooted in my own experiences and the private and professional dilemmas they provoked me to confront, has demonstrated that the crisis of outness, which I investigated in the pilot study that precipitated this research, is not unique to educators who identify as gay or lesbian; heterosexual educators also struggle with issues of outness, though not necessarily with regard to their sexual orientation. Before I situate the findings I've drawn from this study within the theoretical framework of queer theory and the context of current research on queer issues in education, discuss implications for practice, and recommend further research, I am obliged to acknowledge the limitations that constrained the scope of my inquiry.

Limitations of the Study

Although I freely use the term *LGBTQ* in this study to describe three of the participants (and myself), the *B* (bisexual) and the *T* (transgender) in that term are notably absent from this research. Including the experiences of a bisexual and/or transgender educator in this study would undoubtedly have provided rich and differing perspectives to include in the data analysis and would have yielded additional insights into other dimensions of identity integration that none of the current participants was required to negotiate—for example, all of the participants could safely presume that their gender identities were clear to their students and colleagues, and none exerted any time or effort in addressing this aspect of their identity in a professional setting. Just as most heterosexual educators never really

think of managing their sexual orientation in a professional setting, all five of the participants in this study are cisgendered⁷ and were never troubled by the issue of their gender identity in the professional environment.

In addition, I attempted to include participants from a variety of communities and environments—three of the participants teach in relatively suburban communities, one teaches in a rural community, and one in an urban community. My geographical location, however, restricted somewhat the variety of environments from which I was able to recruit participants. Additional participants from urban and/or rural communities would have provided additional data with which to compare the experiences of the current participants and therefore might have provided more comprehensive support for my findings or added insights that are not available based on the current data. Addressing either of these limitations in the current study would have strained its manageability. Similarly, all of the participants share the same race (White) and general socioeconomic class (middle class). Greater racial, ethnic, and/or socioeconomic diversity among the participants would lend the findings a broader perspective and perhaps additional dimensions of insight.

Finally, more data sources would have likewise provided additional insight and credibility to the findings. While it would have been desirable to collect data through interviews with the participants' colleagues, administrators, and students,

⁷ A cisgendered person is someone whose assigned sex at birth matches his or her gender identity (Murray, 2015, p. xii)

it would have complicated and delayed IRB approval of the study and, in the case of at least one participant, it could have jeopardized his employment.

Conclusions

In response to this study's two research questions, I have distilled the following conclusions:

Research question 1: *How have school gender regimes affected the identity integration/development process for each participant? How do the participants express their gender identity in professional settings? How do their gender expression and the expression of their sexual orientation affect their relationships with students, colleagues, administrators, and parents? How do they affect their pedagogy?*

Response: The gender regimes at the schools where the participants work may all be described as heteronormative and hegemonic. As such, they regulate rather strictly the options available to the participants in terms of gender expression and professional opportunities. Though largely unspoken and informally codified, much like schools' hidden curricula, these gender regimes exert powerful influences on the participants, their administrators, colleagues, and students. All of the participants conform—at least to some degree—with their schools' gender regimes; some, however, transgress in subtle but significant ways, and all transgress by countering the gender expectations of their chosen subject. The gender regimes pose challenges for all of the participants, but the heterosexual participants do

appear to experience a lesser degree of anxiety and concern regarding the gender regime's strictures than the LGBTQ participants do, especially with respect to sexual orientation. In comparison to a given participant's gender expression, his/her sexual orientation seemed to have a more noticeable effect on his/her relationships with students, colleagues, administrators, and parents. Mindy's and Patrick's relative outness served as a resource for LGBTQ students and allowed them to develop honest and supportive relationships with their students and colleagues. Luke's closeted status, however, inhibited or limited his opportunities to develop professional relationships in the way that he desires. For Karen and Brutus, their heterosexuality had a negligible impact on their professional relationships, and none of the participants reported—nor did I observe—any detrimental effects on the quality of his/her pedagogy caused by gender expression or sexual orientation. All of these factors appear to be influenced to a much greater degree by the participant's expertise as a teacher and experience in the profession.

Research question 2: Which identity management strategies do the participants use and what are the reasons they use them? If non-LGBTQ participants use identity management strategies, how and why do they use them? How do the identity management strategies used by LGBTQ participants differ from those used by non-LGBTQ participants? How are they similar? What do participants believe are the benefits of integrating their private and professional identities?

Response: All five participants used a variety of the four identity management strategies—passing, covering, implicitly out, and explicitly out—to manage a number of aspects of their identities, for a broad range of reasons, in their efforts to integrate their private and professional identities or, in some cases, to keep those identities distinct from each other. Furthermore, the participants’ adept juggling of both the private and professional aspects of their identities—and the various sub-identities within each of these aspects—demonstrated the “multiple I-positions” that Akkerman and Meijer (2011, p. 315) identified as a definitive part of the “ongoing process” of teacher identity development. The most significant difference in the use of identity management strategies between LGBTQ participants and non-LGBTQ participants was, as expected, the use of the strategies with respect to the participants’ sexual orientation—i.e., the LGBTQ participants applied these strategies when managing the masking or disclosure of their sexual orientation, while the heterosexual participants did not. Sexual orientation, however, was not the decisive factor in determining the degree to which each participant chose to integrate his/her private and professional identities. The data suggest that the more years of experience a teacher has accumulated, along with the expertise he/she has acquired as a result of that experience—as well as the attendant self-confidence—the more likely he/she is to integrate his/her private and professional identities. Additional mediating factors affecting the degree to which a participant has integrated or is likely to integrate his/her identities include the supportiveness of the school environment—namely, colleagues, administrators, and students—the

community in which the school is located, and the participant's marital/dating status. In addition, the data suggest that LGBTQ participants are more likely to cultivate and lead smaller communities within the schools—such as clubs, organizations, or academically affiliated groups—as a way to develop and sustain their own, as well as their students', sense of belonging and affective validation. The participants who are more satisfied with the extent of their identity integration identified the following as benefits: reduced levels of anxiety and stress; greater energy to focus on teaching and learning; and heightened sensitivity to the needs of LGBTQ and other marginalized students.

Queering the Process—and the Conclusions

One of my original goals in pursuing this study was to understand how the process of teacher identity development and integration affected a teacher's pedagogy and effectiveness. Shortly after commencing data collection, however, it soon became apparent to me that examining both teacher identity development/integration *and* the impact of that process on a particular teacher's pedagogy and effectiveness would be a gargantuan amount of work for just one dissertation. Queering the data analysis process to trouble the distinction between heterosexual identity management strategies and LGBTQ identity management strategies required a vast amount of focus and labor; establishing some way to measure each participant's effectiveness—whether that be through student achievement, student feedback, administrators' assessment and evaluation, self-assessment, or some

combination thereof—then queering that process, and subsequently establishing some connection to each participant’s identity development/integration process would have required far more time and resources than would have been suitable for one dissertation. Therefore, queering my research process required me to subvert my original goals and focus instead on problematizing the perceived distinction between the identity development and integration processes for heterosexual and LGBTQ educators, which proved a formidable challenge in itself.

This conundrum of research scope and sequence that I encountered generates questions regarding the nature of queer qualitative research. While I believe that this study demonstrates the “epistemological reflexivity” that Sears (1992, p. 152) mentioned as characteristic of qualitative inquiry, exhibits the “postmodern rejection of epistemological certainty” that Honeychurch (1996, p. 344) identified as a principle of queer research, and undermines the notion that only LGBTQ educators must concern themselves with managing certain aspects of their identities by finding that factors other than sexual orientation often play a greater role in an educator’s need for identity management strategies—this study also reveals additional opportunities to explore queering qualitative research. For example, in light of the “queering” limitations that I experienced, is it advisable (or desirable or even possible) to queer all aspects of one’s research? Queering the research design to include both LGBTQ and non-LGBTQ participants in order to examine strategies that had been heretofore presumed applicable only to LGBTQ persons was critical in drawing my conclusions—however, would it have been

possible to draw any conclusions at all if I had queered the entire research process? Or was it necessary for me to retain some aspects of “conventional” qualitative research (such as axial coding) in order for me to understand the impact of queering certain other aspects of the process (such as participant selection)? I believe it was. Researchers investigating other issues may find it necessary to queer their process in other ways.

And although a queer theoretical framework seems to be an appropriate fit for the focus of this study, it might also prove useful for qualitative research that examines topics seemingly unrelated to gender or sexual orientation. For example, just as I have attempted to illuminate dimensions of LGBTQ teacher identity development by studying the issue across gender and sexual orientation, might a queer theoretical framework be useful in understanding dimensions of pedagogy by studying methods across disciplines such as the sciences and the humanities? How can science be taught creatively? How can the humanities be taught scientifically? Can queering these presumed divisions somehow bridge the alleged gap between the STEM disciplines and the humanities? Are these divisions between disciplines in any way similar to the hermetic, semi-permeable, and permeable distinctions that characterize the degrees of integration of teachers’ private and professional identities, or are these divisions also mutable and capable of being integrated in productive and harmonious ways? An even more ambitious question—and one that seems ideally suited to a queer theoretical perspective would be this: What would

be the effect of queering distinctions among academic subject areas and developing truly interdisciplinary pedagogy that encompasses all fields of study?

Implications for Practice

The findings of this study support the theory that the cultural, social, and professional pressures of heteronormativity, hegemonic masculinity and the overall gender regimes of schools exert an undeniable effect on the strategies teachers use to manage their private and professional identities. Luke finds himself facing the same dilemmas regarding identity integration that Mindy and Patrick faced almost twenty years ago—this replication of circumstances suggests that Mindy’s and Patrick’s increased ability to integrate their identities throughout their teaching careers may be attributed more to their own actions and attitudes than to any profound changes within school environments. Even the two non-LGBTQ participants, Brutus and Karen, confronted identity integration issues—albeit to a lesser degree—promulgated by their school gender regimes. Consequently, these findings imply that teacher educators, preservice teachers, and in-service teachers could benefit from a profound reconceptualization of teaching and school environments, which could alleviate the pressures that all teachers—and queer teachers in particular—must confront.

The findings of the current study support McNinch’s argument that eliminating the focus on “performativity” or “the ‘acts’ of teaching” and concentrating instead on “the learner and learning outcomes” transforms our

understanding of “good teaching,” which he calls “ethical behavior, with social and political implications, not just personal ones” (p. 201). The participants’ experiences—especially Mindy’s and Patrick’s—illustrate the beliefs of Patricia Nicolari, a health and physical education teacher who chose to come out because she “wasn’t practicing what [she] was preaching”: “Teachers who come out usually feel like a more complete human being. Being more complete impacts our teaching, which in turn impacts students. It is a powerful ripple effect that changes the school climate” (Jennings, 2005, p. 24).

Therefore, I propose a number of strategies that might assist teacher educators, preservice teachers, and in-service teachers in their efforts to facilitate a healthy and productive identity development/integration process as well as improve teaching and learning in their classrooms:

1. ***Explicitly incorporate queer literacy and queer issues into all post-secondary teacher education programs***; address these as issues of multiculturalism and professional identity development that affect all teachers regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity. None of the participants in the current study recalled learning anything at all in their teacher education programs regarding LGBTQ issues and how to approach them in the classroom, whether for their own identity development or with an eye toward understanding and supporting LGBTQ or gender non-conforming students. This goal may be accomplished in a number of ways, which would be directly linked to the second proposed strategy.

2. ***Train teacher educators in the best practices for educating preservice teachers in queer literacy and queer inclusion.*** As Murray (2015) asserts, “Teacher educators are in a critical position to prompt transformative change in education, change that interrupts heteronormativity, bridges the gender divide, and illuminates a queer perspective” (p. 203). While some teacher education programs may currently address this need in a required course(s) on multicultural education, including queer issues as one topic in one course does not suffice—to adequately address this issue, queer inclusion must be incorporated within every aspect of an institution’s teacher education programs, from introductory coursework up to and including the culminating student teaching practicum.

As O’Brien (2001) has argued, “Traditional multicultural approaches which take the ‘add-diversity-and-stir’ approach—singing songs and eating foods from different cultures—do nothing to enlighten students about oppression, both past and present” (p. 41). Similarly, add-queer-and-stir will not prove to be an effective strategy. An approach such as multicultural social justice education (Grant & Sleeter, 2010) is needed to ensure that queer issues are incorporated throughout teacher education curricula as a foundational principle. As Murray (2015) points out, however, queer issues are often marginalized if not altogether ignored even within the scope of multicultural education: “there has been little focus on influencing the knowledge and beliefs of teacher candidates about queer issues” (p. 24).

Murray's (2015) is one of the more recent works in a growing body of scholarship that supports queer inclusion in teacher education (Kissen, 1996; Miller, 1998; Philaretou & Allen, 2001; Kissen & Phillips, 2002; Letts, 2002; Morris, 2003; Alsup, 2005; Vavrus, 2009). The current study supports the recommendations of these advocates for queer inclusion. If preservice teachers are to be equipped with the proper knowledge, skills, and dispositions to manage their own identity development as well as the ability to teach *all* of their students—lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, cisgender, gender non-conforming, queer, questioning, heterosexual, or any combination thereof—they must be taught by teacher educators who are themselves knowledgeable and skilled in the area of queer inclusion in education.

- 3. Teacher educators, preservice teachers, in-service teachers—indeed all professional educators—need to create supportive, compassionate, and inclusive school environments where all educators can express their sexual orientation in professionally appropriate ways (i.e., be explicitly out) without fear of repercussions.*** Educators of all sexual orientations and gender identities deserve the right to choose whether they want to freely proclaim their identities without fear of ridicule, harassment, or discrimination. Luke's struggle with his identity integration and his ardent wish that it were not such a monumental task are emblematic of the experiences of many young, closeted educators. Chris Friend (2014), a high

school teacher who decided to come out after his classroom was vandalized with homophobic slurs, described the need he felt to assert his truth. He advocates the kind of urgency Luke expressed in his desire to render identity integration a non-issue in his school environment:

Pretending my personal life and my educational practice can be separated denies the validity and relevance of both. I now see that the world outside the classroom walls includes the social acceptance that students don't always offer one another. I am a gay man who teaches; I am a teacher who is gay. I cannot be only one of those things, and I cannot expect my students to interact with only one of them, either. Those of us in this invisible minority have an obligation to speak out, most especially as teachers... my sexuality offers perspective and experience, both of which I can only give my students when they're first aware I possess them. To teach as myself, I must let my students see who I am. I must use my voice and end the silence. We all must stop hiding, stop perpetuating the shame, and stop pretending sexuality is a non-issue. We all must find our voices.

While Mindy and Patrick have found—and used—the voice to which Friend refers, transforming school climates that encourage LGBTQ educators and students to hide behind their shame and creating supportive environments that celebrate and include everyone along the spectra of gender and sexuality will require Herculean efforts.

If, as we have been urged to believe, “it gets better,” it will take much more than a village. As this study has shown, it has gotten better than it was nearly 20 years ago when I left high school teaching. Improved school climates and greater inclusion of LGBTQ teachers and students have enabled educators like Patrick and Mindy to live as out teachers who enjoy a strong degree of identity integration. It will, however, need to get even better in order for Luke (and other teachers in similar predicaments) to feel secure enough to come out—should he so choose—at his rural school. It will require a radical reconceptualization of school gender regimes and the deconstruction of hegemonic heteronormativity—an enterprise that transcends the boundaries of education alone and encompasses almost every aspect of culture. This study suggests that a number of efforts towards these goals are already underway: educators are opposing gender regimes by, for example, pursuing careers in subjects that do not conform to gender expectations or by resisting cultural expectations to marry by a certain age or to create specific kinds of families; educators and students are challenging heteronormativity by creating communities—whether LGBTQ-focused like the GSA that Mindy sponsors or non-LGBTQ-focused like Luke’s “safe space” band room—that foster supportive and mutually beneficial relationships among LGBTQ and non-LGBTQ persons. These kinds of efforts need to continue and develop beyond school environments, into partnerships with community organizations, advocacy groups, and businesses.

Achieving these goals will require the collective efforts of teacher educators, preservice teachers, in-service teachers, building level administrators, district level administrators, and even entire communities—all must become integral parts of “a broader discourse on a radical politics of sexual and gender justice” (Rodriguez, 2007, p. 300). As I have endeavored to demonstrate throughout this study, identity integration is not “just” a queer issue—it is a challenge that all teachers face.

All educators can begin, as Murray (2015) suggests, by “learning how to critically evaluate curriculum for hidden, as well as overt, messages that transmit stereotypical gender roles and compulsory heterosexuality” (p. 179). Going beyond addressing and/or expunging heteronormative and/or homophobic content from curriculum and infusing queer-inclusive content and pedagogy into curriculum, will likely, however, be less of a challenge for teachers in some subject areas than it will be for their colleagues in some other subject areas. For example, curricula in subjects such as language arts, the performing arts, history, and other social sciences lend themselves more readily to queer inclusion than subjects such as mathematics, technology, and the physical sciences. Indeed, innovative educators in these latter subjects can surely find creative ways to include queer issues in pedagogically sound ways that will enrich instruction and diversify their students’ understanding of both the subject matter and the LGBTQ community. For example, Mindy, whose own attire (the GSA t-shirt, the rainbow necklace) identifies her as a queer scientist, could easily include a historical unit focused on the contributions of queer scientists. Math teachers could utilize raw data about queer youth and queer

bullying to teach mathematical concepts such as percentages, fractions, and statistics. Teachers in subjects like English, theater, and history, however, who often come to know their students more intimately due to their repeated interactions through the use of writing and other discursive forms of expression, experience more frequent and abundant opportunities to address and incorporate queer issues into their curricular and extracurricular responsibilities. Language study could focus on the analysis of hate speech, connotations and denotations of words used to bully or oppress LGBTQ or gender non-conforming students, and other biased forms of discourse. Novels, plays, poems, films, and other forms of literature that feature LGBTQ characters or queer themes—either directly or obliquely—could be included in the curriculum.

Recommendations for Further Research

Continued research focusing on teacher identity integration, as well as numerous other areas of pedagogy and queer inclusion, can assist in reaching these goals. Studies that include educators who identify with a variety of sexual orientations and gender identities will be especially powerful in establishing an educational community with shared needs in the interest of improving education for all. Research studies similar to this one, but including an expanded roster of participants, could illuminate other dimensions of teacher identity integration. For example, a study conducted with elementary or early childhood teachers or a study conducted with teachers of the same subject (e.g., all language arts teachers or all

mathematics teachers) could be helpful in determining whether grade level or subject area affects teacher identity integration in some way. A study conducted with educators from a variety of geographical regions within the US—or from various nations—has the potential to yield insights regarding sociocultural impacts on teacher identity development. Any research that can identify and assess the impact of various factors on teacher identity integration would be instrumental in addressing the influence of those factors on school gender regimes; such knowledge could contribute to the cultural reconceptualization of teaching that is necessary to foster queer inclusion and improve teaching and learning for all students.

Queering my Teacher Community

*Do I contradict myself?
 Very well then I contradict myself,
 (I am large, I contain multitudes.)
 -- from "Song of Myself" by Walt Whitman*

Growing up as a terrified, closeted gay adolescent, I never imagined that I could one day accept my sexual orientation, let alone embrace it, celebrate it, and take pride in it. But at the age of 23, I was able to begin the process that would help me make my sexual orientation a meaningful part of my personal identity. My professional journey towards acceptance and meaning has paralleled my personal journey. Despite my burgeoning personal pride in my queer identity, I labored to bury that part of me in my professional environment. I was out of my personal closet but still hunkered deep inside my professional closet, petrified at the thought that my sexual orientation would somehow get out and destroy my career. I once

believed that my private identity contradicted my professional identity, but I learned to reconcile and integrate these disparate elements into an identity comprised of multitudes—which helps me be a better teacher and, I hope, a better person. Now my experience has fueled my research, and I hope to use my scholarship to inform and empower educators of all sexual orientations and gender identities to queer the teacher community with knowledge and critical pedagogy.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Participant Recruitment Email

Dear NAME,

I'm contacting you regarding a research study that my major professor, Tara Star Johnson, and I will be conducting over the next few months.

We are investigating the ways in which teachers balance their personal lives and their professional lives, along with the degree to which teachers share details or aspects of their personal lives in their classrooms, with their students, colleagues, and the community. Our study has been approved by Purdue University's Institutional Review Board.

We hope that you will be interested in participating in our study. If you agree to participate, we would like to conduct two recorded interviews with you; each interview would last approximately one hour. Interviews would be arranged at a mutually agreeable time and location sometime before the end of August 2013. Participation is strictly voluntary and confidential.

Please let me know at your earliest convenience whether you are interested in helping us with our study or if you have any questions about participating.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Best regards,

Jim

Appendix B: Initial Interview Protocol

Personal Background—Please tell me about yourself.

1. How old are you?
2. Where did you grow up?
3. What was your childhood like?
4. What's your family like?
5. What are your hobbies and interests?
6. What is your sexual orientation?
7. Do you have a partner/spouse/significant other?
8. Do you have any children?

Professional Background—Please tell me about your career.

9. How did you become interested in teaching?
10. Why did you decide to become a teacher?
11. How long have you been teaching?
12. Tell me about the different schools where you've taught.
13. Please describe the way you dress for a typical day at school.
14. What subject(s) do you teach?
15. Do you believe that the subject(s) you teach is more closely associated with a specific gender? [What do you think of that?]
16. Can you identify anything you do in school—whether curricular or extra-curricular—that you believe expresses your gender identity or perhaps contradicts the gender expectations in your school?

Professional Environment—Please tell me about your school and community.

17. What words would you use to describe your school culture?
18. How would you characterize the level of diversity in the school and community?
19. Can you tell me about a time (or times) when you felt reluctant or hesitant to share something about your personal life in your professional environment? [What were you worried about?]
20. Can you tell me about a time (or times) when students, colleagues, staff, or administration asked you about personal information that you were not willing to share? How did you handle that?

21. Is there anything about your private life that you purposely keep separate from your professional life?
22. How do you think [keeping this information private/sharing this information] affects your relationship with your students, colleagues, administrators, and parents?
23. What have you done to combine or integrate your private identity with your professional identity?
24. Do you think that you have successfully integrated your private identity with your professional identity?
25. How do you know?
26. Is there a way in which you'd like to integrate your private identity with your professional identity but have not yet been able to? Why?
27. Is there any aspect of your professional environment that you believe is preventing you from becoming a more effective teacher?
28. Do you believe there are different social, cultural, and academic expectations for men and women—referring to students and teachers/administrators—in education? [If yes, can you tell me about those differences?]
29. Tell me about your experience with the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer community.
30. Do you believe there are different social, cultural, and academic expectations for heterosexual people and LGBTQ persons—referring to students as well as teachers/administrators—in education? [If yes, can you tell me about those differences?]
31. Have you ever witnessed one or more students harassing another student(s) for behaving in non-gender conforming ways? [If yes, how did you respond?]
32. Have you ever been subjected to harassment based on non-gender conforming behavior or have students or colleagues ever questioned your sexual orientation? [If yes, how did you respond?]
33. What do you think can be done to make schools safer and more welcoming for men, women, and all LGBTQ persons?

Appendix C: Follow-up Interview

Possible topics for discussion, based on field observation

1. The participant's appearance/attire
2. Content of the lessons taught
3. Instructional methods used
4. Classroom management
5. Classroom artifacts/décor
6. Documents the participant has provided, including the autobiography
7. Office artifacts/décor
8. Interactions with students both in-class and outside of class
9. Interactions with colleagues
10. Interactions with administrators
11. Interactions with parents/community members
12. "Duty" periods
13. "Free" periods
14. Extracurricular activities

VITA

VITA

JAMES R. GILLIGAN**Education**

Ph.D. in Literacy & Language: Secondary English Education, May 2015

Purdue University

College of Education

Department of Curriculum & Instruction

Literacy & Language

Secondary English Education

Dissertation Title: "Private, Professional, Public: An Investigation of Teacher Identity Development"

Chair: Professor Tara Star Johnson

Master of Arts in English

Queens College of the City University of New York, June 1992.

GPA: 3.7

Bachelor of Arts in English Education, *cum laude*

Queens College of the City University of New York, February 1988.

Professional Experience

April 2011 – present: Assistant Director, Office of Field Experiences; College of Education, Purdue University, West Lafayette, Indiana.

Manage the Office of Field Experiences, supervise the Early Field Experiences Coordinator and Head Secretary, and coordinate and arrange student teaching placements for all Teacher Education students at Purdue; serve as the primary engagement liaison with the P-12 partners who host preservice teachers. Additional responsibilities include advising students; providing support to academic advisors, faculty members, and other staff across campus; and preparing required reports and documentation related to field experiences.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Developed and implemented a Criminal Background Check policy for all Teacher Education programs

- Monitored criminal background checks for every teacher education student in all program areas
- Drafted the College of Education Standard 3 narrative for the NCATE Institutional Report; collected and categorized all supporting artifacts and exhibits for accreditation
- Created specialized instructions to assist University Supervisors in utilizing Concur, an online travel management system

August 2004 – April 2011: Student Teaching Placement Coordinator, Office of Field Experiences; College of Education, Purdue University, West Lafayette, Indiana.

Plan student teaching placements for candidates in 28 Teacher Education program areas for six colleges within the University; cultivate partnerships with school superintendents and principals to facilitate candidate placements throughout central and northern Indiana; introduce candidates to standards of professionalism and appropriate classroom dispositions.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Overhauled the design, navigational structure, and content of the OFE website: www.education.purdue.edu/fieldexp
- Implemented new procedures to simplify the candidate placement process.
- Created Student Teaching Application Workshops to more efficiently introduce candidates to the student teaching application process and to better manage and organize the dissemination of student teaching application information.
- Significantly reduced postage costs by using email distribution lists and list serves to send notices, updates, and other information to various constituencies.
- Developed and implemented a new university supervisor travel policy that decreased travel costs by approximately \$4,000 per year.

August 2001 – May 2004: Instructor and Graduate Teaching Assistant, Department of Curriculum and Instruction; School of Education, Purdue University, West Lafayette, Indiana.

Responsible for teaching a course entitled Exploring Teaching as a Career, conducting periodic visits to oversee students' fieldwork, grading student projects, instructing students in the use of online electronic portfolios, and participating in weekly TA meetings; supervised five student teachers in English per semester, performing bi-weekly observations, and writing midterm and final evaluations for each student teacher.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Created an electronic version of the Student Teaching Evaluation form.
- Participated in a pilot program to integrate electronic portfolios with curriculum.
- Designed grading rubrics for use throughout Block I courses.

August 1996 – May 2001: Graduate Teaching Assistant, Department of English; School of Liberal Arts, Purdue University, West Lafayette, Indiana.

Responsible for teaching, developing curriculum and course policies, designing syllabi and assignments, conferring with students during office hours, and grading all assignments for the following courses: English Composition, Accelerated First-Year Composition, Great American Books, Science Fiction and Fantasy Literature, Composition for English Teachers.

September 1993 – June 1996: English Teacher, Scarsdale High School, Scarsdale, New York.

February 1988 – June 1993: English Teacher, Westbury High School, Westbury, New York.

Grants

2009. Purdue Graduate Student Government Travel Grant

2007-2008. Administrative Professional Staff Advisory Committee Professional Development Grant

Honors and Awards

Earl B. Notestine Award for Outstanding Service, Purdue University College of Education, 2008-2009.

Nominee for Outstanding Teaching Award, Purdue University Department of Curriculum and Instruction, 2002-2003.

Excellence in Teaching Award, Purdue University Department of English, 1999-2000.

Publications

2014. Heteronormative harassment: Queer bullying and gender non-conforming students. With sj Miller. In E.J. Meyer & D. Carlson (Eds.), *Gender and sexualities in education: A reader* (pp. 217-229). New York: Peter Lang.

2013. The distressing realities about queer (LGBTQGV) related bullying. With sj Miller. In sj Miller, L. Burns, & T.S. Johnson (Eds.), *Generation BULLIED 2.0: Prevention and intervention strategies for our most vulnerable students* (pp. 33-47). New York: Peter Lang.

2010. Composing themselves: The discursive (de)construction of queer identity in 6 young adult novels. In J. Alsup (Ed.), *Young adult literature and adolescent identity across cultures and classrooms: Contexts for the literary lives of teens* (pp. 47-62). New York: Routledge.

2009. Of dragons and genders: An ancient hero for the 21st century. [Review of the book *Eon: Dragoneye reborn*]. *First Opinions, Second Reactions*, 1(3), 29-30.
<http://docs.lib.purdue.edu/fosr/>

Presentations and Conference Sessions

National

- 2013, November. The Impact of Out Teachers on LGBTQ Youth: Queering the Discourse on Queer Bullying. National Council of Teachers of English, Annual Conference, Boston, MA.
- 2013, July. Social Justice Strand: We Have a Social Justice Standard! Now What? The Conference on English Education, Summer Conference, Fort Collins, CO.
- 2011, November. Gender Non-Conformity and Bullying: How Queer Teachers Can Make a Difference. National Council of Teachers of English, Annual Conference, Chicago, IL.
2009. The Crisis of Outness: Making a Case for Sexual Ambiguity. American Educational Research Association, Annual Conference, San Diego, CA. (with Tara Star Johnson)
2007. Heteronormativity, Inclusion, and the Challenges of Queer Literacy. National Council of Teachers of English, Annual Conference, New York, NY.

State/Local

- 2015, February. Preparing Your Public Self. Presentation for Liberal Arts Career Development Week. Purdue University, West Lafayette, IN.
- 2013, September. Queering the Curriculum: Inclusive Pedagogy. Guest lecture in EDCI 585: Multiculturalism in Education. Purdue University, West Lafayette, IN.
- 2012, March. Queer Bullying and Gender Non-Conformity. Guest lecture in WOST 280: Intro to Women's Studies. Purdue University, West Lafayette, IN.
- 2012, February. The Social Construction of Queer Bullying. Guest lecture in EDCI 585: Multiculturalism in Education. Purdue University, West Lafayette, IN.
- 2011, March. Diversity, Inclusion, and Marginalized Communities: Research and Professional Ethics. Research Seminar for the College of Health & Human Sciences. Purdue University, West Lafayette, IN.
- 2011, February. Outness as a Dimension of Diversity: Implications for LGBTQ Youth. Guest lecture in EDCI 585: Multiculturalism in Education. Purdue University, West Lafayette, IN.
- 2010, October. The Crisis of Outness: Discursive and Performative Constructions of Teacher Sexuality. Research Seminar. Purdue University, West Lafayette, IN.
- 2010, April. Queer Theory, Gender Identity, and Family Diversity: Considerations for Preservice Teachers. Guest lecture in EDCI 285: Multiculturalism in Education. Purdue University, West Lafayette, IN.
- 2010, February. Outness as a Dimension of Diversity. Guest lecture in EDCI 585: Multiculturalism in Education. Purdue University, West Lafayette, IN.

Professional Affiliations

American Educational Research Association

National Council of Teachers of English

Conference on English Education

Activities and Service

English Education, manuscript review

Journal of Teacher Education, manuscript review

LGBTQ Advisory Board to the Assistant Provost, 2007-present

Safe Zone Facilitator Training, February 2011

Purdue University Common Reading Selection Committee, 2010-2013

College of Education Wellness Ambassador, 2007-2009

Executive Committee Member, College of Education Staff Advisory Committee, 2005-2008.

President, Purdue Graduate Student English Association, 1997-1998.